



Newsletter

Winter

2011-2012

Celebrating Trailblazers & Veterans



Judge Rosemary Sackett



Kristina Stanger



Dean Gail Agrawal

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On October 14, 2011, the Judicial Branch held a ceremony in honor of Judge Rosemary Shaw Sackett. Judge Sackett will retire as the Chief Judge on the Iowa Court of Appeals on January 17, 2012. She is the longest serving female judge on Iowa's appellate bench, with twenty-nine years of service. The ceremony began with the showing of a video of a press conference held by Governor Branstad with Judge Sackett when he appointed her in 1983 and a photo montage of the Court of Appeals through the years. Two of Judge Sackett's five children, Barry and Mary, both attorneys, were the masters of ceremony and commented on how their mother had some interesting hair-dos over the years! Following this introduction, comments were provided by Governor Terry Branstad, Justice Edward Mansfield, Judge Richard Doyle, and Bradley Howe.

"No Shrinking Violet, Rosemary Blazed a Path for Women Attorneys and Judges in Iowa." - Judge Richard Doyle

Governor Branstad noted that at the time of her appointment, he knew it was a remarkable day for women attorneys. But, at the time he would have never guessed that he would be honored to be in the position of Governor again at her retirement and to be able to honor her at the event. He expressed his thanks to Judge Sackett for her dedicated service to the bench, through her decisions, her administrative leadership, and as a role model for women.

Justice Mansfield's speech described the judge as a complex person who embodies themes that at first glance, one might view as inconsistent, but upon deeper consideration show a "worldly, pragmatic, and principled outlook of the law." For example, he noted Judge Sackett is a Republican, yet rides her bike to work each day and drives a Prius. She has small town values but is committed to making sure the court adapts to rapid changes in technology and

administration. She puts family first but works harder than the other judges by handling an equal case load on top of her administrative duties as Chief Judge. He described her as leading court conferences with high collegiality, yet maintains the highest rate of dissenting opinions on the court. He noted Judge Sackett is modest and without ego, yet takes great pride in the successful attorneys and judges she has mentored.

Judge Doyle's speech centered on how

Judge Sackett has been a leader in the legal profession for women, comparing her achievements to those of Arabella Mansfield, a fellow Iowan and the first woman admitted to the bar in the United States. Judge Sackett was the only woman in her law school class and the only woman admitted to the bar in 1963. She helped form the Iowa Association of Women Judges and made the front page of the Des Moines Register in 1986 when she courageously spoke out about the

A Groundbreaking Career: Judge Sackett (cont'd from page 1)

need for diversity on the bench. She became chief of the court in 1996 and the Register recognized her trailblazing efforts in an article in 1999. In 2000 Judge Sackett became the first woman president of the ABA's Council of Chief Judges of State Courts of Appeal. In 2010, with the appointment of Judge Mary Tabor, the Iowa Court of Appeals became one of the first appellate benches to have a majority of woman judges.

Judge Doyle also discussed Judge Sackett's passion for bicycling and how it is emblematic of her leadership of women. He explained how the bicycle became a symbol for women's suffrage. He noted that British novelist, John Galsworthy wrote that under the influence of bicycles, "have blossomed weekends, strong nerves, strong legs, strong language, . . . equality of sex, good digestion and professional occupation—in four words, the emancipation of women." He added that Susan B. Anthony once said in commenting on the bicycle that, "[I]t has done more to emancipate women

than anything else in the world. . . . It gives a woman a feeling of freedom and self-reliance . . . the moment she takes her seat . . . away she goes, the picture of free untrammelled womanhood."

Bradley Howe, an attorney at Berg & Howe, in Spencer, Iowa, shared his thoughts about Judge Sackett as an attorney before she became appointed. Judge Sackett worked at her father's firm in Pocahontas and with her husband's firm in Spencer for over 20 years before her appointment. Howe described his experience of interviewing with Judge Sackett when he sought a job at her and her husband's firm. He noted that Judge Sackett was at her desk working, with one of her infant children there with her, lying on a baby blanket on the floor. He described how Judge Sackett had a reputation as a tough litigator and it was well known that, "She wouldn't be afraid to go to trial if she was 10 months pregnant!"

Judge Sackett offered humble closing remarks at the ceremony. She

thanked Governor Branstad for her appointment and for his appointment of many qualified judges over the years. She thanked her family and the staff she has had. The judge expressed her pride at being able to be a part of such an important profession and a member of the court. In closing, she stated she is excited to be able to spend more time with her grandchildren.

