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(806) 744-4569, ext. 600

TREASURER

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Houston 77023-1423
(713) 924-2200

CHRONOLOGIST

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AWARDS

Ronnie Harrison HARRISON LAW OFFICE, P.C. 411 Fannin, Ste. 350 Houston 77002 (713) 223-4034

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Angie Webster HICKS THOMAS, LLP 700 Louisiana St., Ste. 2000 Houston 77002-2723 (713) 547-9100

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HARTILINE DACUS BARGER DREYER LLP
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Dallas, 75231
(214) 346.3771

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By Nora Bryant



CHAIR'S CORNER

As I start my year as Chair of the Section, I am overwhelmed by the honor of getting to work with such an extraordinary group of women. This year's Council includes attorneys from all corners of the State, with diverse practices and backgrounds, but who have at least this one thing in common - their commitment to service. Our Section is charged with the mission of encouraging and facilitating the active and effective participation of women in

the legal profession and in the community, and addressing women's needs and the issues affecting them. It is no small task – with over 29,000 female members of the State Bar, the issues affecting them are surely as varied as can be. But the numbers show that we do face some common challenges; although women and men enter law school in roughly equal proportions, the ratio of practicing attorneys is quite different – there are twice as many practicing men as there are practicing women

When we talk about how to retain women in the profession, one of the points I hear made over and over again is on the importance of mentorship – how crucial it is for all attorneys to have someone to go to for guidance. But recently, I heard someone give advice that really stuck with me: "Don't just find one mentor, get yourself a team of mentors". When I thought about this, I realized that I need both hands to count the number of mentors I have – women and men who have been invaluable resources to me, both personally and professionally. And the funny thing is, I think most of these individuals would be surprised to hear me call them my mentors. We don't meet up for coffee once a month – although I'd love it if we could, none of us has the time – and in some instances, a year might go by without so much as a phone call between us. But whenever I've had a question, needed to bounce an idea around, or even just wanted to look to a real-life example of the kind of attorney I strive to be, one of them has been ready and able, and none of them have ever made me feel dumb for asking.

I hope that all of you are so lucky, and if you are, I encourage you to reach out to the people who have made an impact and let them know. But even more importantly, I hope that you will look around to see if there's someone you know who might need another mentor on their team. I think we often hesitate to commit because we're already overextended, but sometimes it takes just a small word of encouragement to make a big difference to the women just starting their legal careers.

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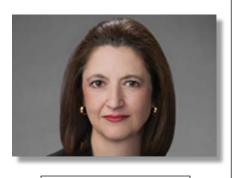
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As part of our efforts to promote women in the profession, our Section is launching a LinkedIn group, to make it easier for women attorneys to connect and join in the conversation about the issues affecting them. We hope you'll be a part of these discussions, and let us know how we can better serve you, our members. I'm looking forward to working with you this year to improve the practice of law for Texas women.

The Women and the Law Section Annual Meeting Notes By Deborah Cordova



Justice Eva Gusman



Robin Russell



Andrea "AJ" Johnson

The Women and the Law Section of the State Bar of Texas held its Annual Meeting on June 27, 2014 at the Austin Convention Center and honored three extraordinary women.

The Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award was established in 1982, by The Women and the Law Section of the State Bar of Texas. The award honors women attorneys who have paved the way for success for other women attorneys through their outstanding achievements and accomplishments in their professional area. In selecting such an accomplished trailblazer, the Council takes into consideration the influence the honoree has or had on other women to pursue a legal career or has opened the door to an area of practice that traditionally had been closed to women or has assisted in advancing legal opportunities for other women in an area of practice. This year, the Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award recipient was Texas Supreme Court Justice Eva Guzman. The Honorable Justice Eva Guzman became the first Hispanic woman to serve on the Texas Supreme Court when Governor Rick Perry appointed her to the Texas Supreme Court on October 8, 2009. In 2009, Justice Guzman was named Latina Judge of the Year by the Hispanic National Bar Association and was also named Judge of the Year by the Mexican American Bar Association of the Texas Foundation. Justice Guzman was also honored by the Houston Police Officers Union and was named Appellate Judge of the Year. Prior to being appointed to the Texas Supreme Court, Justice Guzman was a Justice on the 14th Court of Appeals. Justice Guzman undoubtedly paved the way for women attorneys through her accomplishments and excellence.

