

# In Motion

ASSOCIATION  
FOR  
WOMEN LAWYERS

September 2012

## Upcoming AWL Meetings & Special Events

see inside newsletter for details

### Annual Meeting & Wish List Drive

Tuesday, September 11  
noon-1:30 p.m.  
Italian Conference Center

### Estate Planning Discussion Group

Wednesday, September 19  
noon-1:30 p.m.  
Godfrey & Kahn

### Litigation Discussion Group

Thursday, September 20  
noon-1:30 p.m.  
Whyte, Hirschboeck & Dudek

### AWL Book Club

Tuesday, September 25  
6 p.m. at the Iron Horse Hotel  
Book is *A Discovery of Witches*  
by Deborah Harkness

### Get Your Gavel Conference

Friday, October 12  
Marquette Law School



## Get Your Gavel: Your Blueprint for Breaking the Judicial Glass Ceiling

Friday, October 12  
8:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

### Marquette University Law School

Kay and Ray Eckstein Hall, 1215 W. Michigan St.

The Association for Women Lawyers and the *Wisconsin Law Journal* are sponsoring this day-long conference aimed at attorneys considering a career as a judge. The program, which will feature speakers from across the state including Justice Ann Walsh Bradley, will provide attendees with tools for getting to the bench by both election and appointment.

The cost of the conference is \$25, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch. CLE credit will be applied for. A limited number of free registration will be available to Marquette University Law School and University of Wisconsin Law School students. Parking will be available in the law school parking structure as well as on the street nearby or in other Marquette parking structures.

For more information, contact Sarah McQuin at 414-225-1814  
or [sarah.mcquin@wislawjournal.com](mailto:sarah.mcquin@wislawjournal.com)

To register, please visit [www.regonline.com/GetYourGavel2012](http://www.regonline.com/GetYourGavel2012)

For a registration form and details about our **Annual Meeting** on September 11, see page 4.

# What's Going On

## Nite-Glow Golf

Nite-Glow Golf is back by popular demand! On **Friday, September 7** join us for dinner at the NorthPoint Custard Stand at Bradford Beach at 7 p.m. At 8:30 p.m. we will make our way to the Lake Park golf course to tee off. The cost for this event, which includes golf and food is \$22. Pre-registration is required. Contact [dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com).

## Estate Planning Discussion Group

The AWL Estate Planning Discussion Group will meet at

noon on **Wednesday, September 19** at Godfrey & Kahn S.C., 780 N. Water St. Ruth J. Irvings will speak on "Planning Issues Under Wisconsin's Domestic Partnership Laws and Issues of Related Interest." RSVP to Shannon Brusda at 414-287-9568 or [sbrusda@gklaw.com](mailto:sbrusda@gklaw.com).

The group's May 16 meeting, "The New Wisconsin Trust Code - What to Expect," was approved for 1.0 hours of CLE credit. Please let Shannon know if you need any further information on the CLE approval.

## Litigation Discussion Group

The AWL Litigation Discussion Group has scheduled a presentation by Clerk of Courts John Barrett for **Thursday, September 20**. The focus will be the newly created E-Filing system for documents with the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. The meeting will be at the office of Whyte, Hirschboeck & Dudek, 555 E. Wells St., Suite 1900. Lunch is served at noon, with the presentation from 12:25 until 1:30. CLE credit will be applied for. Lunch will be provided, and a dial-in line is

available if you are unable to attend but would like to listen. Registration is requested so that the correct amount of food is available. Contact Dawn L. Drellos-Thompson at [ddrellos@pdlawgroup.com](mailto:ddrellos@pdlawgroup.com).

## AWL Book Club

The AWL Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, September 25** from 6-8 p.m. at the Iron Horse Hotel, 500 W. Florida St. The discussion will focus on the *Discovery of Witches* by Deborah Harkness.