I.O.W.A. wishes to extend its deep admiration and thanks to Judge Sackett for her efforts in helping make more opportunities available to women attorneys.

"Judge Sackett has a hands-off personality and would never try to impose her values on anyone else, but don't ever try to move her off her values." — Justice Mansfield.

Honoring Our Veterans: An Interview With Kristina Stanger

November 11 was Veterans Day and to honor this occasion, we wanted to get the perspective of one of our members who is a Veteran, Kristina Stanger.

Tell us about your background. I grew up in the country outside of DeWitt, Iowa. My father was a welder and my mother worked various jobs before becoming a nurse. I wanted to be a lawyer since second grade to serve others and knew it would take hard work and schooling to make it happen.

What made you want to go into the military? I was attending Central College in Pella, and wanted to find a way to help pay for college and gain leadership skills. I learned that the Army National Guard unit in Newton had a paralegal opening. So I joined the National Guard. I went through Basic Training after my freshman

year and spent my guard duty (one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer) working as a paralegal with the Newton unit while going to college. I grew to have a lot of pride in our freedoms and service for something greater. I wanted to contribute to the leadership in the military and eventually the community, so I went into Officer Candidate School. For the next 18 months, on top of going to school, I spent my guard duty time in officer training at Camp Dodge. I graduated from Central in May of 2000 and then had to pick my Commissioned Officer branch. I chose the Medical Service Corps because of the tactics focus and humanitarian service aspect. After college and earning my Commission, I worked as a legal assistant at Lane & Waterman before starting law school at Drake in 2001. A year and a half later, I

received the call to deploy in 2003. I was in Business Associations' class and had 48 hours to report for duty.

What did you do in Iraq? I was a 1st Lieutenant Medical Services Corps Officer, coordinating medical care for Soldiers under General Patraeus's 101st Airborne Division's area. Our Company had 110 Soldiers whose focus was on treatment, triage and evacuation from the point of injury on the battlefield to the hospital. Picture, everything before what you saw on the MASH TV show. We treated thousands of Soldiers but also had the opportunity to help treat Iraqi citizens' injuries, inoculations and to help rebuild the Iraq Department of Public Health. Iowans should be very proud of our Soldiers. Their values and expertise are unmatched.

Honoring Our Veterans (cont'd from page 2)

Has your employer given you flexibility to meet your commitments to the military? I am an attorney at Nyemaster Goode law firm in Des Moines. In addition to my Guard time, my husband has also been deployed twice and we have two girls, ages 4 and 19 months. I receive tremendous support from my employer to meet my family and military commitments. I track the hours I spend on military business as nonbillable time and I am not penalized due to my service to the Country. But, I have had to make choices and prioritize. I tried to keep up the pace of those around me and failed. I realized that it takes a whole community to help endure deployments: neighbors, family, and employers. I had to redefine "success" and focus on our family. That means I accept that I might not make partner as soon as I expected and both my husband and I had to exchange individual career goals for our Country's freedom and our family's wellbeing. Declin-

ing another deployment when I had a newborn meant I had to give up my "fast track" in the Army and give up a prior Command. I now returned to Command the Iowa Officer Candidate School. My advice to others would be to love this Country and our freedoms and define success as being the best YOU. Have the integrity to be honest with yourself and choose the hard right for your family.

What do you believe are the biggest issues facing military families? Reintegration. Upon their return, Veterans and their families, employers, and communities have to find a new "normal." Reservists have difficulty securing employment, education, and health insurance upon their return. Right now the average age of a Veteran is 25 and the unemployment rate for them is 30%. We need to show Veterans our thanks for their sacrifices by helping them reintegrate any way we can. Remember there are also some that will not return from these mis-

sions. Please always keep their families in your hearts and prayers.

What can we do to show our support? Get involved in wounded warrior projects, honor flights, camps for military kids, the ABA projects, or Remember Iowa's Fallen.

Websites with more information:

http://www.militaryavenue.com/Content.aspx?Name=ways_to_thank_veteran

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/committees/veterans_benefits.html

http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/unategorized/final_updated_veterans_directory.authcheckdam.pdf

I.O.W.A. sends its gratitude to all Veterans including our other member Veterans and foremothers of the law: Gertrude Rush, Dovey Johnson Roundtree, LeAnne Krell, Marti Nerenstone, and Nicolle Schippers.

