



Newsletter

Fall 2012 / Winter 2013

Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys



Prof. Onwuachi-Willig



Judge Stephanie Rose



Attorney Kim Baer

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On November 13, 2012, Judge Stephanie Rose was invested as the first female federal district court judge in the Southern District of Iowa. Over two courtrooms were packed with family, friends, colleagues and well-wishers for this historic moment.

At 10:00 a.m. Molly McConville Weber, career law clerk to Judge Rose, opened court and welcoming remarks were made by Chief Judge James E. Gritzner. Speakers included Attorney General of the United States Eric H. Holder, Jr., United States Senator Tom Harkin, Robert R. Renaud who spoke on

The Investiture of Stephanie Rose

By Dawn Boucher

behalf of United States Senator Charles Grassley, ABA Eighth Circuit representative David L. Brown, and a friend of the Rose family, Tykee V. Jackson.

In their remarks each speaker focused on Judge Rose's keen intelligence, sound values and hard work ethic. They joked about Judge Rose's taste for making charts and the fact that she spent several hours planning the seating charts for those in the room to the "T". Family friend Tykee Jackson reminisced about the days she and "Stephie" spent in law school and how even before she was Judge

Rose, she was a remarkable friend.

As Judge Rose stood to take her oath of office, her daughter Missy stood by her side. Following her oath, her husband Robert and son Kyle helped her put on her judge's robe before she made her own remarks. Judge Rose spoke about how much this moment was like a dream to her – a dream that she did not believe could or would ever happen. She thanked those people who had helped her achieve her professional and personal goals along the way.

Judge Rose is the first female federal district court judge to sit on the bench in Iowa's Southern District. She replaces retired Chief Judge Robert Pratt, who has taken senior status. Other judges on the federal bench in Iowa include Judge Linda Reade, who serves as the Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, and U.S. Magistrate Judge Celeste Bremer, who serves in the Southern District of Iowa. Judge Reade was appointed to the bench in 2002 and Judge Bremer was appointed to the bench in 1985.

Rainmaking: Transitioning Into Your Path To Success

By Ann Smisek

On November 8, 2012, the 2nd Annual Rainmaking Event was held at Proof Restaurant in Des Moines. I.O.W.A. co-sponsored the event with Polk County Women Attorneys.

Members were first able to mingle while partaking in Proof's fine selection of beer, wine and appetizers. Following this opportunity for networking, participants listened to strategies for success by a panel of experienced women practitioners. I.O.W.A. president, Dawn Boucher moderated the panel.

The panel members discussed their road to success, focusing on turning points in their careers. Kim Baer transitioned from a large firm to a solo practice. Helen Adams moved from a large firm to a corporate counsel position at DuPont Pioneer. Judge Mary Pat Gunderson's career began at a county attorney's

office. She also worked as Secretary of the Iowa Senate and as a part-time magistrate, before being appointed as a district court judge. Kelley Rice has largely spent her career in public service, first at legal aid and a family violence shelter before she settled into her current position at Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation.

There was one repeating theme in each panel member's journey: the importance of having support in your personal life. Each panel member described how having a partner or spouse that encouraged them profession-

Stability in your personal life will make difficult professional transitions easier and will help you position yourself for positive professional transitions.

ally made them able to excel in their careers, either by offering encouragement and guidance in career decisions or by helping manage the household so the women could focus on work when needed.

The panelists also emphasized time-management skills, such as setting aside a block of time for returning phone calls or being sure to dedicate some time to networking events within your practice area to position yourself for transition opportunities. They also stressed to identify your weaknesses and then find someone who performs those skills well that you can learn from.

Overall, the panel members encouraged women attorneys to realize that periods of change are opportunities for growth.

Tips for Career Transitions

- Before making a final career decision, live with that decision in your head for a period to determine whether it is what you really want. When you finally make the decision and announce it, never second-guess yourself. Helen Adams
- Create a clear picture of what you want your life to look like, then take steps to create that life. Judge Mary Pat Gunderson
- Watch people who are good at what they do and mimic them. Some practice pointers Kim Baer has picked up on over the years include:
 - Bill for matters, not per correspondence.
 - Let people know how best to reach

you—email vs. phone message.

