



ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

THE CHALLENGE

The newsletter of the ISBA's Standing Committee on Minority and Women Participation

Voice of the co-editor

By *Vickie Gillio*

This edition of "The Challenge" is a more personal focus on outreach by committee members to women and minority law students and the description of how one lawyer has formatted her practice to fit the contours of her life. Galen Caldwell and Andrew Fox write of how they acted in furtherance of Ole Pace's mandate

to the committee to achieve greater involvement by women and minorities in the ISBA. Jeanne Miller writes of looking at her own life goals, and practicing law in conformance with them. It is in this reaching out and sharing one's life stories that our committee adds to the richness of the diversity in our profession.

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Chairman's note

By *Jorge Montes*

Biblical scripture admonishes us to "give honor to whom honor is due." So many kudos go to Ole Pace for once again placing bar diversity on the front burner of the ISBA's agenda. President Pace has not only aggressively and consistently been studying this issue, but been out and about meeting with minority bar leaders and our committee to understand how we can make the number of minorities in the bar increase. He has also included us in many of his

appearances at the various bar associations' activities.

On another note, I am fortunate to be working with an excellent group of committee members this year. We have hardworking members who have been laboring tirelessly on preparing television appearances, law student receptions (which have enjoyed great success), and the preparation of the annual conference.

Speaking of the annual conference, we are happy to report that the meet-

ing in Collinsville broke new ground in that for the first time the meeting was moved out of Chicago. The turnout was impressive. The conference was capped by a lunch that was attended by minority and women attorneys from downstate from as far as Carbondale. Fittingly, the guest speaker was President Pace. President elect Robert Downs and Executive Director Robert Craghead were also in attendance. Who knows, maybe we will hold the meeting south of I-80 from now on.

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Reaching law students—Mission accomplished

By *Galen Caldwell and Andrew Fox*

Reaching law students and getting them to join the ISBA in the future is no easy task, but the ISBA Standing Committee on Minority and Women Participation has risen to the occasion. From Ole Pace, ISBA President, who made a compelling speech at our committee's annual meeting, to our Chairman Jorge Montes, we were given the task of increasing minority and women

involvement in the ISBA. We took that mission and thought the best place to lay the foundation for the leaders of the future was to plant the seed for future growth in the hearts of the law students. The goal was to assist local minority and women law student associations in sponsoring panel presentations highlighting prominent minority and women attorneys willing to provide professional growth and career

advice to law students.

A. The first panel: Finding your path to success from the minority and women perspective

We were so excited. Jorge Montes and Ole Pace gave us a mandate and the students gave us a marvelous topic. We endeavored to provide relevant strategies and tactics for finding "success" from high-profile minority and women lawyers. The lawyers from our Committee fed us great ideas and the law students gave us the framework. Now all we had to do was



Panel 1, from left to right: Moderators Andy Fox and Galen Caldwell, Panelists Hon. Patricia Brown-Holmes, Jorge Montes, Jesse Ruiz, Amy Tu and law student Laura Bautista.

find four panelists from different minority and women perspectives. But wait, we also wanted to provide perspectives from small and large law firms, from government lawyers and from someone who worked in a non-traditional law firm. Well, as fate would have it we accomplished all those goals and were honored with a Cook County Circuit Court Judge on the panel. Lest we not forget, the subterfuge of the presentation was that we were going to redefine "success" and cast it from the eyes of the minority and women lawyers. In a changing world, where race and gender play an ever-expanding role in every aspect of a free society, we thought we would encourage law students to consider different definitions from the stock definition of big law firm "success." Isn't that exactly what the Standing Committee on Minority and Women Participation strives to do as a mission?

On February 10, 2005, the Committee joined with Chicago-Kent College of Law's Hispanic and Latino

Law Student Association to present "Finding Your Path to Success from the Minority and Women Perspective." The event was co-moderated by Andrew Fox of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, and Galen Caldwell of the Chicago Police Department Office of Legal Affairs.

