

THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

A CATALYST FOR 2014 – 2015



Women and the Law Section Newsletter
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CHAIR'S CORNER



As I start my year as Chair of the Section, I am overwhelmed by the honor of working with such a talented 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 33,000 female members of the State Bar — the issues affecting them are surely as varied as can be.

This year, the Council plans to focus its efforts on serving the Section and as a resource to aid members in their practice. With that goal in mind, we have begun a thorough (and much-needed) overhaul of the Section's website. Once complete, it will provide information about benefits offered by the State Bar, upcoming CLE events and networking opportunities, as well as practical advice and useful links to other websites that other Texas attorneys have found valuable. The website will also feature the articles prepared for the Section newsletters. The Council hopes members will find the website can be a pragmatic tool, and we invite suggestions from members on how we can continue to improve it.

The Council also looks forward to offering our membership additional benefits in the form of CLE and networking happy hours. We kicked off the bar year with a well-attended happy hour on September 18, 2015, cohosted by the Houston Trial Lawyers Association. Our next complimentary happy hour is scheduled to take place in Austin on January 22, 2016, and all of our members are welcome. With regard to CLE provided by the Section, we hope to expand on the number and variety of programs offered. In addition to organizing the Section-sponsored CLE at the Annual Meeting as we have in past years, we are developing a Webinar that we expect to be available in January 2016.

Finally, the Council will lead the Section in a fundraising endeavor benefiting the Tahirih Justice Center in 2016. Tahirih provides legal and social services to women and children fleeing human rights violations, including sex trafficking and forced slavery. We believe this organization embodies the Section's mission, and we look forward to contributing to Tahirih's efforts in addressing women's needs. Additional information about this project will be made available in future newsletters and on the Section's website. We hope our members will be inspired to contribute to the cause or find another way to better the lives of women through monetary gifts and/or community service.

The Council and I look forward to serving you this year. Please reach out to us if you have suggestions or would like to get involved in our efforts to serve the needs of women in Texas.

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TIPS FOR MAKING TELECOMMUTING WORK FOR YOU

By [Chelsie King Garza](#)

From 2005 to 2012, the number of people telecommuting has increased 80%.¹ According to [research](#) by the financial software company Intuit, nearly a quarter of U.S. workers telecommute for at least a few hours every week. 67% of companies allow at least some employees to work at home occasionally, up from 50% in 2008, and 38% allowed some workers to do so on a regular basis, up from 23%.²

According to Forbes Magazine, telecommuting is the workforce of the future. With a decrease in overhead and the same level of production, who wouldn't support telecommuting? As an employee, though, how do you ensure that your work is getting noticed and that your productivity is recognized? Here are some tips for staying in the mix and staying motivated when you are working outside of the office.

1. Keep Talking – Check in Often

Communication is one of the biggest hurdles to a successful remote workplace. Often projects are given to those employees who stay top of mind. Don't try to use only one tool to connect to your colleagues. Email, chat, phone, text, and video conferencing each has its own place. Pick a communication tool that best conveys your message and meaning. And do not rely solely upon email. It is convenient, but can be easily overlooked.

Email is great for tactical information, simple short messages, and sharing quick data. The phone works well when you need to brainstorm or solve a messier problem. Video conferencing or conference calls are ideal for several people tackling a challenging topic or strategies involving complicated details.

Additionally, be proactive. Don't wait to hear from your manager or supervisor. Initiate the conversation.

2. Manage your Managing

If you're a manager, it can be difficult to stay present and available when you're telecommuting. Reach out to your team members regularly to set clear goals and expectations, offer support and assistance, and show you care about them as people, not just employees.

Also, work in some face time. Make sure you still have in-person meetings, such as monthly attorney or

¹ GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics.com

² <http://blogs.wsj.com/atwork/2014/04/29/employers-cool-off-on-job-sharing/?mod=e2fb>.

employee meetings. It is easy to leave your virtual workforce feeling left behind.

3. Have some Watercooler Chats

As more people begin to work remotely, colleagues may become more removed from one another. Team building increases productivity, just as getting to know one another personally increases the desire to work together. To that end, water cooler chats are lost on remote workers. Try to work those topics into your regular work conversations. Of course staying focused and productive is a concern when working remotely, but it is important to ask co-workers about their weekend, kids, or hobbies to strengthen the team.

Also, be deliberate about reaching out and connecting with your co-workers. Join the next team call a few minutes early to chat and catch up. Ask your manager for regular check-in calls or video conferencing sessions to share progress and strategize cases.

4. Measure Productivity

Know what productivity measurements fit your job and your employer. If you are in outside sales and will be judged based upon the number of new and reoccurring sales you originate, know your numbers and make sure these numbers are known by management. In the legal practice, many of us are judged on our overall profitability. Learn what is valued most at your firm, hours billed, new clients or files generated, etc. Keep track of your profitability. Also, keep an eye on what you are doing that helps make you profitable, *i.e.*, business development practices or time management that allows you to bill your requisite hours. This will help you maintain profitability over the long run.

However a company or firm chooses to do it, replacing vague expectations with concrete ones is even more crucial in virtual work environments, where the problems badly defined goals create are likely to be amplified. Employees should know these standards before agreeing to a remote work environment. Otherwise you may be setting yourself up for failure.

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IN THE KNOW...

- ❖ CONGRATULATIONS to WAL Board Member Paula Whitten Doolin who welcomed a baby boy in May 2015.
- ❖ CONGRATULATIONS to Judy Ney for being named the New chair of the Workers' Compensation section of the State Bar.
- ❖ CONGRATULATIONS to Carolyn Moore and Terry Sires on their August 22, 2015 wedding.
- ❖ CONGRATULATIONS Annie McAdams and McAdams PC on the opening of their new Denver office where they will exclusively handle Plaintiff Personal Injury.
- ❖ CONGRATULATIONS to Carolyn Moore on being named the chair of the Government section of the State Bar.
- ❖ CONGRATULATIONS to JoAl Cannon-Sheridan on being named in Thomson Reuters "Best Lawyers in America, Family Law" for the 3rd year in a row; being appointed as the Chair of the Professionalism and Collegiality Committee of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; serving as the current Vice-President of the Texas Academy of Family Law Specialists; and serving as Secretary/Treasurer of Austin Bar Association Family Law Section.
- ❖ Would you like to recommend membership to a colleague? Full Membership is \$25 for one year (if you have been licensed less than two years, your first two years are free) and a Student Membership is \$5. Membership year is Just 1st to May 31st. You can download an application from our website at <http://www.txwomenlawsection.com/Portals/0/WomenAndLawBrochure%204-20-2015.pdf>

Are you a WAL Section member and have something you would like to share with the rest of the 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

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Re: IN THE KNOW

MENTORING CAN BENEFIT EVERYONE

By [Meagan Hassan](#)

Mentors can foreseeably help all of us (particularly female lawyers) cultivate a pipeline of useful resources to confirm our analyses, acquire meaningful advice, and expand our networks. While many of us already know the innumerable benefits associated with joining a women's organization, countless contemporaries perceive their responsibilities to interfere with their attempts to develop meaningful mentoring relationships. Those without mentors are immeasurably more likely to drop out of the profession or to accept a job (or paycheck) which does not satisfy their wants or needs. Some of these women need a steady paycheck, others need regular hours, and others simply haven't identified what they need or what is available. Meaningful mentors can help alleviate such uncertainties in a positive, productive, and efficient manner.

The need for mentors doesn't change as we get older, wiser, or more accomplished – in many instances, newer lawyers can educate more experienced lawyers about recent changes in case law or useful technological advancements. When I first started, countless successful lawyers told me that it is technologically and procedurally impossible to identify anonymous speakers online and bring them into a Texas court; those lawyers' provably erroneous perceptions taught me the priceless value of young lawyers. As a result, I make it a point to keep at least three law students on the payroll at all times.

Women lawyers who work in small firms (or male-dominated fields) are frequently expected to either seamlessly fit in or to blaze their own paths. Without mentors, these women often laboriously and needlessly reinvent the wheel. While there are numerous organizations that provide formal mentoring programs, many women fail to understand or acquire the benefits associated with experienced sounding boards capable of providing meaningful advice without judgment.

Advice and mentoring can go in both directions. As a result, I encourage all of you to reach out to other women lawyers – there are probably only a few who will ever shut down a sincere request (or offer) for help. Whether we are brand new baby lawyers or 35+ year practitioners, we all have something unique to offer each other and our profession. Let your colleagues know that you are not only looking for advice, but that you are also available to them in the event they require it. Chances are that someone has already addressed your issue, that you can find that person, and that you can be a valuable resource to them as well.





Congratulations

2015 WAL SUPER LAWYERS!

Andrea M. Johnson	Misty M. Ventura
Suzanne M. Duvall	Malinda Ann Gaul
Deborah J. Race	JoAl Cannon-Sheridan
Collyn Peddie	Kim Askew
Cori A. Harbour-Valdez	Chelsie King Garza



2015 WAL RISING STARS!

Deborah L. Cordova

Annie McAdams

Kirby Drake

Meagan Hassan

Alison Colvin

The Women and the Law Section of the State Bar of Texas Held its Annual Meeting June 18-19, 2015 at the Grand Hyatt, San Antonio and Honored Three Extraordinary Women.

The Women and the Law Section was happy to present Carol Dinkins with the Sarah T. Hughes Award.



As only the fourth female associate hired at Vinson & Elkins in 1973, Carol Dinkins became the first woman partner at the firm. She has spearheaded the firm's aggressive hiring of women lawyers, and has been an active mentor and promoter of women throughout her career. In 1981, she served as the Chair of President Reagan's Task Force on Legal Equity for Women, and in 1999 she was presented with the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Award for Women Lawyers of Achievement. She has won the admiration of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who swore her in as the first female Deputy Attorney General of the United States.

The Section was also proud to present Kathleen Wu with the Louise Raggio Award



Like Louise Raggio, Kathleen Wu is known for her advocacy for women's issues. She has written extensively on issues facing women in the workplace, and is a frequent speaker on the topic. Kathleen has served on the State Bar's Task Force on Women and Minorities, and on the Women in the Profession Committee. Ms. Wu is a founding member of the University of Texas' Center for Women in Law, which studies and advocates for the promotion and retention of women in the profession. She currently serves as the Partner in Charge of the Business Transactions Department of Andrews Kurth, in Dallas, where she is known as an innovative thinker and trusted advisor to her clients.

The Barbara Culver Clack Award was presented to Judy Ney



Justice Barbara Culver Clack was a founding member of the Women and the Law Section, and the first Chair. This award proudly presented to Judy Ney, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Section for more than 15 years. The Section would not be where we are today without her wisdom and guidance.