



Newsletter

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Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys



Gail Klearman



Sharon Malheiro

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Gail Klearman & Sharon Malheiro: 2013 Arabella Mansfield and Gertrude Rush Award Winners

On Thursday, June 20, 2013, I.O.W.A. held its annual dinner and awards program in conjunction with the Iowa State Bar Association's annual meeting at the West Des Moines Marriott Hotel. The program and dinner was probably one of I.O.W.A.'s most successful with over 100 people in attendance. President Dawn Boucher gave opening remarks discussing I.O.W.A.'s activities and membership growth over the past year. Ann Smisek gave a brief update on I.O.W.A.'s involvement in the Infinity Project and 50/50 in 2020 Project.

The Honorable Stephanie Rose, U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of Iowa, gave the keynote speech. She inspired all of us with her story of how she excelled in her legal career through hard work, mentorship, and a dedi-

cated husband to help her maintain work-life balance.

Alissa Smith, our Professional Action Chair capped off the program by presenting the Arabella Mansfield and Gertrude Rush awards.

Arabella Mansfield was the first woman lawyer admitted into practice in the United States and she happened to be an Iowan. I.O.W.A. began the Arabella Mansfield award in 2002 in an effort to recognize those women attorneys who have promoted and nurtured women in the legal profession.

The 2013 recipient of the award was Gail Klearman, nominated by Emily Gould Chafa. Gail received her B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis and her J.D. from the

University of Minnesota. She has dedicated her entire legal career to public service, first working at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, and then managing special legal projects for the Queens Legal Services Corporation in Queens, New York. Since 1992 she has been a managing attorney with Iowa Legal Aid. This is where Emily met Gail and witnessed Gail helping advance women in the legal profession and helping women in need through the legal system.

Emily described Gail as having mentored countless young women attorneys while managing a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) project. The attorneys working on this project were mostly women with relatively little legal experience. The cases were often emotionally

2013 Arabella Mansfield and Gertrude Rush Award Recipients, cont'd

draining and involved working with women clients who were abused and living in complicated family situations. As Emily described in her nomination, "Gail spends a considerable amount of time talking these lawyers off the cliff, figuratively speaking. Gail's nurturing manner and sound advice gave many a young woman lawyer a solid start to her legal career." In addition to her work on the VAWA project, Gail also mentors potential future attorneys through Iowa Legal Aid's AmeriCorps program and counsels women through Iowa Legal Aid's language access program.

Gertrude Rush was the first African-American woman to be admitted to the practice of law in Iowa, in 1918. In 2003, I.O.W.A. co-established an award in her honor with the Iowa National Bar Association. The award recognizes a lawyer who manifests the pioneering spirit of Gertrude Rush, demonstrates leadership in the community and in the legal profession, and demonstrates concern for human and civil rights.

The 2013 recipient of the Ger-

trude Rush award was Sharon Malheiro, nominated by Judge Celeste Bremer, Roxann Ryan and Deb Tharnish.

Sharon received her undergraduate and law degrees from Drake University. She is a shareholder at the Davis Brown law firm specializing in employment law and media and communications law.

Sharon exemplifies Gertrude Rush's spirit of fighting discrimination against minority groups. Sharon has strenuously advocated for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals. She was a leader in the legal battle to obtain the right to marry for gay citizens in Iowa. In *Varnum v. Brien*, 763

"The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you; they are unique manifestations of the human spirit."
-Wade Davis, Anthropologist

N.W.2d 862 (Iowa 2009), she served as an expert witness and planned legal strategy. She has also represented same sex couples in legal efforts to have both of their names on their children's birth and death certificates.

Sharon's efforts to advance civil rights for the LGBT community expands beyond the courtroom. Sharon mentors individuals struggling with their sexual orientation and volunteers for various community groups to help spread her message of inclusion and support for diversity. Sharon is currently the Chair of One Iowa, an organization seeking equality for LGBT Iowans. She has also volunteered for the AIDS Project of Central Iowa, the Family Futures Network, and Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Iowa, among others. Sharon's perspective is exemplified best by a poster hung in her office with a quote by anthropologist, Wade Davis (see box at left).

