

The Catalyst

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on Women and the Law

Using Legal Training to Advocate for a World Free of Breast Cancer

BY COLLEEN BORACA

When I was in law school, one of my favorite courses was Law and Poverty taught by Professor Hank Rose.¹ I remember Professor Rose saying that “Going to law school will change how you approach the world. Even outside your career, you will have unique skills that allow you to help others.” Twenty years later, I have first-hand experience to prove that Professor Rose was correct.

My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was a sophomore in college. She was in remission for about one year before her cancer metastasized throughout her spine. Our family was fortunate that she had top-notch health insurance and medical care. Unfortunately, she died five days before I was scheduled to take the July 2002 Illinois Bar Exam.

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Free the Girls Campaign

BY JENNIFER LUCZKOWIAK

As the bar year comes to a close, the ISBA Women and the Law Committee is proud to report on a successful 2022 service project benefiting Free the Girls, an organization dedicated to empowering women who have been the victim of sex trafficking. In light of the Committee's inability to meet in-person due to COVID-19, Committee Chair Shira Truitt suggested the Free the Girls bra drive, which was spearheaded by subcommittee members Margie Komes, Lisa Knauf, Paloma Holloman, Gladys Santan, and Laura Castagna.

When asked why she chose this service project, Shira Truitt stated, “I thought this was the most appropriate opportunity for our committee; this was women helping women—along with our allies—and it was something we could definitely do. I wanted to offer something we could do in our own areas so that it didn't matter where—in the state—we were located. I also wanted to offer an opportunity that provided a real and tangible chance to help other women; not something symbolic. Free the Girls fit those ideals perfectly.”

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Using Legal Training to Advocate for a World Free of Breast Cancer

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My mother's death shattered me. I decided to devote my legal career to helping people access medical treatment. I worked for seven years as an Assistant State's Attorney for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office in the Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Unit. My trial partners and I prosecuted mental health involuntary admission and treatment cases. In 2009, I became a Supervising Attorney at the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago,² helping HIV+ individuals navigate bureaucracies. Five years later, I started teaching at NIU College of Law and directing the NIU Health Advocacy Clinic. This medical legal partnership clinic is located on-site in Aurora at Hesed House, the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois. I have been incredibly lucky to have multiple fulfilling jobs throughout my career.

In 2018, I had my first mammogram. It was a nerve-racking ordeal, and my anxiety was heightened when the clinic left me a voicemail telling me that "something is wrong" and "more imaging is needed." I immediately called back but could not get speak to a live person for twenty-seven hours. As I waited, all I could think about was how my three young children might no longer have a mother—just like me. When I finally got through the next day nobody would tell me why further imaging was needed. A diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound and biopsy later, I learned that I had a precancerous, but benign, mass. After this ordeal, I set out to find a new care team, one that does not leave voicemails about problematic ultrasounds and then disappears. I am fortunate to be part of a high-risk prevention program through Northwestern's Lynn Sage Comprehensive Breast Center.

After going through these experiences, I knew that I needed to do more to help those facing breast cancer diagnoses. Was there something that I could do with my legal training to help women and men like me? The Susan G. Komen ("Komen") Foundation immediately came to mind. Komen's mission is to "save lives by meeting

the most critical needs in our communities and investing in breakthrough research to prevent and cure breast cancer."³ Komen's impact on the breast cancer community has been phenomenal.⁴ Since 1982, it has invested nearly \$1.1 billion in breast cancer research. *Id.* It provides social supports for people going through treatments and operates a Breast Care Helpline. *Id.* Komen provides financial assistance to those facing breast cancer and help individuals navigate insurance challenges. *Id.*

Until this point, my contact with Komen had been through participating in multiple Races for the Cure.⁵ My cousin, sister-in-law and I raised money and participated in two 36-mile walks through the Avon Breast Cancer Foundation. These walks were therapeutic and allowed us to connect with others impacted by breast cancer.