The panelists for the February 10, 2005 program included: The Honorable Patricia Brown-Holmes, Circuit Court of Cook County Child Protection Division; Jesse H. Ruiz, partner at Gardner Carton & Douglas LLP and Chairmen of Illinois State Board of Education; Amy Tu, Director of Corporate and Strategic Development Group at The Boeing Company; and Jorge Montes, Chair of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board. The discussion was unique. The panelists candidly addressed issues and solutions to stumbling blocks often encountered by minority and women attorneys when career planning while in law school, networking, job searching, working for their first employer, and making initial career moves.

We were treated to the inner workings of great legal minds and truly wonderful people that evening. Some of the highlights included the following: Jorge Montes presented unique experiences from his long career serving in many bar associations, and a long career working in the Hispanic community in a small law firm he founded. The special bond he created when speaking to the crowd of law students and the other panelists inspired all of us present that evening. The Honorable Patricia Brown-Holmes riveted the crowd with her positive energy. She comforted the very diverse group of students present by stating that it was okay to be a woman, okay to be African-American, okay to be Hispanic, and it is okay to be Asian-American. Jesse Ruiz gave us the history of someone who has always burned the midnight oil in his quest to become involved and prepared in every aspect of his personal and legal career. Among other very practical advice on how to succeed while working at a large law firm, he gave insights from the perspective of the hiring side of the interview process. Amy Tu, from Boeing International, exuded the peaceful charm of a person who travels the world and thinks in a million directions. Yet when she addressed the stu-

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dents she also gave advice on handling issues of race and gender in the workplace. She described issues on race and gender as generally arising from a lack of education, for we must constantly inform ourselves, to train and to be sensitive to other perspectives, whatever the issue may be. To be quite honest, there was not a dull moment in the conversation and the only real drawback to the panel presentation was that the panel spoke so long that we were not able to entertain questions from the audience. That was a problem that was promptly remedied in the second panel presentation.

B. Second panel: A tactical guide to balancing a career and a family

The second panel presentation came at the clamoring of the students; the Women in Law and the Hispanic and Latino Law Students Association



Panel 2, from left to right: Prof. Laurie Leader, Ted Yi, Anita Wilson and Natalia Delgado.

requested a panel on how to balance a career and a family and the ISBA was not about to turn down the opportunity. On March 30, 2005, the panel entitled "A Tactical Guide to

Balancing a Career and a Family" was held at Chicago Kent College of Law. Laura Bautista, Secretary of the Hispanic and Latino Law Student Association at Chicago-Kent, moderated the discussion. The panel was comprised of the following attorneys: Natalia Delgado, General Counsel for the Huron Consulting Group; Professor Laurie Leader, Chicago-Kent College of Law; Anita Wilson, in-house counsel for Morgan Stanley Discover Financial Services, Inc.; and Ted Yi, a partner at DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary US LLP.

In keeping with the presentation's theme "A Tactical Guide to Balancing a Career and a Family," the speakers offered students substantive advice on family planning decisions, employing household and child care assistance, relocating near support networks of family and friends, utilization of technology advances to establish a home office, and financial and career sacrifices of being a stay-at-home parent. Mr. Yi and Ms. Delgado explained the importance of "guarding one's professional reputation" by insuring that one is always accountable and dependable regarding assignments while meeting family obligations.

The panelists also provided tips on searching for "family-friendly" employers, as well as what questions to expect and ask concerning family obligations during a job search. Students courageously spoke regarding stereotypical exceptions and biased questions that they have

encountered while interviewing concerning their status as single parents, working mothers, or spouses of partners with careers. The panelists provided the students with practical advice on addressing those issues in a professional and appropriate manner.

Both presentations were extremely successful and well attended by students from several Chicago area law schools. Each event was followed by a "meet and greet" reception. ISBA volunteers were present to facilitate conversation between the panelists and students. \$50 gift cards to area book stores were raffled at each reception to add to the excitement. The committee would like to thank Gardner Carton & Douglas; Kirkland & Ellis LLP; and Women in Law; for co-sponsoring the events.