The Louise B. Raggio Award (formerly the Ma'at Justice Award) is presented to a woman or an association of women working towards the furtherance of justice in our society. This year, the Council of The Women and the Law Section of the State Bar of Texas honored Robin Russell, Managing Partner of Andrews Kurth's Houston Office. Ms. Russell's practice includes bankruptcy restructuring and litigation with financial transaction work. Ms. Russell has been with Andrews Kurth for over 27 years and in January of 2011, was appointed as the Managing Partner of the Houston office. Ms. Russell also serves on Andrews Kurth's Policy Committee, Finance Committee, Opinions Committee and the Women's Initiative Team. Ms. Russell's notable accomplishments caught the attention of The Women and the Law Section and as a result she was recognized for addressing the needs and issues affecting women both in the legal profession and in the community.

The Barbara Culver Clack Award is presented by the Chair of The Women and the Law Section to an inspirational woman attorney. This year, Melissa Dorman, chair of The Women and the Law Section honored Andrea Johnson with the Barbara Culver Clack Award. Andrea "AJ" Johnson is a partner at Burleson, LLP and her practice includes employment and commercial litigation. AJ has been and continues to be an inspirational role model to The Women and the Law Section through her leadership in the organization and commitment and passion for the advancement of women attorneys. AJ's unwavering dedication to The Women and the Law Section is a true reflection of her admirable character.

SECTION HISTORIES



A CONVERSATION WITH ELLEN GRIMES

- Where did you grow up?
 - I grew up in Dallas, Highland Park.
- Did you have brothers and sisters?
 - I have one sister and three brothers. I am the only one that became a lawyer.
- During your childhood, do you recall boys being treated differently than girls?

I think it was assumed that boys would be the president of the class, student council or different clubs, and that it was the girls' role to be secretary or treasurer or vice president. It was the unspoken assumption at the time. It was just part of the culture. I think that mentality really stays with women, or it did at that point, and could affect how they progress in their work or their opportunities for leadership later on.

❖ What made you decide to attend law school?

My husband was a lawyer and we had many male lawyer friends. I didn't know any female lawyers at all until I started practicing. Our friends would talk about their war

stories of what happened with their clients or what was happening in court, and it all sounded so interesting to me. I was getting a little bored teaching school. So I got the LSAT practice test and timed myself on the kitchen oven. I did okay on it so I decided to just try law school. I was never totally committed until I actually graduated from law school. The whole time I was in law school, I kept thinking, "should I be here? Shouldn't I be here?" because I had little children. That was really the hardest time in my life—taking care of my children and going to law school. So I stuck at it for the three years and was absolutely delighted when I started practicing because I really, really enjoyed it. I'm glad I did it. I'm kind of amazed I didn't drop out actually.

- Where did you go to school?
 - I went to the University of Texas in Austin for my undergraduate studies except for one semester at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. I have a Master's in French from the University of Houston. Then I went to law school at the University of Houston.
- ♦ How did you decide to attend the University of Houston for law school?
 - Well, since I had already gone to UH to get my Master's degree, I was very familiar with it and, also, it's the least expensive law school in town.
- Before law school, did you pursue another career?
 - I was a French teacher at a private Catholic girls' school. I was a fashion coordinator at a store, which used to be called Joske's. I did some television commercials for Joske's. I taught English also at a public school. And I did all of that prior to going to law school.
- ❖ How were women in law school treated at that time?
 - I did not feel any discrimination whatsoever. It was tough on all of us equally. I cannot think of any way that there was any discrimination at all. However, when I started practicing, I felt some discrimination. When I voir dired the panel in a jury trial, I would have to ask them how they felt about a woman being a lawyer in court because there still was this idea that women weren't supposed to be doing that sort of thing. Some people thought it was not "ladylike." Also, all the judges were male, and it was a little disconcerting when I listened to the opposing lawyer and the judge discuss their plans for their next hunting trip.
- ❖ Where did you first work as a lawyer?
 - I started out working for Scott Douglas & Keeton. I worked there for a year. It was big business litigation, mainly antitrust at that point. After that, I started practicing family law at Tindall and Foster. I went to work for Harry Tindall and worked for him for five years. He taught me how to practice family law. He was a great mentor to me.
 - After working for Harry, I started my own firm.
- ♦ How would you describe your experience looking for work after law school?
 - I did not really have difficulty. Law Firms interviewed at the University of Houston. I felt like that my age was a problem rather than my gender, since I was forty years old when I graduated. Most of the other students were in their early 20s.
- ❖ Who did you look up to during your first years of practice?
 - I really am very, very grateful to Harry Tindall for what he taught me during those five years and for how much he pushed me to become a certified specialist in family law. He gave me the opportunity to go to court all the time. He encouraged me to get involved in different aspects of the state bar committees and local bar committees.
 - The women that I really admired and who gave me an idea of how women were supposed to present themselves in court or handle a lawsuit were Louise Raggio in Dallas, Burta Rayburn in Houston, and Marian Rosen in Houston. Sybil Belasco and Ruby Sondock were the only two female judges I remember.
- ♦ How has the legal profession changed over the course of your career?
 - I have three different areas that I know about. First, my husband was an attorney with a big firm, so I see what's happened there. Lawyers don't stay with their firms throughout their whole career like they used to. They move around a lot. Second, what I see in family law is that there are not as many trials as there used to be. The popularity of mediation and the requirement of mediation have promoted settlement. Also, litigation is so expensive now that people are also much more prone to get their cases settled in mediation. In the old days we went to court constantly. Also, I also see the effect of publicity about the courts and judges. It seems like the judges get more publicity these days if they are doing something that people think is inappropriate or wrong. I think that the publicity has diminished the public's respect for the court system. Therefore, they want to stay out of the courts.