While I enjoyed participating in the walks, I kept thinking that there might be a way for me to use some of the skills I have developed as a lawyer to help this cause. Lawyers have strong, persuasive written and oral communication skills. We are persistent and creative. Lawyers are excellent storytellers. When I contacted Komen, I was educated about its Advocacy Ambassador Program ("AAP"). The AAP allows individuals, like me, to work on promoting Komen's public policy initiatives at the grassroots level. Ambassadors are trained on various topics including the appropriations process, fundamentals of the United States government⁶ and the history and legislative priorities of Susan G. Komen. Ambassadors also attend quarterly policy update calls and participate in the annual advocacy summits. This program sounded like a perfect fit for my background as a lawyer. I applied to be an ambassador in September of 2020 was accepted about one month later.

I participated in my first Susan G. Komen Advocacy Summit in April 2021. For two days, advocates from across the country were trained on three pieces of legislation aimed at increasing access to health care. We were taught the importance

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of telling our stories, especially how to tell them in a way that will impact legislators. We were given advice about meeting with members of Congress. In a non-pandemic year, the summit is held in Washington, D.C. Like the rest of the world in 2021, it was held via Zoom. On April 14, 2021, I was part of a group of advocates who met with various members of the Illinois delegation including the offices of Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth as well as Representatives Mike Bost, Bobby Rush, Darin LaHood and Lauren Underwood.

Our group encouraged the lawmakers to fund the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program at \$275 million in FY22 to ensure all women have access to potentially lifesaving breast cancer screening and diagnostic services. We also asked them to support the Access to Breast Care Diagnosis Act (S.1067) to reduce out-of-pocket costs for patients and increase access to medically necessary diagnostic breast imaging.

Each member of our group had an assignment, and mine was to lead the discussion on encouraging lawmakers to co-sponsor the Improving Social Determinants of Health Act (H.R.379/S.104) to improve the social factors that impact individuals' and communities' health. I talked about my mother and our family's journey throughout her illness. I discussed some of the clients who I have been humbled to work with throughout my career at the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago and the NIU Health Advocacy Clinic. When my mother was sick, my family was fortunate to have a car to drive her to treatments, a house where she could rest if not feeling well, food security, health insurance and much more. Many of my clients have faced major illness without these necessary supports in place, which needs to change.

Over the past year, I have continued learning a lot as an Advocacy Ambassador. Komen's current public policy agenda, per one of our training webinars, focuses on advancing health equity through accelerating research, ensuring access and alleviating patient burden. The 2022 Susan G. Komen Advocacy Summit was held the week of April 25. I was part of a group of advocates who met with the offices of Senators Dick

Durbin and Tammy Duckworth as well as Representatives Lauren Underwood, Darin LaHood and Cheri Bustos. Our group encouraged lawmakers to fund the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program to ensure all women have access to potentially lifesaving breast cancer screening and diagnostic services. We also asked them to support the Access to Breast Care Diagnosis Act (H.R. 5769/S.1067) to reduce out-of-pocket costs for patients and increase access to medically necessary diagnostic breast imaging. I led the discussion asking them to co-sponsor the Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC) Access to Care Act (H.R.3183/S.1312) which would waive the five-month waiting period for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and 24-month waiting period for Medicare to improve access to care and quality of life for people living with MBC. I had a chance to tell the story of how quickly my mother's health and prognosis deteriorated once diagnosed with MBC and how this is the case for many others. Patients with MBC do not have 24 months to wait for Medicare coverage. I was also able to tie in the stories of many of the clients at the Health Advocacy Clinic who were approved for these benefits only to face frustration when they have to wait months and years to receive SSDI benefits and years to obtain Medicare, even though deemed eligible. Unfortunately, these benefits are too little too late for some critically ill patients in need of financial support and medication now.

The other advocates I have worked with are survivors and oncologists. I have been the sole lawyer. Certainly, survivors of breast cancer have expertise that is more valuable than anything I know. The oncologist also brought a unique viewpoint, especially in the discussion about the importance of early detection. While I was there as a daughter whose mother died from breast cancer, I had my lawyer hat on. I told my story in a way that was concise while advocating for the legislation in a way that was supported by facts and persuasive. It was tremendously rewarding to use my skills to help a cause that has impacted not only my family but millions of other families throughout the world.

