

It is the mission of GAWL "To enhance the welfare and development of women lawyers and to support their interests."

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Judge Debra Bernes: Ruling Out Cancer

Judge Debra H. Bernes of the Georgia Court of Appeals, who underwent two surgeries in the past week to treat cancer, "is going to be OK," her husband Gary Bernes said Tuesday afternoon.

The judge may not need any further treatment and is expected to walk out of the hospital at Emory University in the next couple of

weeks, Gary Bernes said. "She's awake and feeling fine and bossing me around," he added.



The Honorable Debra Bernes

Bernes' family created a Web site to inform well-wishers about her progress. A posting by the judge herself on Saturday said that kidney surgery on Thursday "went off without a hitch." And another post by a family member Monday night said that a doctor reported that a second surgery—which Gary Bernes said was to put a support in her back—"couldn't have gone any better."

"Though I certainly would prefer not to have cancer," Bernes wrote in her Saturday post, "there is a silver lining in this cloud. Your kind

Con't Page 5

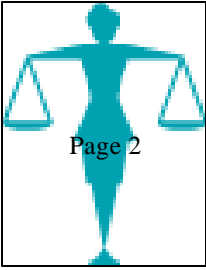
The Power of Women's Affinity Groups

By Christian Torgrimson

381,000+. That's the number of results you get if you Google the phrase "women's affinity groups."

What is an affinity group and why are they so popular? Affinity is defined as "of or pertaining to persons who share the same interests; inherent likeness or agreement; close resemblance or connection." In practice, an affinity group is a gathering of like-minded individuals who pool resources and brain power around a common interest.

When it comes to women's affinity groups, that common interest is the promotion of women, whether it is within a company, a law firm, or a boardroom. GAWL recently was invited to attend a Women's Affinity



Leader Spotlight On: Yonette Buchanan

Each Month, the Leadership Committee identifies a GAWL member to feature in our Leader Spotlight. This month, Yonette Buchanon caught our eye....

GAWL's
Next Monthly
Meeting is
Aug. 22d
At Noon
At Twelve at
Atlantic
Station

Visit
gawl.org
regularly.

Forward this
newsletter or
an e-blast to a
friend!

Meet Yonette Buchanon. Yonette recently joined Ashe Rafuse & Hill LLP as a partner after serving ten years as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of Georgia. At the U.S. Attorney's Office, Mr. Buchanan served as chief of the Terrorism and Violent Crime Section, where she supervised the investigations, prosecutions and trials of such serious matters as domestic terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, and crimes against children. She was also chair of the Hiring Committee.



**Ms. Yonette Buchannon:
Partner, Mother,
GAWL Member**

Yonette has received numerous awards and recognition for her achievements both as a prosecutor and advocate, including most recently an award in 2007 from the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, for her work in a high-profile civil rights and public corruption case. She is an active member of the Atlanta, Gate City, American and National bar associations, as well as the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers and the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys. Yonette also serves on the Diversity Committee of the Defense Research Institute

and on the Board of United Way's African American Partnership.

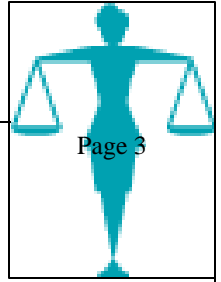
Ms. Buchanan is originally from Guyana, South America. She came to the United States when she was seventeen years old, and worked as a teacher's aide until she began her college studies. Yonette received her B.A. degree, magna cum laude, from City College of New York in 1987, and her J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1990.

Yonette's significant achievements in the field of law are all the more remarkable in light of the fact that she is the proud mother of nine-year-old triplets. In her spare time, she loves to read. Recent books include The Mermaid Chair by Sue Monk Kidd (author of The Secret Life of Bees), The Kite Runner, by Khaled Hosseini, and People of the Book, by Geraldine Brooks.

Be sure to introduce yourself to Yonette at a GAWL function, at court, or over email. She is a leader and a proud GAWL member.

Check out the Leadership Committee webpage at www.gawl.org for more Leader Spotlights.

GAWL MEMBERS ON THE RUN



One of GAWL's objectives this year is to change the face of leadership by influencing the election or appointment of GAWL members into leadership positions. By supporting members who seek out these positions, we can influence this process and ensure that more women become leaders on the bench and in the State Bar. The first step is to disseminate information about GAWL members who are running for elected offices in November. From now until the elections on November 8th, GAWL will be providing bi-monthly updates via e-blast on our members' campaigns. Through these e-blasts, GAWL will offer information on how YOU can get involved in the process and help us change our leadership!

If you wish to provide information about your campaign to be included in the e-blast, contact Toni L. Castel (VP of Communications) at tcastel@castel-law.com or at (678) 462-5611. The deadline for inclusion in the September 15 e-blast is September 12. It is recommended that candidates submit biographical information, a photo in jpg format, contact details and details of the campaign website. GAWL reserves all editorial rights.

How can You help our Members on the Run?

- Forward this email to voters!
- Check out their campaign websites!
- Get involved in their campaigns!

Impressions of Leadership, The 2008 Inaugural Leadership Academy

By Heather C. Wright

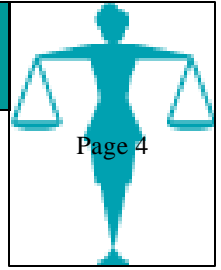
The business of law is at best challenging. After leaving law school with a degree and some modicum of idealism, each of us runs headlong into the harsh realities of day-to-day practice. The challenges of balancing the practice of law with our own personal hopes and dreams is sometimes a daunting task.

If you are like me, you were both fascinated and sobered by the stark realities presented by the "It's About Time II" Study. While some law firms have responded to the exodus of diverse talent by implementing workable part-time programs, many suffer turnover for want of a method to repair the system while maintaining profitability. In the meantime, many in our profession, especially women, exit the practice for alternative professional endeavors. It seems that there are some realities that we may never change, no matter how strong our leadership. Certainly, it is a challenge that each of us responds to differently.

It is with these thoughts ruminating in my mind that I began my journey to a deeper understanding of leadership as a part of the inaugural class of the GAWL Leadership Academy. Like many other educational seminars, I attended the Academy with some amount of skepticism. The four-day commitment was daunting in light of the lost revenue inherent to my participation. And many educational seminars just simply do not live up to the hype. However, casting those considerations aside, after the first day, I could not have been more pleased to be a part of the Academy.

The Leadership Committee created an insightful and diverse program, covering such topics as: goal setting, communications, marketing, community leadership, mentoring, and many other topics. We were challenged to step out of our comfort zones to develop new skills and refine existing strengths. I think each of the fifteen

Affinity Groups Con't from Page One



Leadership Breakfast hosted by Atlanta Woman magazine on July 22nd. Affinity groups from a wide range of companies and corporations attended, including Bank of America, Home Depot, AT&T, Accenture, Best Buy, Turner Broadcasting, Georgia Pacific, and Ernst & Young. These groups all have different names, from WolfPack to LEAD to Turner Women of Today. Each affinity group focuses on different topics from sharing experiences, ideas and advice, to providing leadership, networking, and mentoring, to professional and client development. However, they all share a common purpose: to utilize the power and influence of women to strengthen our impact within a community.

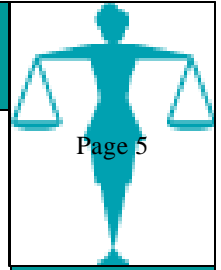
At the breakfast, GAWL fit right in with the discussion among these groups because we have the same purpose. From a broad brush perspective, GAWL's 1,000+ membership is an affinity group for women lawyers that serves to promote our interests, pool our resources, and use our voice to influence the legal community. As we have all read, GAWL's recently published "It's About Time II" Study on flexible work arrangements brings to light the continued lack of women in higher leadership roles in law firms. The study also provides a stark reminder of the current need for balance to resolve the disparity between the 48.8% of women lawyers who graduate from law school and the 17% of women who make partner across the United States. Recently, the California Women Lawyers bar contacted GAWL for permission to quote and cite to the report as an example of changes that can be made within their legal community. Our affinity group is reaching beyond our boundaries to support women lawyers in other communities.

Our affinity group is having an impact for women lawyers here in Georgia as well. Through Judicial Applicant Review Committee ("JARC"), GAWL influences the appointment of judicial candidates by reporting directly to the Governor's Judicial Nominating Committee. GAWL vets and endorses qualified members who are running for judicial office. GAWL also disseminates information on members running for other elected positions to provide an opportunity for women lawyers to get involved in the process and increase the number of women leaders.

Within our organization, GAWL has many affinity groups that focus on a wide range of common issues and more importantly, the practical solutions to them:

- GAWL's five active Chapters in Columbus, Savannah, Southside, Atlanta and John Marshall Law School provide a network for women lawyers around the State to develop their professional skills, meet other women lawyers, and refer business within smaller communities.
- GAWL's seven Neighborhood Networking Breakfasts focus on networking, rain-making and mentoring and are organized by locations, including Buckhead, Cobb/Cumberland, Decatur (which offers 4 separate meetings), Gwinnett (a brand new NNB), Intown/Midtown, North Fulton, and Perimeter/Dunwoody. Two-thirds of our members who responded to the most recent annual survey stated they had received a referral for business from a GAWL member through the NNBs and other avenues within GAWL.

Affinity Groups Con't from Page Four



- GAWL's Feminist Affinity Group gathers over dinner and wine to discuss and debate gender related issues, such as a recent article about the age-old debate of the division of domestic work among the sexes.
- GAWL's Working Mothers Affinity Group hosts monthly lunches with speakers as well as a list serve discussion on a variety of topics for working mothers, including flexible work arrangements and negotiating maternity leave.
- The GAWL Foundation, a 501(c)(3), works together to encourage busy lawyers to participate in the many community service opportunities that need our help, including dinners with the Nicholas House.

Your affinity group is ready and waiting to serve your interests. Through these groups, and others, GAWL offers the opportunity to network, develop professional skills, create a referral source for business, establish a niche within a community, and to become a leader. GAWL members can find a readily available forum to utilize our power and strengthen our influence as women lawyers. These groups are just a small example of what women lawyers can do when we collaborate over a goal that we all have in common: the promotion of women lawyers.

Christian Torgrimson is the current GAWL President and a partner with Pursley Lowery Meeks LLP, practicing in eminent domain and real estate related litigation. She can be reached at 404 880-7180.

Debra Bernes (Continued from Page One)

words, good wishes and prayers have been medicine for my heart." Pictures on the site show Bernes, 52, getting a visit from a hairdresser and heading out for Lullwater Park on the Emory University campus over the weekend.

Chief Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes said Tuesday that Bernes has her laptop and is directing her staff and reviewing matters from the hospital. Barnes said there's no need to reassign her cases at this point. "That wouldn't be something we would consider for quite some time," said Barnes. A Web site poster on Friday professed amazement that Bernes had held a staff meeting at the hospital, and the court's Director of Technical Services John Ruggeri posted Friday to say the information technology staff was preparing for Bernes' return to work.

Friends and members of the state's legal and political communities made reference to Bernes' spirit—as well as her relatively short stature—in posting get-well messages on the site set up by the family. In one post, Atlanta lawyer Mary M. "Peggy" Brockington referred to Bernes as "small but mighty," and several posters, including Gov. Sonny Perdue, called Bernes "the little engine who could." More than 200 messages had been posted on the site.

The site can be found at www.caringbridge.org; visitors must type "debrabernes" as one word in the box calling for the specific Web site name.



Op-Ed: When Your State Doesn't Make the Top 50 List August 2008

The results from Working Mother magazine's second annual list of the "50 Best Law Firms for Women" are out.

The only two Georgia firms listed on the 2007 list did not make it onto 2008's list. Six other national law firms, with a regional office in Georgia, were represented on the 2007 list for the practices of another regional office. Those related offices also failed to maintain their spots. For 2008, Georgia law firms can claim no kin or friend on the list.

Big surprise. In Spring 2008, GAWL published its follow-up study on part-time policies in larger law firms in Georgia. A copy can be found at www.gawl.org. Let me save you a Point Five: ain't nothin' changed since the first study. Generally, part-time policies in larger firms do not exist or exist with illegible fine print (e.g., kiss the thought of meaningful work and partnership good-bye).

Mussbe some kinda conspiracy between GAWL and that working woman magazine. I bet that there lady magazine looks at that "part-time" hullabaloo and automatically diskwalifiesya if you don't got one. That ain't right! Ain't no two-bit rag gawwnna tell a Georgia law firm how to run a business! No sirree. In fact, it is an honor not to be on that list! Firms on the list awttabeshamed of themselves. Shameful, I say!

Full-time now, full-time tomorrow and full-time forever!

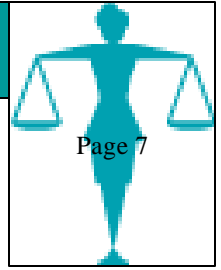
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Op-Ed pieces are submitted to the GAWL Newsletter through the op-ed editor. These editorials are intended to address important and/or controversial issues in the field. Members are encouraged to respond to Op-Ed pieces through the Newsletter Editor, Jennifer Keaton. Additionally, unsolicited op-ed submissions and related Letters to the Editor are welcome by emailing Ms. Keaton at Keaton@elarbeethompson.com. Generally, opinion pieces are published anonymously.

Inaugural Class (Con't From Page 3)

members of the class discovered a new strength within her and were encouraged to improve and grow in new directions. Each of us took away some very important lessons.

Substantive growth aside, the single most surprising result of the Academy is how quickly and strongly the class bonded. I would never have imagined that fifteen professional women collected in a small room for four days would have formed such instant and strong relationships. It defied any experience that I have had as a member of the Bar and I look forward to strengthening these relationships long into the future.
(Con't next page)



This experience made me realize that maybe we are not as behind the curve as the It's About Time II Study might make us feel. As women in the profession, we are truly a diverse group with incredibly different professional and personal goals. As women, it seems that we seek a wider range of personal and professional interests that many of our male counterparts do not. That is not to say that there should not be a path to partnership for successful women who have families. There should be. But it seems to me that we, as women lawyers are reacting in very positive ways to the realities of "wanting it all." As a result of our own circumstances, we enter a wider variety of professional endeavors, allowing each of us to more readily seek our personal goals.

The Inaugural Leadership Class is a testimony to our success as women lawyers that we have reached a level of great diversity and strength. The Class of 2008 is indeed a very diverse and successful group. We are partners at large firms. We are engineers. We are sole-practitioners and corporate counsel. We are law clerks to judges. We are managing partners. We are litigators and bankruptcy lawyers. We are marathoners and budding pilots. We are professional recruiters and prosecutors. We are teaching self-defense and running for judge. We are developing and planning our communities. We are bilingual and culturally diverse. We are serving on non-profit boards and are active in our communities. We are liberal and conservative. We are mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. We are women lawyers, doing our best to be leaders for our families, our communities, and our profession. Personally, I am very proud to be a part of the Leadership Class of 2008, because I think we represent how women lawyers have responded to the challenges of our profession and how we can lead those who come after us.

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