SECTION HISTORIES

(Cont'd)

❖ Do you feel that women face challenges in the legal profession that men do not?

The challenges that I see are the problems of motherhood. There's always that tension of the competition between family responsibilities and work. However, I see men being more involved with the family responsibilities, which helps. Ultimately, I think that it is usually the mothers who have the primary responsibility.

❖ What advice do you have for women pursuing legal careers?

I think they should do it. I think it's a fantastic career. The particular field I'm in is always extremely interesting. The stories, the problems, the people, and the clients are interesting. The other lawyers you deal with are interesting. It's an opportunity to get to know people really well. You have the satisfaction of feeling like you are doing something to help people. You also get paid well for the work you do. I think it's a great career. The most important asset an attorney can have, especially in the family law field, is actually really caring about your client and what happens to him or her. Then you must be willing to really, really work hard because it is hard work. You owe it to your client to keep healthy so that you have the energy to do the hard work. You must keep learning in your particular specialty of the law. You must remember that there are two sides to every story that your client tells you. You don't have to take every client who interviews you. Wait for the ones you care about.

❖ What's the most important lesson you've learned from a mistake you made?

There will be mistakes. Nothing is ever perfect and most mistakes can be corrected. If it can't be corrected, it's usually not as disastrous as it may first appear to be. I can't really remember a disastrous mistake. I can think of things I wish I had done differently, but that's always the case.

- What's the most important thing that can be done to improve retention among women in the legal profession?
 - I think the retention problem is based on the problem of women having to juggle their family life and work. The pressure gets to be too much. I think it would help if there wasn't so much emphasis on the billing, and if there was more flexibility in the time that women spend in the office. Law firms should make it easy for men and women to pick up and deliver their children to and from school, attend their games and activities, stay at home if a child is sick, help the attorneys find adequate affordable day care, provide babysitter lists or on-site daycare.
- Would you recommend that a lawyer looking for greater flexibility start her own firm?
 Oh, yes. That's always a good way to deal with it. You are able to control your time yourself instead of having somebody else control it.
 That is the reason I started my own firm.
- ❖ Please tell us about your involvement in the Women in the Law Section.

I first started being involved with the women in the profession committee when I was on the Board of Directors for the State Bar. A director is appointed to be a liaison with the committees or the section. After I was on the Board of Directors, I just stayed on the committee as a member of the committee for a very long time. I can't even remember how long. But one of our big projects that I was most proud of was getting the history of the female lawyers in Texas book published by the Texas Bar Books. It's called Rongh Road to Justice. We hired an author, Betty Chapman, to write the book, and the Texas Bar Foundation provided the seed money for it. Texas Bar Books published it, and it's for sale on the website. It's a wonderful, readable history of the women in the profession in Texas; all of their stories are so interesting. It's fascinating.

❖ As far as your practice, what are you doing now?

I am heading toward retirement. Instead of doing active litigation practice, I'm mainly doing cohabitation agreements, prenuptial and marital agreements. I'm also doing collaborative law divorces, which I like a lot.

Are you a WAL Section member and have something you would like to share with the rest of Membership (i.e. Awards; Honors; Employment move or office relocation; Upcoming CLE speaking engagements; Employment search: hiring or seeking, etc.)? Our newsletter reaches over 800 WAL members from across Texas. Please send your announcement(s) to:

Angie Webster, Newsletter Editor <u>awebster@hicks-thomas.com</u> Re: WAL NEWS

¹ http://texasbarbook<u>s.net/books/rough-road-to-justice/</u>

FIVE THOUGHTS FOR FINDING BALANCE By Nicole D. Mignone, Esq.