Undoubtedly, the skills we have as lawyers

puts us in a unique position to help others. Being an Advocacy Ambassador for Susan G. Komen has been a huge honor. This work is meaningful and gives me purpose. Komen is one of thousands of agencies that could benefit from your help and skillset as an attorney. I advocate for other families whose lives have been shattered by this disease. I advocate for my daughter (and sons) so they will not need to undergo what I experienced with my mother. I advocate for myself. Most of all, I advocate for a world free of breast cancer. If interested, I would love to have you join me. ■

Colleen Boraca is a clinical associate professor at the Northern Illinois University College of Law. Professor Boraca directs the NIU Health Advocacy Clinic, a medical-legal partnership located in Aurora at Hesed House, the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois. She would like to thank NIU College of Law Clinical Professor Wendy Vaughn for her feedback and comments on this article.

1. I loved the class so much that I now co-teach Poverty Law at NIU College of Law with Professor Wendy Vaughn. We used Professor Rose's syllabus when designing our course.
2. AIDS Legal Council is now part of the Legal Council for Health Justice, an organization of amazing advocates in Chicago.
3. [Breast Cancer Foundation](#) | [Susan G. Komen](#)®.
4. More information about the services provided by Susan G. Komen can be found on the organization's website at [www.komen.org](#).
5. I actually "walk really fast" for the cure since a knee injury prevents me from racing for it!
6. My major in political science came in handy.

Free the Girls Campaign

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The collection drive ran from January 1 until February 14, 2022, and included 20 drop-off locations across 16 Illinois counties. In total, the collection drive resulted in approximately 750 bras donated to Free the Girls plus a financial of approximately \$500. Thank you to the following partners who served as drop-off location sites: Kelly & Castagna; Knauf Law; the Illinois State Bar

Association; Law Hesselbaum, LLP; PHM Law; Prairie State Legal Services; The Truitt Law Firm, LLC; and Turner & Sackett Law Offices.

According to Free the Girls, “With an estimated 80% of trafficking survivors at risk for being re-exploited due to the lack of sustainable economic opportunities, our entrepreneurship program provides women

a choice rather than re-victimization. Bras become currency and, as one of the women in our program says, ‘Free the Girls isn’t just about bras, it’s about what bras can provide. The bras become clothes for my kids, bras become things for the house.’”

To learn more about Free the Girls, visit www.freethegirls.org. ■

Getting to Know the Kane County Bar Association’s First Female President: A Conversation With Susan Tatnall

BY MARY F. PETRUCHIUS

In observance of Women’s History Month, I decided that I wanted to write an article about first woman bar association presidents. With a little research and assistance from my colleagues in the Kane County legal community, I “tracked down” Susan Tatnall. Susan made “herstory” by becoming the first woman to be elected President of the Kane County Bar Association. Susan is retired and now living in Princeton, New Jersey so I was, unfortunately, unable to conduct her interviews in person. We wrote this article together by having numerous telephone conversations and email exchanges. As a result, we found that our “journeys” are uncannily similar and I now have a new friend! I hope to meet Susan in person the next time she visits the area.

Mary: Susan, it is such a pleasure and honor to interview you! Are you a “homegrown” West Suburbanite or a transplant?

Susan: Thanks for inviting me to revisit a proud and wonderful part of my life. I grew up in the Finger Lakes region of New York and went to high school in Kenmore, New York, a suburb of Buffalo.

Mary: What schools did you attend up

to and including law school, and what were your areas of study?

Susan: I received a B.A. degree from Russell Sage College, a small women’s college in Troy, New York, with a major in English Lit. As did most of the women of my era, I married right after college. My husband was a civil engineer and was drafted into the military the mid-1960’s. We lived in Korea for a year and then moved several times to many different states due to his career. In 1977 while we were living near Lexington, Kentucky, I attended the University of Kentucky Law School and graduated in May, 1980. I was 40 years old and my daughter, Leah, was 12.

Mary: Whom would you say were and are the greatest influences in your life and why?

Susan: I always loved school and learning and I was influenced by strong, successful women. I tried to live the expected life of a wife and mother but, while I loved my husband and my daughter, those roles were not enough for me.

Mary: Whom do you consider to be the most influential women in your life and why?

Susan: Gloria Steinem was extremely influential. Remember, the late ‘60’s was

the start of the second women’s movement in this country. In 1972---I know, ancient history---I was living in Miami, Florida. I went to hear Gloria speak in support of George McGovern for President and it was an epiphany for me!! There were women who thought like me. I began reading feminist literature, subscribed to *Ms. Magazine*, and my world changed.