- Treat clients like customers. They appreciate you taking the time to call them when they are available (nights and weekends).

- Empower clients to make decisions.

- Be self-disciplined. This includes letting things fester in their own block of time. In other words—do not allow yourself to think about work when you are at home. Kelley Rice.
- Put in the hours and build your reputation when you can. Then employers may be more flexible and allow you to slow down when you need it for family matters. Judge Mary Pat Gunderson.

• Remember you are a package: have both a good attitude and a good work product. Judge Mary Pat Gunderson.

• Having a strong support system in your personal life is critical. It empowers you to seize professional opportunities when you have a partner to help carry the workload at home. Kelley Rice.

• Understand that demands sometimes have to determine your priorities. At times you may have to make work your priority. At other times, you may need to make your family your top priority. Kim Baer.

• You never know when an opportunity will present itself so be the best you can be wherever you are at the moment and be willing to take some risks. Helen Adams

Girls Gone WILD (Women In Law Day)

By Miki McGovern

IOWA and PCWA assisted Drake Law Women in sponsoring Women in Law Day, (WILD), at Drake Law School on Saturday, November 10, 2012. Both college and high school women were invited to the conference. There were students and parents from around the state, as well as students from Minnesota and South Dakota.

Three members of IOWA were allowed to give a short presentation about IOWA and the importance of networking. President Dawn R. Boucher spoke first about the role IOWA plays in the Iowa legal community. Then former presidents, Emily Gould

Chafa and Miki McGovern spoke briefly about the benefits of joining IOWA. Application forms were provided to Drake Law Women and to the college students, as well.

Dean Alan Vestal welcomed the students to Drake. The keynote address was made by our own IOWA member, the Honorable Judge Annette J. Scieszinski of Albia, Iowa.

The members of Drake Law Women were grateful for the contributions IOWA made to the event. A thank you note was presented to the IOWA members at the event:

To Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys:

Thank you for the generous donation to help fund women in the Law Day. This is the first year Drake Law Women has held this event since 2009 and it would not have been possible without the support of your organization. This is a wonderful event and has attracted students from across Iowa and other states around the Midwest. Thank you again for making the event possible!

Best wishes,

Ashley Milligan

VP, Drake Law Women

Chair, Women in the Law Day

So You Want To Be A Judge Program

By Ann Smisek

On October 19, 2012, IOWA and the Infinity Project sponsored a "So You Want To Be A Judge Program" at the University of Iowa College of Law.

Prof. Onwuachi-Willig moderated the program, posing questions to the panel about the judicial selection process, how we can encourage more women and minorities to pursue careers in the judiciary, and how law students can best position themselves for judicial opportunities. The panelists included Brenna Findley, chief legal counsel to Governor Branstad, Martin Diaz, a state judicial nominating committee member, Celeste Bremer, federal magistrate judge, Marsha Beckelman, 6th judicial district judge, Karen Romano,

5th judicial district judge, and Amanda Potterfield, Iowa court of appeals judge.



The judges offered candid advice about life as a judge, including the difficulty of maintaining court efficiency when there is a lack of funds for support staff and clerks.

Judge Romano expressed concern that it seems that there are far fewer applicants for judicial vacancies now than in the past and Judge Bremer presented data on the gender and professional background of applicants to the Supreme Court in 2011. Martin Diaz expressed his per-

spective on reviewing applicants as a commissioner. Brenna Findley explained how final applicants are evaluated by the Governor's office. She also offered sage advice from her own experience, explaining to the students how it is possible to meet your student loan obligations and commit to a career in public service.

Following the program, the University hosted a reception where the panelists and students were able to mingle, share law school experiences, and discuss career options. We



extend our thanks to all who participated.

What, Why and How of Mock Trial

By Anna Mundy, Co-Chair YLD Mock Trial Committee & I.O.W.A. member

It is that time of year when we begin to see the email requests for mock trial judges. While it is easy to dismiss those emails in light of busy law practices, other community involvement, and family demands, we must remember that Iowa's mock trial programs rely upon the continued support of the members of the Bar. In addition, mock trial provides a wonderful opportunity for us female attorneys to set an example for students who may wish to follow in our career path. See below for the details on the mock trial program and the need for I.O.W.A. members, wherever you live or practice in the state, to volunteer as judges.