Proof that Women Can Be Rainmakers

On November 10, I.O.W.A. co-sponsored a networking event with Polk County Women Attorneys, the Iowa State Bar Association's Women & Minorities Committee, and Drake Law Women. It was held at Proof restaurant in Des Moines. The event began with a panel discussion on how women can be successful litigators and bring in business to be "rainmakers." Participants included, Lu Ann White from Hanson, Bjork & Russell, Brooke Timmer from Fiedler & Timmer, Angela Campbell from Dickey & Campbell, Sharon Malheiro and Deb Tharnish from Davis Brown law firm, and Lorraine May from Hopkins & Huebner.

Lu Ann initiated the discussion by pointing out that when she entered the practice, the idea of marketing was a foreign concept. She believed that as long as she worked at a firm, the firm would provide clients. She stated that she learned quickly that you need to develop marketing skills to be successful in private practice. The other panel members echoed this experience. Through the discussion, panelists pointed out various marketing strategies and techniques for success:

Be professional to everyone. "The best value of a human is how you treat someone who can do you no good."

Avoid talking bad about your clients because you never know who your next client might be.

Research a constituent group you would like to help, offer to do seminars for these groups, and offer discounts to them. For example, Lorraine reached out to women entrepreneurs in the Small Business Association. Sharon has gained clients by becoming involved in, and offering legal support to Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender community groups.

Consider applying for committees and commissions. Lorraine was a member of the Racing & Gaming Commission. Although she had to refrain from taking these types of clients for a while after leaving the commission to avoid conflicts, she made contacts that helped build a

long-term lucrative client base.

Get involved in legal associations where there is a need for women members. For example, the Iowa Defense Council Association, Iowa Association for Justice, and ISBA Committees.

Speak at CLEs or teach a class. For example, Angela has gained clients by teaching courses at Grandview and Drake.

Join trade groups for your area of law. E.g., National Association of Women in Construction.

Don't let anyone set limitations for you.

Understand your best qualities and embrace them. On the flip side, don't try to be what you are not.

Get involved in what you like and the clients will follow.

Do good work, have confidence, and always treat the opposing party with respect.

Lift each other up. Women should make a conscious effort to refer cases to other qualified women attorneys.

Fabulous Female Fall Function at Dean Agrawal's

On October 1, 2011, I.O.W.A. sponsored our first Fabulous Female Fall Function. University of Iowa College of Law Dean, Gail Agrawal, graciously hosted us at her home near the Coralville Reservoir. Guests enjoyed delicious appetizers catered from the Cottage, as well as our signature cocktail for the event: Appletinis.

Membership chair, Beth Myers and Secretary, Jessica Doro



The event was designed for I.O.W.A. to connect with Iowa law students, provide networking and camaraderie among sixth district members, and encourage others to join our organization. Approximately 60 members and potential members attended. Board members in attendance included current president, Ann Smisek, past president and sixth district representative, Jenn Smith, past president, Alison Werner Smith, treasurer, Josey Bathke, secretary, Jessica Doro, membership chair, Beth Myers, and public relations chair, Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger.

We were excited to see so many law students come to support I.O.W.A. and we enjoyed sharing stories of our individual law school experiences: the good, the bad, and the ugly! We were fortunate to have numerous professors and area judges in attendance.

We expressed our hope to Dean Agrawal that I.O.W.A. can become more engaged with Iowa law students and assist in arranging job shadowing opportunities for students or connecting students and recent graduates with alumni in our organization.

We hope to make this an annual affair for our organization and extend our many thanks to Dean Agrawal for inviting us to her beautiful home.



Past President & Sixth District Representative, Jenn Smith, and Dean Agrawal

Join I.O.W.A. Today!

2011-2012 I.O.W.A. Leadership

President: Ann Smisek

Vice President: Dawn Boucher

Treasurer: Josey Bathke

Secretary: Jessica Doro

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Committee Chairs: Gail Sheridan-Lucht, Miki McGovern, Alissa Smith, Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, Beth Myers

Judicial District Representatives: Allie Wilske (1st), Amanda Van Wyhe (3rd), Elisabeth Reynoldson (5th), Jenn Smith (6th), Kate Evans (7th)

Advisory Members: Emily Chafa, Mary Walsh, Roxann Ryan, Allison Werner Smith

Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys (I.O.W.A.) provides an excellent opportunity to network with other lawyers throughout the state and have an impact on issues affecting women and the legal profession. Members stay informed and stay connected through a list serve, an email distribution list for announcements, a membership directory, board meetings and other I.O.W.A. meetings, CLEs, and website. More information at: www.iowawomenattorneys.org



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