As a kid, did you ever quickly spin yourself around, either standing up or by merry-go-round, and then just stop? During the subsequent moments of repose you were likely absorbed in the moment, feeling first the exhilarating rush and then the calm wave throughout your body. You were probably not mentally engaged with a laundry list of thoughts, doubts, or obligations.

As lawyers and as women, our proverbial plates often feel overly full with deadlines, commitments, and obligations, not to mention the endless (not always so helpful) conversations in our heads. We may stop one merry-go-round only to step on another without taking the opportunity to feel any release and calm. Life requires constant recalibration so we can feel balanced, and we need to feel balanced so that we can actually feel the life we are living. In the midst of the obligations and responsibilities, do we understand the why behind them? By recognizing that a meaningful life encompasses the journey and the destination we can momentarily pause, breathe, and enjoy life. Despite the media and societal messages to the contrary, we do not have to rush. Life does not end in a ceremony awarding prizes for the best life, kids, relationships, or career. Likewise, no academy awards a trophy for best supporting role in someone else's life or best lead role in your own. We just have our life, with varied plot lines. And if we take some time after the rush, we can actually feel exhilarated rather than frenzied.

If your own life feels a little off-course and you seek equanimity, you may consider taking a few minutes over a break, perhaps with a journal, to contemplate the following topics which may be the cause. Conscious change, both internal and external, comes first from awareness.

1. Defining Success

Defining success for yourself on your terms, rather than an ever-changing standard defined by others, provides a stable inner compass. This clarity allows you to commit your time aligned with your values, and then success will not feel like a moving target. So often the constant exposure to media or others' opinions feeds self-doubt and fear of not being "enough." If external metrics cause you to compare, you may never feel you have truly attained success.

BOOK REVIEW By Paula Whitten-Doolin

THE SECOND SHIFT: WORKING FAMILIES AND THE REVOLUTION AT HOME. Arlie Hochschild with Anne Machung. New York: Penguin, 2012. 278 pp.

The focus of this book, first published in 1989, is the pervasive myth (as the author refers to it, and later finds it to be) of the woman who can "have it all;" a successful career, marriage, and family (including children) and the ways in which that myth plays out in families at all levels of income and social status. The format of the book starts with an introduction—where the author explains her impetus for the research, which involved trying to be a successful professor at Berkeley (a very progressive institution) with a newborn, and failing in many ways. She then covers background research on the topic, some of which shocked me. For example, she cites studies from the 1960s and 1970s, aggregated, which showed that working women worked an average of an extra month, a year, of 24 hour days, than their husbands when childcare and housework were factored in. She also finds, through her own research, that the time with children is most often not "fun" time; it is more likely to be "hurry-up-and-take-yourbath-eat-your-breakfast-get-dressed-go-to-bed" time, than the time that husbands spent with children. She also finds that those women are exhausted, unsurprisingly. So she seeks to figure out how this actually happens, and plays out, in real marriages.

At first, I did not realize that the book's research was from the 1980s - 1990s. The author did follow up and update this edition in 2012, but the fact that the research anecdotes in the book are not tied to a time or place is telling. The format of the book follows actual couples whom the author observed, and how they handled the working family—successfully or not—while she interacted passively with them. Each reader will draw his or her own conclusion, but the marriages which seemed to work the best involved less or little "struggle." In some cases, this meant that the working woman accepted a secondary role to the husband—even if she made more money—and persuaded him to help with house/children in other ways (such as by playing "helpless"). In other cases, the husband accepted an equal (or close to it) role in the home voluntarily. In the other cases, there was a power fight, where each party would give (too much) they thought, and the other would exact a toll in return. In terms of work at home, this most often exacted a cost on the wives; in terms of time with

Take a few minutes to envision or jot down how you will know you have achieved success for yourself. Describe your day, your lifestyle, your relationships, and how you feel. Return to this vision often to help you determine how and when you will spend your time.

2. Vulnerability

As lawyers, especially newbies in the workplace, we erroneously believe we are supposed to have the right answers to everything. As human beings, we all are "winging it" on our own path. The bane of the legal profession, though, is the ubiquitous argument for the sake of being right rather than being at peace or being vulnerable. Yes, we need to advocate for our client and this requires preparation. We accordingly research, investigate, and gather information. Being prepared also means knowing our strengths and recognizing where our vulnerabilities lie so we can garner support. Being vulnerable allows inner peace, not weakness. Rather than pushing an argument just to be right, we instead review the opposition's perspective and become practiced at the art of questioning. Just as you can more clearly see the riverbed in calm water, inner peace produces the power position.