And if you have read this far, rest assured that there are even bigger plans for the future. We have tentatively marked our calendars for September 2005 for an event at either John Marshall Law School or DePaul University College of Law. We cannot announce the title of the event or the panelists, because these events come from the hearts and souls of the students, who after working with our Committee as law students, will join the ISBA and take on the leadership role in coming years. We would like to thank Jorge Montes, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Minority and Women Participation, Ole Pace, President of the ISBA and Janet Sosin for their support and leadership.

It's not rocket science—It just feels like it

By Jeanne Miller

7:30 a.m.

"H as anybody seen my English book?"
"Where's my gym suit?"

"Who ate the last waffle?"

Monday morning in the Miller household. Unfinished homework, a missing field trip slip, and three lunches waiting to be prepared. Two turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree. Add one work-from-home attorney, who is wondering why the affidavit she prepared the night before is no

longer on the fireplace mantel.

8:00 a.m.

The title company is on the line asking for figures. Lunches are packed and lined up on the counter. One client is going to be 20 minutes late and isn't sure she wants to close because she is unhappy with last week's unscheduled walkthrough. Our oldest child is on the school bus, while our youngest is racing down the driveway to a neighbor's car, one shoe in his hand, while the third, yes you

guessed it, the middle child, sits hunched over on the couch clutching her stomach.

"It hurts all over, Mom. Even my toes."

In less than an hour there will be people, grown people with combed hair and leather briefcases, sitting around a large table, watching the door for my arrival.

I would say that the above is a typical morning, but in the work-from-home world, as in all parenting worlds, there is no such thing as typi-

cal. You roll through the day expecting something to happen, and praying that you can fix it while maintaining a modicum of dignity. Fifteen years ago I became a stay-at-home mom. However, as my children grew older and the need for things like college funds and car notes became more obvious, I clearly needed to receive a paycheck.

Though I graduated from Washington University Law School and subsequently worked for a downtown law firm, followed by a corporation stint—mothering had been my longest-held position. So when it was time to put my \$80,000+ education back to work, I came to the harsh realization that I had no discernible skills. Truth be told, I had not litigated, prepared court documents, conducted research, or filed as much as a single motion in over a decade. Needless to say, I wasn't feeling good about the future of my chosen profession, until I shared my angst with a few other attorneys and they kept giving me the same advice. "Girl, work from home!"

That sounded simple enough until I realized that I would still have to know something, to do something... So I picked my favorite class from law school, which happened to be Property Law, and a career in real estate law was born. A close friend walked me through the steps and paperwork, allowing me to attend closings with him, until I felt comfortable enough to fly solo. Since then, I have become an agent with two title companies, the only way to make any real money at a closing.

Though I am by no means the queen of work-from-home, it has been the most rewarding time in my life, mostly due to the flexibility factor. There are slow periods when the only blessing is that my husband has a job. There are also hectic periods when four clients want to close on the same day. Or else. Add to this the bonus of external expectations. But before I get to those, there are a few ways that I have learned to make practicing law from home run smoothly, for the most part...

Workspace

It helps to have a designated workspace. One that is off-limits to the rest of the family. Don't be afraid to say no. It's not only a healthy reminder that you are in a position of power,

but it also prepares your kids for the real world. So practice with me. "No you may not use the Internet on my computer. No. You may not type your English paper, play Scrabble, watch Yu-Gi-Oh, or sit in my lap and ask a million questions while I draft a deed. This land... is my land. Period. Now beat it!"

Organization

I learned this one the hard way. And as you can see by the missing affidavit, I still have a few kinks to work out. File cabinets and separate folders for everything are a must. Putting them to use is more important than purchasing them in bulk. Also, file things away immediately before the documents start networking by themselves and the next thing you know you have a foot-tall stack of pages to redirect. 'Cause truthfully the

18th page of one contract looks very much like the 18th page of all others. Which could be a problem...