When we moved once again---I think it was our 10th move---to Kentucky, I made the decision to go to law school. I knew I could not march and burn my bra but, I thought that as a lawyer, maybe I could make a difference for women’s rights. A Women and the Law professor, Carolyn Bratt, and my dear friend, Kim Greene, a law fellow student, were hugely inspirational in helping me understand the changes that needed to be made regarding women’s rights.

Just as I started my third year, my husband was transferred again, this time to Batavia, Illinois. As soon as I graduated, I moved to Kane County and took the Illinois bar exam with no prep classes. I knew no one in Illinois at the time. I joined the National Organization for Women, worked on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in

the state, and tried to find a job. All of the incredible women I met during this time were significant influences in my life.

Mary: Please tell our readers about your first job out of law school and how you got hired. What was it like to start a career in a predominantly male profession?

Susan: Believe it or not---a little humor here---no one was “fighting” to give me a job, and the two offers I *did* receive were for unbelievably low salaries. So, with lots of guts and naivete, I opened my OWN office in an 11’ by 11’ room in Geneva and hung out my shingle. David Lowe, an experienced and excellent attorney across the hall, became my mentor. David lent me his secretary for a few hours a week and he is a hero to me.

The Kane County Bar Association (KCBA) was amazing. I became a member and started to receive case referrals. I joined several committees and met other lawyers who referred cases to me. I also created talks on 3” x 5” index cards on subjects I thought would be of interest to women. I spoke to any women’s group that would have me. There were fewer than a dozen women lawyers in Kane County at the time and most of them worked in the public sector. I was in the right place at the right time and I was determined!

I met many wonderful and helpful lawyers and really began to learn how to be a lawyer. Wendell Clancy, Kane County Circuit Judge Susan Clancy Boles’ father, persuaded me to run for an office and, eventually, I was elected KCBA president in 1989-1990. It was and is one of the great honors of my life.

Mary: In your years of practice, did you have a passion for a particular area of the law or is it fair to assume that it was family law?

Susan: I had no intention of being a family law attorney. I accepted almost every case I got---even those I knew next to nothing about, I’m sad to say. I was never unprepared. One exception: I had a bar referral divorce case and Steve Cooper represented the husband. I filed a petition for temporary support. It was granted and the judge told me to write the order. I had no idea how to do that. I had a private conversation with Steve and he kindly showed me how to do it. Another hero!

As a result of my talks to women’s

groups, at which I *always* left my business cards, I found that women reached out to me because they wanted and were more comfortable with a female attorney. That is how I became a family law attorney. Eventually, men began to hire me as well.

Mary: Were you fortunate to have a mentor or mentors who helped you during your career?

Susan: After five years being on my own, a family law attorney, Gilbert Drendel, approached me. He asked me to become a partner in his firm, which was another honor. Gib and the other lawyers in that firm taught me so much and I consider him a great mentor. In 1980, I met Patricia Golden and Pamela Jensen, who both later became judges, and Linda Siegel. They also taught me so much and are still my dearest friends.

I must specifically mention Judge Pamela Jensen here. She became the 16th Circuit’s first woman judge in 1987 and went on to have a brilliant career as an associate, circuit, and presiding judge of the Civil Division. Pam and her husband are now retired and live in Salida, Colorado. Pam was a true groundbreaker for women and was a dedicated and outstanding lawyer and judge. Women attorneys owe her an immense debt of gratitude.

We women lawyers supported each other, networked, referred cases to one another, and had women lawyer social events. This is still an essential role women must play in society, not to the exclusion of men but, as a necessary addition to our careers and our lives. That is really the reason I agreed to be interviewed for this article during Women’s History Month.

I experienced some humorous and some not so humorous instances of the ways in which women are still not treated equally. When the first Illinois Domestic Violence Act was passed, Pat Golden and I set up a meeting with the State’s Attorney who was in office at that time. We wanted to ensure that he would support the Act and make certain that his lawyers and the police understood its importance. His response was that, unless he “saw blood or bruises”, it was “one person’s word against another’s”, and he was not in favor of it.