For the moment, consider whether any perceived discord or imbalance you currently feel derives from a need to be right due to a fear of being vulnerable. Determine what information would dissipate that fear.

3. Intuition

Intuition may be our biggest ally with the least credibility. An education, especially for law, develops thinking and analytical skills. Although logical reasoning provides the foundation necessary for effective advocacy, it does not have to exclude other tools at our disposal. Intuition guides us through uncharted territory concerning people, situations, and the truth. We may need to awaken this hibernating skill within us, but we cannot discount its utility at times. Wisdom and experience teach you when to use these tools.

When you feel uncomfortable about a situation or person, do you tend to discount it with logic because you have no "evidence" to substantiate it? Instead of doubting the feeling, consider asking yourself what you would need to happen, change, or know to feel more comfortable. Practice writing your hunches down and following up on a few with questions or research. You may be surprised by what you discover.

children, this most often exacted a cost on the husbands, but neither was willing to cede.

This research painted a fairly bleak picture. The updated research from 2012 (post "The Great Recession" of 2008, in which men were far more likely than women to lose their jobs) was somewhat hopeful. In that 30-year period, the extra month of work (for women) had receded by half—i.e. an extra two weeks of 24 hour days—and men were more likely to support a high-earning wife. Yet there is still an impact on United States children. According to a 2007 UNESCO report, despite being first in income, we ranked twentieth out of twenty-one countries studied in health, schooling, and social relationships. And our children are more likely to be unhappy.

The author's conclusion from this is that US employers need to better support family in ways which are gender neutral—paternity and maternity leave, subsidized child care, paid FMLA leave. My conclusion is that balance—of children, marriage, and work—is still elusive for successful women; and that strategies for dealing with balance must likely start in the home, as well as the workplace.



Congratulations to D Magazine's 2014 Corporate Counsel Award Finalists:

Hope Shimabuku

Champion of Diversity

Dena DeNooyer StrohOutstanding Community Service

4. Problem-solving 24/7

Life as a lawyer requires a constant refinement of communication skills, depending on the audience and the situation. Clients have problems to solve and they seek quick answers. When you leave your office, though, and communicate with friends and family, do you continue to wear your lawyer hat? If you allow your problem-fixing communication style to spill out into your personal life you may be unconsciously draining your energy reserves.

When your girlfriends or family call you to discuss an issue, try letting them discuss it fully without offering any advice. Ask them questions about how they feel, what they think, and what options they have considered. Have faith in them to determine the best course of action and reinforce this confidence in the conversation. Strong women accustomed to taking care of themselves and others tend to be on auto-pilot in the area of fixing everyone's problems. People feel more empowered, though, if they can hear themselves talk through the issue with support as they make their own decisions. In the long run this will make you a better lawyer as you become a better listener. You may also be surprised how much more energy you have when you just listen, and if you are asked to solve the problem, verify they aren't just seeking permission to make the choice they already know best serves them.

5. Abundance Consciousness

Law school reinforces scarcity consciousness with its bell-curve grading system setting the stage for an adversarial winners-versus-losers professional framework. Sadly, jobs, opportunities, issues, and clients seem to fall into this same competitive framework. This mindset may serve some purpose, but the possibility also exists that such a competitive paradigm is neither universal nor necessary. If we instead believe that every problem can be resolved amicably, more creative solutions could be reached. Although opposing counsel may not always share this open-minded perspective and instead be aiming for the jugular, by being both prepared and open-minded, a more peaceful and positive resolution process can emerge.

The key to counteract this scarcity consciousness, which drains the soul, is to cultivate abundance consciousness. Consider practicing gratitude and acknowledgement of the abundance around us. Seek the positive, the bright side, and the half-full glass whenever possible by finding creative outlets, ingesting information that reinforces abundance, and mingling with happy people.

By considering these five concepts in the context of your current life, one may spark a new awareness that shifts you toward a more grounded inner calm. Then when you feel the chaotic spinning, it will feel more exhilarating than frenzied.



Congrats 2014 WAL Super Lawyers!

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Deborah J. Race JoAl Cannon-Sheridan

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2014 WAL RISING STARS!

Deborah L. Cordova

Annie McAdams

Please submit your name for recognition in the next newsletter.