Buy the basic tools and add to them as needed. A fax machine, copier and second line are essential. Also, staples, paper clips and lots of printing paper. If you specialize in real estate, go ahead and stock up on fax cartridges. There is nothing like explaining to a client that you can't exactly see their commitment, but you know it's in there.

Schedule everything

It helps to make lists and to designate times for even the most simple tasks. Have two times during the day to return calls. And keep all phone numbers in one place, so you don't have to look for that torn paper plate you remember using. Or the edge of last week's TV Guide. But no matter

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how well you master the scheduling thing, expect to have to search the garbage out back at least once or twice. Things happen... If you have a Palm Pilot, learn how to use it and don't forget to dock it regularly. And please change the batteries the first time the message says low battery. It's not kidding.

Retainer

Get one up front. This was a hard lesson for me to learn but a lesson none the less. Early on, I would do a substantial amount of work for my clients without collecting anything up front. This included cellular calls, research, and literally hours from my day investigating title issues and mortgage concerns. Then invariably, something happened and the deal wouldn't close. I had incurred expenses and spent valuable time on their behalf, yet I had nothing to show for it. Nothing made me angrier. I even had one client who was selling his home in the morning and purchasing one in the afternoon, who decided at the end of the first closing that he would not retain me for the subsequent purchase because he was short on proceeds. I had done all of the work for the second closing already, and had even given a discount since I was representing him for two deals. Lesson learned.

Since that day, no acceptable retainer...no Jeanne Miller.

Dress Code

Get dressed every day as though you are leaving the house. Not necessarily a suit, but it's best to shower and put on real clothes. This puts you in a work mode, and you are less likely to watch Oprah before you get started. But remember, flexibility has its rewards, so if your ritual is an hour of TV viewing, that's okay too. Whatever gets you through the day. Treat it like a commute. They have their coffee and newspapers on their laps. We have the remote control. But don't abuse the system, If it's 11:00 and your thumb is hurting from channel surfing, helloooo...

Understand your Value

Bottom line. You went to law school and learned a skill. A client would not get free or discounted services at a doctor's office. Early on, I

was tempted to give clients a below "competitor's" rate for closings. I felt I had to discount my services because I worked from my home and did not have an office. This was a horrible decision. It never failed that the closing that I discounted ended up being the most work. I realized quickly that there is value in what I do. If someone doesn't want to pay my rate, I have to be prepared to walk away from the business, no matter how tempted I am to buckle. My rate is fair and if a client can find a better deal, then bless him. As for working from home I am unapologetic. Working from home means clients can reach me on their schedules. There have been many family dinners when I have excused myself to handle a client's concern that could not wait. I position it as an advantage.

Work from Home

The hardest part about working from home is finding time to actually work from home. It's easy to get bogged down doing laundry and cleaning bathrooms. Some days you'll even find yourself mending socks as though your life depended on it or cleaning out the medicine cabinet. But those are things that can be done as a family, or at the very least, completed after you have put in the necessary hours it takes to succeed as a work-from-home attorney. That brings us to the external battle that comes with the territory. Outside distractions account for many wasted hours, so those must be scheduled in, whenever possible. This includes volunteerism.

One of the main reasons I decided to work from home was to play an

active role in my children's education. Two days a week, I have responsibilities in their schools and also substitute on an as-needed basis once or twice a month. Though these experiences are rewarding, I am always tempted to do more. I want to be the ice cream mom, the reading mom, the junior great books mom, even swami, if that's what they need... Not merely because I love the work, but because of the look on my son or daughter's face when I walk into their classroom, or when I'm serving ice cream to their friends. That look, crooked smile and all, means more to me than any retainer.

That said, it is still important to balance those outside commitments with inside accomplishments. If you volunteer on Monday, perhaps you should forgo your morning TV ritual on Tuesday. Or if you are going on a field trip on Wednesday, perhaps you should work an extra hour or two the following day. It's not a question of sacrifice, but one of knowing how to make it all fit without shortchanging either side. And don't worry about volunteering too much while your children are young. Trust me, you'll be banned soon enough.

3:30

One child just arrived home. Another is asking to use my computer. Excuse me for a second. "No." I have returned all of my calls, scheduled three closings and two orthodontist appointments. After a quick game of Scrabble with my son, it'll be time to start dinner.

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“Inspiring Women”—The Women Everywhere: Partners in Service Project marks six years of service to women and children in need

By Michele Jochner and Yolaine Dauphin

On two days in May, the Women Everywhere: Partners in Service Project, a collaborative effort of nine area bar associations, will celebrate its sixth anniversary of joining several hundred volunteers—including judges, attorneys and friends of the legal community—together to provide services to women and children in need throughout Illinois. The theme for this year’s program is “Inspiring Women,” and the co-chairs for this year’s Women Everywhere events are Ellen M. Girard of Quarles & Brady and Jeanne M. Reynolds of Reynolds & Reynolds. Due to the success of the Women Everywhere program in past years, the program has been expanded to two days. On Thursday, May 12, 2005, Women Everywhere will present its educational program for high school girls in the Chicago area, which consists of two components: tours of area courthouses and government facilities, and an educational seminar. Two weeks later, on Thursday, May 26, 2005, Women Everywhere will conduct its day of community service and outreach to local agencies that assist women and children in need.

What follows is an outline of the activities for these two days:

May 12, 2005 - Educational Program:

Over 200 female high school students will participate in this year’s educational program. Some students will start their day with City of Chicago Treasurer Judith C. Rice, who will be the program’s kick-off speaker for students participating in tours of federal and state courts and offices. Kimberly J. Anderson of Anderson & Boback has been instrumental in coordinating student visits to various courtrooms in the Richard J. Daley Center, and Andrea Aycinena of Peck Bloom Austriaco & Mitchell has taken the lead in coordinating tours of Cook County Criminal Court Building. In addition, students will participate in tours of the Chicago federal courthouse and offices.

Other students will participate in the Women Everywhere educational seminar, which is co-chaired by Yolaine

Dauphin, law clerk to Justice Charles E. Freeman, and Michele M. Jochner, law clerk to Chief Justice Mary Ann G. McCormack. This group of students will begin their day by hearing opening remarks from Judge Ann Claire Williams of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Then, Dolores K. Hanna of Bell, Boyd & Lloyd and Dean Patricia Mell of The John Marshall Law School will discuss with the students overcoming obstacles against women in society and the workplace. Next, the students will hear from Mary Lee Leahy of Leahy Law Offices and Tracey Ladner, Deputy Corporation Counsel of the Employment Litigation Division of the City of Chicago Law Department, who will review sexual discrimination and harassment cases. The students will then prepare oral arguments for a mock appeal of a discrimination case. Illinois Appellate Court Justices Anne Burke, Shelvin Louise Hall, and Jill McNulty will hear the arguments and engage in questions and answers with the students.

The students participating in the court tours and the educational seminar will then come together for lunch

at the James R. Thompson Center, where they will hear from Dorothy Brown, Cook County Circuit Court Clerk. After lunch, the students will also meet with Lilia Chacon, Fox 32 Chicago News Reporter, and Kerri Stefanson, a forensic investigator with the Illinois State Police Crime Lab, who will discuss their career paths and the jobs they perform.

May 26, 2005 - Service Day:

On this date, several hundred volunteers will participate in a day of work projects for community agencies which provide services to women and children in need. Last year, nearly 30 community agencies in several Illinois counties received direct volunteer services through the Women Everywhere service day. Projects undertaken by volunteers included painting, gardening, or other facility maintenance work, as well as providing legal education to the organizations and those they serve.

For more information on any aspect of the Women Everywhere project, and to volunteer to make a difference, contact Courtney Stevens of Jenner & Block at (312) 840-8621.

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