The first time I tried to obtain an order of

protection for a client, the judge I appeared before told me that the law was too new and refused to grant it. I had a talk with the chief judge about that and he told me to return the next day to the judge. The judge signed the order without a word.

The first time I went to Kendall County to represent a client in a divorce prove up, I was the first person in the courtroom. The judge hearing the case walked through and tipped his hat to me; he headed into his chambers. Then he came back out and said, “Now, whose legal secretary are you?”

Mary: Are there any attorneys whom you are proud to say *you* mentored, and do you know where they are and what they are doing today?

Susan: I think I helped mentor Katherine Moran and Kate McCracken, whom we hired when I was at Gib Drendel’s firm. Everyone knows what successful careers they had and have. I also believe Sandra Byrd would say that I was helpful to her when she left the Public Defender’s office, even though she quickly found out that divorce was not “her thing”. Also, Susan Lonergan and I mentored each other. I always tried to help other attorneys along the way.

Mary: What tips do you have for new women law school graduates?

Susan: My advice to those attorneys is to be prepared and firm, but kind. That is very important. Get involved in bar associations! They’re great on many levels. The best advice I can give to women attorneys is to be fierce, not unkind, but fierce in standing up for yourselves and for your women clients. Also, and maybe most importantly, is to be involved in any ways you can with other women lawyers. You will not regret it!

Mary: Now that you have retired from the practice of law, please tell us how you enjoy your time. What took you to New Jersey and what are your interests and activities?

Susan: I retired seven years ago and now live in Princeton. It is beautiful here, believe it or not. I wanted to return to the east coast and be near a university and NYC, and I am happy here. I stay active and am lucky enough to still be in good health. I audit classes at Princeton and other places here. I love modern art and love to visit the New York and Philadelphia museums.

Mary: Susan, thank you so much for sharing with our readers a glimpse of your life and, on behalf of all women attorneys, thank you for paving the way for us!

Susan: The most crucial obligation our profession has, in my opinion, is to see that the rule of law continues to exist and that it applies to *all* citizens. You are entrusted with that enormous task now, and I am proud of all of you.

When you first approached me about this article, I wasn't sure. I have been retired

for over seven years and I don't often think about my law career. I did, however, want to make younger women lawyers and law students aware that they stand on the shoulders of the many women who have made their current situations better. But I was also surprised at how much I enjoyed looking back on those years and events. It was like taking a walk down memory lane and it was fun. Thank you, Mary, for the opportunity. ■

Mary F. Petrucci is the pro bono project lead for Prairie State Legal Services' West Suburban Office. She was the 2013-14 chair of the ISBA Standing Committee on Women & the Law. Mary was the 2011 recipient of the Matthew Maloney Tradition of Excellence Award and was honored with the Board of Governors Award in 2014. She is an IBF Diamond Champion. Mary is a member of the ISBA Standing Committee on CLE and is CLE liaison to the Business & Securities and Human & Civil Rights Section Councils, and the Standing Committees on Delivery of Legal Services and Corrections & Sentencing.

Susana Mendoza: The Goalkeeper for Illinois' Finances

BY CHRISTINA MALECKI

As Illinois state comptroller, Susana Mendoza has been sworn to follow the laws of the state of Illinois just as she followed the "laws of the game" she fell in love with as a former soccer player during her years in high school and college. Using the work ethic she developed on the field of play, Susana Mendoza delivers when it comes to balancing the state of Illinois' budget. She was able to successfully "block tackle" debt buildup and erase the backlog of billions of dollars in unpaid bills for the state. Susana has scored a historical "hat trick" during her career as an Illinois politician. First, at age 28, Susana became the youngest member of the 92nd Illinois General Assembly. Second, she was the first woman elected as Chicago City Clerk. Third, she is the first Hispanic person to be independently elected to a statewide office in Illinois. Being a sports enthusiast myself, I had the opportunity to "forward pass" the following questions to Susana. Her enthusiasm and candor made her responses very refreshing, like her honest and vibrant personality.

1. Describe your current job duties.

As Illinois State Comptroller, I am the state's Chief Fiscal and Accountability Officer, responsible for managing all the state's fiscal accounts and paying all the state's bills.