Congratulations to Gail and Sharon for their success and I.O.W.A. thanks them for their contributions to our profession and community.

I.O.W.A. Co-Sponsors Visiting Mom Project

Last fall, I.O.W.A. teamed with Polk County Women Attorneys and the Ashcraft Library Project to help raise money for the Visiting Mom Project. The project was initiated by Judges Paulsen and Bremer in an effort to help establish a special meeting room for incarcerated mothers to visit with their children at the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women in Mitchellville.

The project's initial goal was to raise \$10,000 to supply furniture, toys, games, and books. Contributions quickly poured in. At one Polk County Women Attorneys luncheon, Fiedler & Timmer law firm agreed to match any donation made during the luncheon. Polk County Women Attorneys and Drake Law Women also co-hosted a Sip, Savor and Support event at

Jasper Winery where half of the proceeds from a wine tasting were donated to the project.



Judges Bremer and Paulsen, attorneys from Fiedler & Timmer, P.L.L.C. and other I.O.W.A. members pose for a picture in the new Visiting Mom Room during the open house.

In total, the groups raised \$15,000 for the project. Leaders of the project selected furniture and toys based on requests from incarcerated mothers. They purchased over 360 books, \$2,500 of educational games, train table and train set, Duplo block table and blocks, furnished doll house, kitchen and dishes, puzzles, shelving, rocking chairs and toy storage bins.

On October 28, 2013, there was an open house for the public to see the new visiting room.. Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds spoke and led a ribbon cutting ceremony. Leaders and supporters of the project were also in attendance.. Many thanks to everyone for their donations and contributions for this project!

Partners in Pumps: Women on the Partnership Track

By Emilee Boyle Gehling*

Every female attorney has her professional goals. For many young attorneys in private firms, their goals include making partner. The Association for Legal Career Professionals reported that in 2012, women represented only 19.9% of the partners in U.S. law firms. As women, we can utilize our unique strengths and explore opportunities to change this number. Below are some pointers to help you get there.

Find Out.

Seek out information about the partnership model utilized at your firm. Understand the eligibility metrics and set your goals to meet and exceed each requirement. Write down your goals and track them weekly, monthly, and/or quarterly. Speak to partners in the firm about the responsibilities that will be expected of you when you become a partner. Be clear about what you want, then set your goals and tick them off one by one.

If you plan to take off time for maternity leave, have an honest discussion with your firm about billing requirements that would be expected given your time off. My firm, run by a female rainmaker, was clear that billable hour requirements will be proportionately reduced for time off. In my view, if you are not getting paid while you are on maternity leave, your billable requirements should not be the same as your male colleague who is paid while you are not.

Speak Up.

Don't assume your firm's shareholders know you want to be a partner. Make sure you mention you want to be on the partnership track. A good time to do this is at your annual review. Approach each discussion about your

performance as an opportunity to showcase the value you added to the firm and finding opportunities for growth. Look for ways to add to the Firm's bottom line, so that you become an invaluable asset to the Firm.

"Bill Like A Man."

My boss and founder of our law firm heard this advice from her (male) mentor. Although it may be read with a sexist undertone, the message may nevertheless be helpful. His view was that some women attorneys would miss billing opportunities because they did not value the time they spent analyzing a matter. For instance, if you analyze your case while out of the office and come up with a key case strategy, bill your time. His perception was that women would hesitate to bill unless they were working in a more traditional sense. Don't hesitate to value your time and work.

Take Advantage of Networking Potential.

As women, we can take advantage of unique networking potential. For instance, women have the freedom to go to coffee or lunch one-on-one with men and women. Some men hesitate to ask women to lunch for fear it would feel like a "date" if they ask. Women also are often hard workers attuned to detail (in my experience). We can use these attributes to volunteer for committees and groups where we can set the agenda and gain recognition for the work we do.

Just Ask.

Let potential clients know what you do. If you have built a relationship with a potential client, let

them know you are not too busy to help them should they need it. Or let them know you appreciate referrals. Don't miss opportunities to help potential clients.

If your goals include becoming a partner in your law firm, taking the actions outlined above will help propel you forward in your career. Goal-setting and measuring your progress are some key elements to getting where you want to go, whether you arrive clad in flats or pumps.



*Emilee Boyle Gehling makes deals happen. When companies and professionals need their deals to come together, they turn to Emilee to anticipate and meet legal needs, clear roadblocks, and complete the transaction. Her general practice includes but is not limited to Business Law, Commercial Law, Contracts Law, Corporate Law, Debtor and Creditors, Employment Law, and Real Estate Law. Emilee is a Partner in the Goosmann Law Firm in Sioux City, Iowa.

4th Judicial District Members Gather for Lunch and Tax Lessons

On January 21, 2014, I.O.W.A. members in the 4th Judicial District and Pottawattamie County Women's Bar Association held a joint gathering. The meeting was an opportunity for the women to catch up and network over lunch while also acquiring knowledge on current tax issues.

Joyce Klimesh, an attorney working at Dickinson & Clark accounting firm in Council Bluffs, hosted the event. Joyce educated the participants on new tax issues for the 2013 filing year and upcoming changes to be aware of in 2014. Approximately 10 members participated.

This is a great idea for local I.O.W.A. members to get together. If you would like to host an I.O.W.A. local gathering and need help organizing it, please contact us at president@iowawomenattorneys.org.



Seated (left to right): Deborah Petersen, Joyce Klimesh
Standing (left to right): Jennifer Carlson, Erin Planalp, Karen Dales, Shelley Whitcher, Kerrie Snyder, Helen Broadway-Savage, Ryann Glenn, and Nicole Hughes

3rd Annual Proof Event: "Defining Your Own Success"

On December 3, 2013, I.O.W.A. co-sponsored with Polk County Women Attorneys, the ARAG Group, and ISBA's Diversity & Inclusiveness Committee, the 3rd Annual Proof Event. For three years the groups have held an event at Proof Restaurant in Des Moines where a panel discusses issues critical to women's success in the legal field, and members have an opportunity to ask questions, receive candid answers, and network over appetizers and drinks. This year's theme was "Defining Your Own Success." Panel members were:

- **Melinda Ellwanger**, Free Lance Services Attorney
- **Brenna Findley**, Legal Counsel to Governor Branstad
- **Elizabeth Kennedy**, Shareholder at Ahlers & Cooney, P.C.
- **Cheryl Murad**, Career Law Clerk to Judge James Gritzner
- **Karen Shaff**, Executive VP & General Counsel at Principal
- **Prof. Melissa Weresh**, Director of Legal Writing at Drake Law School

Over 50 women attended the event. The panelists openly and honestly discussed challenges and roadblocks regarding their professional development.

The panel discussed how to address discrimination in the work place and gave tips on organizing strategies to prioritize your work schedule and improve work-life balance. The panel also discussed how to be a good mentor and how to utilize your own mentor.

Unfortunately, there was a flurry of action when a fire alarm went off in the building and the panelists and guests had to evacuate. However, that did not stop the panelists from sharing some invaluable information with the attendees and participants were able to continue socializing and networking.

Join I.O.W.A. Today!

www.iowawomenattorneys.org



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2013-2014 I.O.W.A. Leadership

President: Dawn Boucher

Vice President: Shellie Mackel

Treasurer: Lindsey Purdy

Secretary: Jessica Doro

Past President: Ann Smisek

Committee Chairs: Emily Chafa, Kate Johnson, Miki McGovern, Alissa Smith, Ann Smisek, Alison Werner Smith, Christina Thompson

Judicial District Representatives: Jackie Armstrong (2nd), Lindsey Buchheit (3rd), Shelley Whitcher (4th), Elisabeth Reynoldson & Amanda Atherton (5th), Jenn Smith (6th), Anthea Galbraith (7th), Diana Miller (8th)

Advisory Members: Emily Chafa, Roxann Ryan

Law Student Representative: Meredith Morgan