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Letter from the President

by Heather Palmer

The Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys (hereinafter "I.O.W.A") held its Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 23, 2005. I.O.W.A presented the Fourth Annual Arabella Mansfield Award to Deborah M. Tharnish, and the Third Annual Gertrude Rush Award to Igna Bumbary-Langston. Romonda Belcher Ford, Emily Chafa, Ruth Cooperrider, Deborah Svec-Carstens and LuAnn White presented *Liberty & Justice for All*, which included dramatic portrayals of Arabella Mansfield and Gertrude Rush and music from members of the Des Moines Choral Society.

IOWA has a new Board of Directors for 2005-2006 (*see the list at left*).

This should be an exciting year for I.O.W.A. We are planning on holding several activities, including CLE opportunities throughout Iowa. The first I.O.W.A activity scheduled this year is the Women Build Day arranged by Jackie Armstrong. The Women Build Day will be held on July 23, 2005. Women attorneys will assist in building a Habitat for Humanity home in the Des Moines area. For more information, contact Jackie at jarmstrong@iowabar.org.



In the Spotlight



Romonda Belcher Ford is an Assistant Polk County Attorney originally from North Carolina. She obtained her Juris Doctorate degree from Drake University in May 1995. In her spare time, Romonda enjoys dramatic acting, reading and writing poetry, and tutoring and mentoring youth. She portrayed Harriet Tubman in a one-woman show at the Salisbury House. She performs regularly with the Langston Hughes Players. She's performed in the Deborah Marshall Productions of *Stand and Never Walk Alone*. Romonda performed renditions of Gertrude Rush and Sojourner Truth with the Des Moines Choral Society in February. Recently, she established Ryane Ensemble, a one woman dramatic acting show. She is a member of the National Association of Black Prosecutors and the American Bar Association. She serves on the membership committee of the Polk County Bar Association and as a mediator for the Volunteer Lawyers Project. Romonda is married to Rep. Wayne Ford and has one stepson.

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Emily's Boutique

What is small, beautiful, distinctive and a money maker for I.O.W.A.?

by Jackie Armstrong

Emily Chafa embodies grace as she deftly glides from I.O.W.A. leadership roles to entertainment roles to her capitalist role as the maven of feminist jewelry. The "women's" pin" sales have been Emily's brainstorm and inspiration for years and the sales provide a steady income stream for I.O.W.A.

I recently volunteered for Emily's boutique during the ISBA annual meeting. Women approached the array of colorful pins with curiosity and admiration, and then heard Emily's segue from a description of the pins' origins to an enthusiastic invitation to join I.O.W.A. and a cheerful recitation of our project this summer with the



Women Build program for Habitat for Humanity. I do not imagine that there are many I.O.W.A. members that do not know Emily, but if you have not met her, seek her out the next time you have an opportunity to be in Des Moines. You will be richer for the introduction. We are all in her debt for her perseverance with the pin sales project on our behalf.



As always, Emily's Boutique is open! Contact Emily at ebchafa@dmgov.org or 515-283-4530 if you are interested in buying pins, I.O.W.A T-shirts, sweatshirts and mugs. All proceeds benefit I.O.W.A and related projects. We appreciate your support of these fundraising endeavors.

Miscellaneous

Newsletter Submissions

Do you have an idea for the I.O.W.A. newsletter? Do you have a job to advertise, news about an I.O.W.A. member, or an upcoming event to announce? Contact Liz Croco at ecroco@simmonsperine.com.

WellFem-In-Law



Looking for suggestions on well-being? Recipes for tonight's dinner? Visit our website at www.iowawomenattorneys.org to read Bev Clark's WellFem-in-Law monthly columns.

Women Build

The Zen of Construction

by Jackie Armstrong

On **Saturday, July 23, 2005**, I.O.W.A. is going to work with other women to build a house for a single mother with three children who is working two jobs but still needs our help to build a home for her and her children. I did a pilot test of this construction endeavor in early June. (Anyone can help with this house, the work days are Thursdays and Saturdays.) The supervisor was a woman, and a terrific teacher. She patiently showed me how to use a cat's paw to pull out nails and reposition a wall that was slightly out of line. The camaraderie on the construction site erased my concerns about lacking useful skills, as volunteers and Habitat for Humanity staff pitched in to teach and support those of us who were novices. I loved almost everything about the work that day. I liked the great diversity amongst the volunteers—college women, a school board member, an engineer, an accountant and a homemaker hammered side by side, with ages ranging from the 20's to the 60's. I didn't have to go to the gym that day—construction workers deserve our respect for the hard labor that they put into their profession and my muscles got a workout far beyond that offered by my elliptical machine at the Y. Despite the two-hour drive home, I enjoyed a feeling of satisfaction from a day spent well.



When I.O.W.A. gathers on July 23rd for our official work day, I anticipate the rewards will be multiplied: all of the good feelings about the importance of the project, the fun of meeting new people and the excellent workout will be there for us, along with the gratification of extending and cementing our I.O.W.A. contacts. We are now ten volunteers strong—if you would like to join us on the 23rd, please let me know at jarmstrong@iowabar.org. If you have already planned to be part of the team, consider wearing an I.O.W.A. T-shirt on the 23rd, to dramatize our organization's commitment to the community. (If you do not own one, contact ebchafa@dmgov.org.)

Join the Iowa State Bar Association at the 2005 Iowa State Fair

by Alison Werner Smith

This is a casting call for volunteers from across the state to staff the new and improved ISBA booth at the 2005 Iowa State Fair! Join us from August 11th through the 21st at the ISBA booth in the Varied Industries Building, where this year's booth will feature informational materials for the public, video presentations and a drawing for a big screen TV! Our booth was such a great success last year, we have doubled in size to bring more information and more resources to the public in a comfortable and air-conditioned setting!



would like to see you again, and some new faces as well. Help put a face to your Iowa State Bar Association by bringing your smile to our table.

Volunteers will receive complimentary tickets to the Iowa State Fair and a snazzy ISBA polo shirt.

We hope to have another great turnout this year among the bar staff for food, fun and good times at the State Fair! Bring your friends and family to "America's Favorite Fair... Right in Your Own Backyard". The booth is a joint project of the Civics Committee and the Public

Relations Committee of the ISBA.

We need attorney volunteers to staff the booth from 9-9 each day of the fair. Over 100 attorneys volunteered their services last year--- we

Please contact our coordinator, Brett Toresdahl at isbavlp@dwx.com or call 800-325-2909 for more information.

Member Information

Ruth Cooperrider, I.O.W.A.'s Professional Action chairperson, was elected President of the United States Ombudsman Association on May 10, 2005. Ruth is the Deputy Ombudsman and Legal Counsel for the State of Iowa's Office of Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman, which investigates complaints about administrative actions of state and local governments within Iowa.

The United States Ombudsman Association is mostly comprised of ombudsman at various levels of the government in the United States, but it also has members from Canada and other parts of the world. Prior to her election as President, Ruth served for two years each as Vice-president and chairperson of the Outreach

and Development Committee. She also chaired the committee that drafted the association's Model Ombudsman Act in 1997 and participated on the American Bar Association's Ombudsman Steering Committee that developed the ABA's 2001 Ombudsman Standards.

Ruth is a Past-President of the I.O.W.A. She is also active in other bar associations, serving currently as Secretary of the Polk County Bar Association and on the Iowa State Bar Association's Administrative Law Section Council.

Congratulations, Ruth!



The **National Conference of Women's Bar Associations**,
 and its sponsor **Foley & Lardner LLP**,
 proudly present an exciting all-day program for women
 bar leaders nationwide:

Women's Bar Leadership Summit 2005:
**“MAKING YOUR WOMEN’S BAR ASSOCIATION
 RELEVANT TO YOUR MEMBERS”**

Friday, August 5, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

and

Joint NCWBA/NAWL Annual Award Luncheon
12:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.

InterContinental Chicago Hotel
 505 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Bring your inspiration, advice, and active participation to this unique opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other women's bar leaders from across the country, and to hear how women's bar associations can build the future for women lawyers today.

Topics Include:

*Mentoring Programs that Work; Developing Women Bar Leaders;
 What Your Women's Bar Associations Can Do to Get More Women on the Bench; How to Increase Membership; Helping Your Members Find Work/Life Balance; The ABA Commission on Women's "Best Practices" For Women in Law Firms; The ABA Oral History Project and How Women's Bar Associations Can Help*

The Summit will break at mid-day for a NCWBA/NAWL Annual Award Luncheon, honoring Judge Ann Claire Williams, United States Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, and the NCWBA's Public Service Award winner.

*Following the Summit presentations, you are invited to a reception from 5:00 to 6:00 pm
 Sponsored by the law firm of Meckler Bulger & Tilson LLP*

Co-Sponsor:

The National Association of Women Lawyers

Register for both today for special savings!

 Name (as you would like it to appear on your name tag)

 Firm Affiliation

 Address

 E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

 Association Affiliation & Your Title

 Association's Annual Budget

 Number of Members

Prices: Summit Plus Luncheon: \$150

Summit Only: \$95 Luncheon Only: \$75

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

For (circle one):

Summit Plus Lunch Summit Only Luncheon Only

Will you be attending the ABA Annual Meeting?

Yes

No

P.O. Box 4736
Des Moines, IA 50306