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## Member Profile

Denise Goergen



By Paula Davis-Laack

During law school, Denise's goal was to build her own corporate practice. Leveraging

her undergraduate degree in finance, Denise has realized her goal, and maintained a successful corporate practice for more than 25 years. She specializes in employee benefits law, advising clients on ERISA issues and matters pertaining to benefit, health and welfare plans. Denise has been with Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, s.c. for the majority of her career.

In addition to being a busy partner at a large law firm, Denise is heavily involved with a local non-profit organization which began as a grassroots effort to raise awareness about the rising rates of lung cancer among women who are non-smokers. She is a founding member of the Betty Brinn Children's Museum, and a recent member of the Board of Directors of TEMPO Milwaukee Foundation. She most recently finished a three-year rotation with the Great Lakes Benefits Conference.

Denise has been an active part of the AWL membership committee. She and others within

her firm strongly encourage all new women attorneys at the firm to become part of the AWL community. Denise has a keen awareness of the importance of building networks with executives and others from the business community at large.

When it comes to women in the legal profession, Denise has observed a change over the years with regard to women who are seeking to have a corporate practice. She feels that it's tougher for women to make partner in a corporate-type practice than it was when she was at that level. She understands that associates have the extra pressure today of carrying with them heavy law school debt. She has also noticed a difference in how attorneys entertain their clients. Today, not everyone has to play golf or sports to make meaningful client connections.

Her advice for women lawyers who are just beginning their careers is very specific – maintain flexibility with your career goals.

Many young attorneys never know where doors will open that will offer them the best opportunities; often, the opportunities are different from what they envisioned.

In addition, she advises to practice in an area that you find interesting as you will be spending so much time devoted to your practice. Denise feels that she's been able to maintain her longevity in a large law firm, while also raising a family, due to the fact that she's part of a large team. Her practice group's sense of team work and willingness to support each other provided her with a measure of flexibility while she was juggling growing her practice and raising a family.

Denise has been married for 27 years and has three children – ages 19, 23, and 25. When she's not working, she loves riding horses, having formerly been part of a dressage drill team. She and her husband also enjoy entertaining at their lake home.

# Thoughts from the President

## Get Your Gavel

Twenty years ago, a conference was held in Milwaukee to address the judicial glass ceiling. In attendance were women who have since become judges, including Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judges Hon. Mary Kuhnmuench and Mary Triggiano. These two judges and Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley believe that it is time for another conference aimed at giving women the tools to get to the bench.

The states vary widely in numbers of women trial court judges. The District of Columbia is far ahead of the pack with 46% of its trial judges being women. The state with the next highest percentage of women trial judges is Nevada with 36.1%. Our neighboring states shake out as follows:

Minnesota	29.6%
Illinois	27.3
Michigan	25.7
Iowa	23.5

Wisconsin comes in at just 15.6% – lower than any of our neighbors. In case you are wondering which state has the lowest percentage of women trial judges, it's North Carolina with 7.5%.

This year, Judge Triggiano called AWL past-president Sheila Heitzig and a conference was born. On **Friday, October 12**, AWL and the *Wisconsin Law Journal* will present "Get Your Gavel: Your Blueprint for Breaking the Judicial Glass Ceiling." This will be a day-long conference, held at Marquette University Law School, with speakers from across the state.

It will address getting to the bench by both election and appointment. It will cost only \$25 to attend (including lunch) so that it will be accessible to everyone who is interested. There will be a CLE component to it, as well as networking opportunities.

One of the things that AWL always wants to do is create opportunities for potential mentors and mentees to connect. (See Jennifer Rashel's article on page 5 of this newsletter.) The women judges who will be presenting at our conference will tell us how valuable their mentors were to them on their journey to the bench. Perhaps you will find a mentor at this conference who, at one time, was where you are now.



The conference is open to everyone who wants to attend, including non-members. We are going to publicize the conference statewide so that we can bring as many women as possible to this event to be inspired, educated and encouraged. Registration details are on the cover of this newsletter.