2. What do you enjoy the most about being the IL State Comptroller?

I most enjoy knowing that my hard work is directly making a difference in improving people's lives as well as the health of our state's finances. Most importantly, I've enjoyed being the comptroller during the absolute most challenging times in the state's history. I've now successfully navigated Illinois through the two worst fiscal crises to ever hit our state: the 736-day budget impasse and the Covid-19 global pandemic. I did so while prioritizing the most vulnerable people and businesses in our state. Since taking office, I've been laser focused on paying down, and now eliminating the state's \$16.7 billion backlog of unpaid bills, without using federal stimulus funds. We no longer have a bill backlog but instead have an Accounts Payable. I delivered the fastest vendor payment cycle in decades, down from an average of 210 business days to 17 days today. As a lead architect of Illinois' financial turnaround, my work was largely responsible for earning the state its first credit upgrades in over 20 years. More than just positive numbers on spreadsheets, improving the state's finances meant that people who relied on the stability and predictability of critical resources were getting the help they needed. It meant businesses across our state were no longer on the verge of closing and instead

could plan for the future. Knowing that my work has that type of positive impact makes me happy.

3. What are factors to consider when running for office?

First and foremost, you need to ask yourself if you have a true passion for helping and serving others without an expectation of thanks in return. If the answer is not a categorical yes, you should look to do something else. It's important to understand that you're asking people for their trust and faith in you to do right by them.

Beyond that, there are several other important factors to consider:

1. Is the office you're seeking to run for winnable?
2. Can you assemble a campaign team of paid and volunteer staff that can help put together a winning campaign?
3. How much money do you need to raise to compete and win, and are you able to successfully fundraise to meet your goals?
4. Do you have the energy and stamina to run a winning campaign and set the example with your work ethic? Everyone thinks it's easy to run for office, until they realize it's anything but.

5. Can you assemble notable endorsements that bring with them votes or financial commitments?

4. What are the biggest obstacles/challenges women in politics face?

I think the biggest obstacles/challenges women in politics face are centered around fundraising, work/life balance, and confidence.

1. Women generally tend to have a more difficult time raising money than men do.
2. Women tend to delay running for office more than their male counterparts do, particularly if they have young kids. A major hurdle for women running for office or even getting involved in politics on a volunteer level has been the lack of affordable childcare. Hopefully that will change now that Illinois recently passed legislation that allows candidates for office to use campaign funds to pay for childcare services. This new law will hopefully be especially helpful in encouraging more women to step up to run or get active on campaigns.
3. Sometimes our own lack of self-

confidence or our too exacting standards are our own worst enemies. Women tend to want to check off every box of qualifications before deciding to run for office, whereas men check their pulse. If men have a pulse and are breathing, they feel they're more than qualified to run. Women need to do a better job of believing in themselves, knowing what they're good at, and stepping up to run, even if they don't check every box. We definitely shouldn't wait around for others, many times men, to encourage us to run or validate us as worthy of their support.

5. What is the biggest difference in politics now compared to when you started? What do you attribute the changes to?

I think the biggest difference in politics now compared to when I started in 2001, is the deep political partisan divide that exists. Back when I started, it was a great quality to be bipartisan. Cultivating strong working relationships on both sides of the political aisle was seen as the sign of a good politician. People from opposite political

parties could disagree on political issues, but still be friends, break bread together and work together on the issues they could agree on. Today, the political divide is so great, and it's become even hateful. I've seen families torn apart over differing political ideologies. I think Donald Trump had a lot to do in allowing the pent-up frustrations and inner demons of people to bubble up to the surface and find a safe haven and even support for behaviors once deemed inexcusable. Social media and the misinformation readily spread on it has also contributed to this divide. Unfortunately, the normalized hate and disrespect towards others, coupled with misinformation rooted in anti-science and conspiracy theory mentalities, poses a serious threat to the fragile institution of Democracy.

6. What are some of your hobbies (or have you read any fun books or watch any interesting movies recently)?

I love to cook and eat (I'm a major foodie). I also love to travel with my husband and son, love going to sports games (especially soccer), love snowboarding, listening to live music, and occasionally jumping out of perfectly fine airplanes. ■

An Interview With Representative Terra Costa Howard

BY MISSY GREATHOUSE

I had the pleasure to connect with Representative Terra Costa Howard to learn about her journey into politics, as we celebrate women in politics this newsletter.