What: The Iowa State Bar Association Center for Law and Civic Education with the assistance of the Iowa State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Mock Trial Committee sponsors Iowa's middle school and high school mock trial competitions. Approximately 175 middle school teams and 125 high school teams participate yearly in the program. This amounts to nearly 3,000 Iowa students taking advantage of this program.

Mock trial is a trial presentation put on by two teams of students. Each team prepares opening statements, direct examinations, cross examinations, and closing arguments. The students perform the lawyer and witness roles. Each team also presents both sides of the case on behalf of the plaintiff/prosecution or defendant. Civil and criminal cases are used in alternating years.

Why: Iowa's mock trial program has obvious educational benefits for students—it provides a valuable civics lesson to students through an introduction to our justice system, and it teaches students teamwork, critical thinking, and public speaking skills. But each year after the conclusion of the mock trial competitions, I am reminded that mock trial also gives us as lawyers the unique opportunity to encounter hundreds of young Iowans, and their families, in a positive and influential manner. Both Emily Anderson and I as co-chairs of the Mock Trial Committee understand the impact of mock trial on students because both of us participated in mock trial programs as children. Mock trial led us to law school and eventually the practice of law. And we are not alone in that path as Iowa celebrates 31 years of mock trial programs, there are numerous other examples of

former mock trial students who have gone on to become practicing lawyers in our state.

I am consistently impressed with the knowledge, skill, and preparation that mock trial students bring to their performance. Each student's excitement and passion for mock trial is evident, whether performing the role of an attorney or a witness. Following the competition, I am repeatedly approached by judges who convey they were glad to take the time out to volunteer as a judge because there is something refreshing and enjoyable about the judging experience. Where else can you see a 14 year-old discuss the intricacies of the hearsay rule?

There is a real need for lawyers to serve as volunteer judges on a semiannual basis. The middle school students compete in the fall; while the high school competition begins in the spring. With over 400 mock trial rounds annually that equates to at least 800 judging spots to be filled yearly!

There is no requirement that volunteer judges maintain a trial practice. I understand that Evidence class in law school may have been a number of years ago for some of us, but I assure you that as members of the Bar, you are all qualified to serve as mock trial judges. If we do not have enough lawyers sign up as volunteer judges, the mock trial program may have to rely upon teacher coaches or college mock trial students who lack formal legal education. This is disappointing to students who have put countless hours of preparation into their performance. When I tell students that I am an attorney upon the conclusion of a round, I can see and feel their admiration and awe. Let's face it, we as lawyers, do not always receive a glowing reaction when we reveal our profession! Spending a few hours volunteering as a mock trial judge allows us the chance to show the students, their parents, fans and teachers that Iowa is full of talented women lawyers who are also wonderful people.

How: Regional competitions will be held throughout the state from February-March. The state competition will be in Des Moines March 26-27th. The time commitment is approximately 2-3 hours for one round.

For further details, please visit www.iowamocktrial.com, to find the dates and locations of the regional competitions in your area of the state, and to sign up to judge a round or several. Feel free to contact Anna Mundy (mundy.anna@principal.com) or John Wheeler (jwheeler@iowabar.org) with questions.

2012-2013 I.O.W.A. Leadership

President: Dawn Boucher

Vice President: Shellie Mackel

Treasurer: Josey Bathke

Secretary: Jessica Doro

Past President: Ann Smisek

Committee Chairs: Gail Sheridan-Lucht, Miki McGovern, Alissa Smith, Catherine Chargo

Judicial District Representatives: Marcy Lundberg & Jackie Armstrong (2nd), Lindsay Bucheit (3rd), Shelley Witcher (4th), Elisabeth Reynoldson & Tara Lawrence (5th), Jenn Smith (6th), Kate Johnson (7th), Diana Miller (8th)

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

Join I.O.W.A. Today!
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