## What's Going On, cont.

### AMUW Lecture on Political Unrest in Syria

The Association of Marquette University Women will host "Political Unrest: Notes from Syria" on **Wednesday, September 26**. Dr. Lisa Wedeen will touch on international law with respect to conflict in Syria, the law in Syria with respect to the government's reactions to the demonstrations, and possibilities for change. The program begins at 6 p.m. with a lecture followed by a reception, in Raynor Memorial Libraries, Beaumier Suite, 1355 W. Wisconsin Ave. For more information, visit the AMUW website.

### Member News

Shay A. Agsten has been promoted to a shareholder in the Banking, Bankruptcy, Business Restructuring & Real Estate Practice Group at von Briesen & Roper, s.c.

### Welcome New Members

- **Kelliann Blazek**
- **Britany Morrison**
- **Madeleine Thompson-Davies**  
Nelson & Davis, LLC

\* \* \*

*If you have an event to publicize or an item for member news, send it to Dana Robb. Deadline for the next issue is August 16.*

## Getting Involved In AWL

### Membership Committee

Looking for a way to get involved in an AWL committee but don't have a lot of time? The Membership Committee is a great way to make a contribution. Giving an hour or two in October or November or March can make such a big difference. Responsibilities include welcoming new members, making reminder calls regarding renewal applications, and inviting potential members.

### Social Media

If you love social media, and would like to help promote AWL by updating our Facebook page, we need you! We'd like to kickstart our Facebook presence, and are looking for interested members who can post events, programs, news and other information to the page.

If you are interested in helping out with either of these needs, contact Dana Robb.

# Judicial Conference

AWL and the *Wisconsin Law Journal* will host a day-long conference aimed at attorneys considering a career as a judge. "Get Your Gavel: Your Blueprint for Breaking the Judicial Glass Ceiling" will give attendees the tools to get to the bench.

The conference will be held on **Friday, October 12** at Marquette University Law School and will feature speakers from across the state addressing getting to the bench by both election and appointment. The cost is \$25 (including continental breakfast and lunch). CLE credit will be applied for.

The full agenda for the conference will be added to the AWL website as soon as all speakers are confirmed (visit [associationforwomenlawyers.org](http://associationforwomenlawyers.org) for the latest information). Participants will come away from the conference with useful information, including: (1) A reality check on the appointive process. How much is merit, how much is who you know, and how do other, unknown, factors affect the process of appointment? (2) A better understanding of what getting elected is all about. How do we sort out perceived election problems -- the myths -- from real campaign challenges? We will expose the myths and demystify the challenges of the campaign trail, from organizing to establishing visibility to fundraising, and (3) A realistic knowledge of what the job of being a judge is all about. We'll look at the day to day management of the job and hear from judges on the bench.

Registration information for the conference can be found on the front cover of this newsletter.

## 2012 Annual Meeting and Wish List Drive

Tuesday, September 11 • noon-1:30 p.m.  
Italian Conference Center  
631 E. Chicago St. (free parking in rear lot)

Join us for our Annual Meeting, where we will swear in officers for the 2012-2013 fiscal year and present AWL's annual awards and the AWL Foundation's scholarships. For details about the Wish List Drive, see page 7.

### Award Recipients

**Community Involvement Award** • Jennifer Van Kirk, Peckerman, Klein & Van Kirk  
**Founders Award** • Karen Case  
**Mentoring Award** • Elizabeth Ruthmansdorfer, Moertl, Wilkins & Campbell  
**Pro Bono Award** • Prof. Michele LaVigne, UW-Madison Law School

### Scholarship Recipients

**Virginia A. Pomeroy Memorial Scholarships**  
Kelliann Blazek (UW-Madison) and Alaina Fahley (Marquette University)  
**AWL Foundation Scholarships**  
Nicki Bohan (UW-Madison) and Codi Carstens (Marquette University)

Please RSVP with payment by Friday, September 7 at 5 p.m. using the form below. The cost of the luncheon is \$30 for AWL members and \$35 for non-members. Registrations after the deadline will be \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members.



### Annual Meeting Registration

Member Name(s) & Firm \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest Name(s) & Firm \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Please note any special dietary needs. Feel free to use additional paper if needed. Please RSVP by Friday, September 7. Pre-registration is necessary. "No Shows" will be billed.*

**Make checks payable & mail to:**  
Association for Women Lawyers  
3322 N. 92nd Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53222

**Or e-mail to [dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com)**  
**Or fax to 414-255-3615**  
If emailing or faxing, please bring a check made payable to AWL to the meeting

# A Mentoring Relationship Begins

By Jennifer Rashel

Anticipating the upcoming hurdles I will face as I finish my last year of law school and enter the legal profession, I knew I could use all the help I could get. So I joined the Association for Women Lawyers, knowing it would provide me with a network of women lawyers who have faced similar challenges and who have valuable experience and advice to share. I specifically wanted to make use of AWL's mentorship program to form a relationship with a lawyer who could provide some guidance as I transition from student to attorney in this upcoming year.

I contacted Kathy Charlton of Hawks Quindel, S.C. and asked if she would be willing to be my mentor and she graciously accepted. Kathy was listed in the AWL Membership Directory

as willing to mentor attorneys or students interested in family or employment law, as well as those interested in small private firm practice. I reached out to Kathy specifically because she is a graduate of Vermont Law School, where I am currently a third-year student. Kathy and I both went to Vermont Law School with the intention to study environmental law. While Kathy found her passion in family and employment law and I am still developing my own career path, I knew she would have great insight on the Milwaukee legal field in general and great overall career advice.

Neither Kathy nor I have previously participated in the AWL mentoring program, so we collectively brainstormed ideas on how to develop the mentorship and what goals we hope to accomplish through participating in the program. I asked Kathy if

she would be willing to do some mock interviews with me since she often interviews candidates for open positions at Hawks Quindel. I wanted the chance to be candid with someone who has been on the hiring side of the table to critique my interviewing skills and to share pitfalls she has seen and should avoid during the real thing. I hope that by doing a mock interview with Kathy I build my confidence and feel better prepared when I interview for positions in the future.

For being a metropolitan city, Milwaukee still has a community feel about it, especially within the legal profession. A benefit of that small-city stature is that lawyers here in Milwaukee interact frequently with each other and can develop strong reputations within the field. Kathy has been practicing in Wisconsin many years and so the network of con-

nections and relationships she has formed with other attorneys in the city is expansive. Because of that network, Kathy suggested I compile a list of attorneys to set up further informational interviews. If she does not know the particular lawyer personally, it is likely someone she knows does. The informational interviews will give me additional direction as I plan my career path and will allow me to start to enter into Milwaukee's close legal community.

The AWL mentoring program is something I hope helps me to launch a successful career after graduation. I am extremely grateful to Kathy for agreeing to spend the time to serve as my mentor and with her help I will be better prepared to begin practicing next year. I encourage all other student members of the AWL to make use of the mentorship program as well.

## Practice Points

### Taking the Case

*This month we introduce a new column. Practice Points provides tips and insights that attorneys in all areas of practice may find helpful. Catherine A. La Fleur will provide some initial thoughts, and then we want your input. If you'd like to comment on what she shares, or add ideas of your own, or if you have a question for a future Practice Points topic, send an email to Dana Robb. Deadline for this topic is September 16th.*

One of the most difficult aspects of legal practice, if you do not serve institutional clients, is whether or not you should take a particular case. There are many factors that bear on whether a lawyer should take

a case, including ethical rules. There is a delicate balance between needing the money that a new matter may provide and an attorney's desire to help a client. Especially for new practitioners, balancing that great desire to help a client against whether you can financially afford to provide the representation is difficult.

First, the Supreme Court Rules require an attorney to be competent to handle the matter, although the rule does provide the ability to learn. So the complexity of the matter and the lawyer's expertise or ability to learn must be one of the factors in deciding to take a case.

Second, does the lawyer have time to take the case? Sometimes clients present a very immediate need for action and that must be balanced against the lawyer's workload and staffing.

Third, can the lawyer afford to take the case? If it is, for example, a personal injury case and will necessitate incurring filing fees, service fees, deposition transcript fees, medical record fees, expert fees, with no provision of income until the conclusion of the case, can the lawyer's office afford to front all of those expenses? If not, the lawyer may be in a position to want to settle the case at less

than appropriate value simply because of the economics of the case.

Finally, does the lawyer like the client? If a client rubs the lawyer the wrong way in the initial interview, no matter how great the case seems, it may be the one that ends up on the furthest corner of the desk. Then, unreturned calls can lead to a claim filed with the Office of Lawyer Regulation. I think most experienced lawyers would agree that difficult clients do not magically become less difficult over time. It may be better to refer that case to a colleague, rather than to commence representation.

## Leaders in Law, Leaders in Service

# Catholic Charities and U-Visa

By Linda Grady

On its website, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee describes the immigration law services that it provides as “broad-based [legal services] to newcomers to the United States who are seeking to become citizens or reunify with family members living here. They also assist individuals trying to secure asylum or temporary protection in the United States.”

Catholic Charities was a recipient of the Milwaukee Bar Association’s 2011 Pro Bono Public Award for its work in the area of immigration law. Catholic Charities will also be the recipient of the items collected in our September Wish List Drive (see page 6 of this newsletter).

AWL member **Elizabeth Murrar** recalls graduating with honors from college, but being unable to find a job. She enrolled at Marquette University Law School with the idea of becoming a labor and employment lawyer. It soon enough became clear, however, that immigration law was a natural fit for her.

Elizabeth’s husband is Palestinian. She handled his applications for permanent residence and, later, United States citizenship, as well as other immigration issues for members of his family. The idea of assisting immigrants to achieve something positive and life changing intrigued her, and she knew the low-income immigrant community was a vastly underserved population that could benefit greatly from her skills.

After starting at Marquette, then-3L Anne Jaspers and Professor Thomas Hammer recommended that Elizabeth take an immigration internship with Catholic Charities through the school’s pro bono program. Elizabeth began doing U-Visa cases through Catholic Charities during the summer of 2008.

The purpose of U-Visa is to encourage undocumented persons to report crimes and cooperate in their investigation and prosecution, which ultimately helps to bring their attackers to justice. A partial listing of the types of crimes U-Visa is meant to address, according to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center website, includes rape, torture, trafficking, slavery, and incest which occur in the United States, although many other similar crimes are also considered. If the petition is granted, the immigrant is given temporary legal status and work eligibility for up to four years, and may be eligible to become a permanent resident.

Among the problems that Elizabeth encounters practicing this area of law are seemingly well-meaning members of the public who have made comments to her that her clients are “illegals,” or that they are “leeching” off the system. Elizabeth sees her clients quite differently – as hardworking, family-oriented, law-abiding, tax-paying people who lived in utter poverty, and came to this country to give their children better opportunities.

In one U-Visa case, Elizabeth recalled representing a woman who had been repeatedly raped and physically abused by her husband. She had lost her job a few months prior because she was undocumented, and was about to lose her house to foreclosure. Elizabeth explained that abusers often use the specter of undocumented status to prevent the victim from complaining about their behavior, particularly where the immigrant’s legal status is directly tied to their relationship with the abuser.

The case was resolved successfully in favor of Elizabeth’s client, and the husband-attacker was imprisoned, not only for domestic violence against her, but also for sexually assaulting a minor – the teenage daughter of a friend. The client had no

idea that a husband is prohibited from physically or sexually abusing his wife. Therefore, a secondary layer of justice was achieved – the obvious victory of retaining legal status as an immigrant, but also the victory of being humanely validated as a woman who is entitled to be free from attack by any man.

Elizabeth credits attorney Barbara Graham at Catholic Charities with her continued involvement in immigration law cases. A sole practitioner, Elizabeth tries to maintain one to two active pro bono immigration cases at a time, along with her paid cases.

For more information about pro bono opportunities with Catholic Charities, contact [bgraham@ccmke.org](mailto:bgraham@ccmke.org), 414-643-8570, or [skurek@ccmke.org](mailto:skurek@ccmke.org).

## Scholarship Thanks

*We recently received the following notes from two of the recipients of the annual scholarships, awarded by the AWL Foundation.*

“I just wanted to express my thanks for naming me a recipient of the AWL Foundation Scholarship. The financial help toward my law school education is greatly appreciated. AWL provided a number of excellent networking, social and community events last year, and I look forward to continuing my membership and participating in those events again this year.”

*Codi Carstens*

“Thank you again for the exiting news regarding the Virginia A. Pomeroy Scholarship. I am honored and thrilled to be the recipient from UW-Madison, and I am looking forward to meeting your members in September. Thank you!”

*Kelliann Blazek*

Tax deductible donations to help fund future scholarships can be made payable to AWL Foundation and mailed c/o Diane Diel, 126 N. Jefferson St., Suite 402, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

# Annual Meeting to Include Wish List Drive

Every year, the AWL Community Outreach Committee organizes a "Wish List" drive benefiting a local charity and coinciding with the AWL Annual Meeting in September. This year's recipient is the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Catholic Charities Outreach Program.

The Catholic Charities Outreach Program is a branch of the non-profit Catholic Charities that provides various types of assistance to low-income individuals and families in need. It services clients throughout Milwaukee and surrounding communities regardless of faith, race or gender. Catholic Charities is supported by individual donations, the United Way, and the Archdiocesan Fund. It receives approximately

900 calls a years, impacting about 2,700 individuals; and the need is growing exponentially.

The Catholic Charities Outreach Program addresses many needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, personal care items, and medicine; but it also provides assistance with applying for public benefits, referral to Catholic Charities internal services (e.g., mental health services, immigration legal issues), and referral to external sources such as a county's Human Services and Economic Support Divisions.

The program is unique for several reasons. For example, every individual has access to the program. Unlike many other programs, receiving assistance

is not contingent on eligibility requirements such as income or a medical or mental health diagnosis. Not only does the Catholic Charities Outreach Program help with its clients' immediate needs, it also helps assess the cause of those needs, develop a plan for addressing the cause, and counsel clients as they overcome their challenges.

## Immediate Needs

Catholic Charities Outreach Program needs our help. The program is currently in need of diapers and wipes, personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, and monetary donations, which may be made payable to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Please consider donating and/or conducting a drive within your firm or agency to benefit the many families Catholic Charities Outreach Program helps each year. Feel free to bring your donations to the AWL annual meeting. If you are unable to attend the annual meeting, drop off locations include:

- In western suburbs at Schott, Bublitz, & Engel, 16655 W. Bluemound Rd., Suite 270, Brookfield
- Downtown at Grace, Masson & Associates, 735 N. Water St., Suite 1100, Milwaukee;
- Or contact Meghan MacKelly at (414) 276-4608 x3124 or [meghanm@kohnlaw.com](mailto:meghanm@kohnlaw.com) to arrange a convenient location and time.

## Inside AWL

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## How to Reach Us

Our administrator, Dana Kader Robb, can be reached at 414-750-4404 or [dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com). Her fax number is 414-255-3615. Please send changes in your contact information directly to her.

If you've changed jobs, won an award, are hosting an event, have committee news or a topic of interest to AWL members, this is your forum. Please submit information to Dana using the above contact details. We reserve the right to edit for length and content. Deadline is the 16th of each month prior to the issue. Newsletters will be in members' hands within the first week of the month.

Visit our Web site at [www.associationforwomenlawyers.org](http://www.associationforwomenlawyers.org).