Tell us about a little about yourself personally.

- Married 27 years (almost). Mother of 3 beautiful daughters who keep me humble.
- Graduated from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1993,
- DePaul University College of law JD 1996
- Served on the Glen Ellyn 41 School Board 8 years

- Adjunct Professor College of DuPage Paralegal Studies program
- Glen Ellyn Village Plan Commission
- Member of the ISBA since 1996 and have served in numerous committee assignments and chairmanships throughout.
- Spare time- cooking, reading fiction and watching EPL soccer matches. Looking forward to traveling again.

Tell us about your work as an attorney.

I have had the opportunity to have many different experiences as an attorney. My first job out of law school was as a staff attorney with the Eighteenth Judicial Court. It was

a great opportunity to learn the behind the scenes, working with judges and how they evaluate the law on their cases.

I moved to the DuPage County Public Defender's Office as an assistant assigned to Juvenile Court. I found my passion in those courtrooms working on behalf of children and families.

After my third daughter was born, I went into private practice. My current practice focuses on continued work with children, elderly, and the disabled. Families need assistance navigating the system whether in family court or probate court. It is an honor to serve as a Guardian ad Litem.

Tell us about your decision to run for office.

After serving 8 years on our local school board, I knew I wanted to continue to serve my community. Like many women after the 2016 election, I knew I could not sit by and watch an administration decimate the rights of women and children. The more I researched my legislators, I was incredibly disappointed to see their voting records did not represent our communities. So, I picked up a clipboard and started collecting signatures.

What factors do you think are important to consider when running for office?

Time - Do you really have the time to devote to not only the election process but if elected. It is a much larger time commitment than people realize.

Money - Can you take a pay reduction due to the time commitment? Can you raise money to run for office?

The right reason to run for office. That may seem strange because it's hard to imagine why anyone would run for office without a noble purpose but unfortunately it does happen. Do your homework about the responsibilities of the position. Often, individuals run for office because of one issue then get elected and realize they must govern. There is so much more to being elected to office than just running. You have to make decisions for EVERYONE, not just the people who agree with you.

What would you want women to know who are interested in getting involved in politics?

Talk to your families first. Running and serving requires a great deal of time away from them. They need to understand what that means.

You will need a good support system. Whether it is someone to help with carpooling, getting people off to school/work or just a shoulder to lean on when things are tough.

Unfortunately, there are a number of safety concerns as well. We are living during a time when angry people make threats. One of my colleagues needed police protection because of lies that were communicated about one of her bills. I had a rock thrown at my windshield and threats

made as well.

Once elected, what are things that surprised you as you entered the world of politics?

It is not as it seems. I had the same reaction when I was elected to the school board. Doing the work is much different than the public realizes. You have a lot to learn and a greater understanding/appreciation for the work staff does as well.

On the not positive side, social media is the source of a great deal of misinformation. People seek out information that supports their way of thinking. It is easier to believe false information because one can go searching for it. When they do, its near impossible to present truth/facts.

What do you wish you would have known prior to deciding to run for office?

The amazing people I would meet that are in it for the right reasons. The staff of brilliant individuals who do the day-to-day work, for little pay who want to change the world. No one goes into public service expecting to become financially wealthy. Those of us, who do it for the right reasons, can look at ourselves every day and make our families proud.

What do you enjoy most about being a public servant?

When you meet someone for the first time and they tell you how that bill you passed, changed their lives. Knowing you did the right thing, even when it's extremely difficult and you know people will be unhappy.

Anything else you would like to share with the women of ISBA?

We women need to do more to support one another. Often women feel threatened by other women, as if someone else getting ahead leaves you behind. When we women work together, we can change things for everyone. That is our superpower! ■

Section, CLE Coordinator of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section, Third Judicial Circuit Assembly member, member of the Special Committee on Racial Inequality, member of the Bar Elections Supervision Committee, and member of the Standing Committee on Judicial Evaluations – Outside of Cook County.

Missy Greathouse is the executive director of Dispute Resolution Institute, Inc., a nonprofit providing conflict resolution services throughout Illinois, both within and outside of the court system. She serves in many leadership roles in ISBA including as Chair of the Child Law Section, Ex-Officio Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution