

Annual Dinner Edition

May 2009

**Improving the Practice for Women Lawyers
“One Bulb At A Time”
By Christian F. Torgrimson**

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

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For those of you who may not be familiar with this quote, it comes from the Daffodil Principle, a theory about how one woman can affect change one step at a time. As the theory goes, by moving toward our goals one step at a time, enjoying the journey along the way, and using the accumulation of time, we can accomplish magnificent things – in other words, we can change the world.



2008-09 GAWL President
Christian Torgrimson

The principle is based on a true story of one woman, Gene Bauer, who in 1958 started planting with one daffodil bulb what later became five acres of beautiful daffodils high in the San Bernardino mountain range in

Southern California. The author of the principle, Jaroldeen Edwards, had reluctantly agreed to visit the garden with her grandchildren after much cajoling by her daughter. After a short drive, they came upon a sea of 5,000 beautiful colorful blooms planted in majestic swirling patterns on a hillside and a sign that read:

**Answers to the Questions
I Know You Are Asking:
50,000 bulbs
one at a time
by one woman
2 hands, 2 feet
and very little brain
Began in 1958**

It was a life-changing event for the author who realized that an insurmountable goal cannot be achieved unless you

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GAWL Launches Trailblazer Series

Ever wonder what it would be like to be the first woman on the management committee for King and Spaulding? Ever considered running for the highest executive office in the state? Perhaps you have considered running a non-profit legal program or leading a law school as dean. Maybe, you dream of sitting on the bench as a trial or appellate judge or you might be

striving to build and grow your own private law practice. If any of these goals are an aspiration for you, then you already have something in common with a Trailblazer.

In conjunction with other history projects instigated by the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers, the Communications Committee has recently completed

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PARENTING TEENAGERS

By Elaine G. Levine

April 2009

In August 2004, I was the first person to come upon a fiery car crash in Sandy Springs at midnight on a Friday night. It was horrific.

I wrote an email the following morning and sent it to about 30 friends describing the experience: “I was the first car on the scene, saw the boy driver (age 17) burned dead or alive (don’t know) trapped behind the wheel, was five feet away when the front end of the car exploded, a neighbor and I tried but couldn’t get him out, tried to help but went into shock and was confused and unable to do much with the two seriously injured kids, one of whom died... Please don’t give up on the talks with your kids. Please make sure they don’t leave one party to go to the next with drivers they and you don’t know.... The Medical Examiner says he does teen wreck after teen wreck from midnight to 2:00 am every Friday and Saturday night... Keep trying to keep your kids in, safe, driving only with experienced drivers they and you know.”

My email was forwarded and forwarded again to hundreds of people and I received back numerous emails from parents all over the country. With three children of my own, I could not imagine the grief of the families of the five teenagers in the car that

crashed and burned that Friday night at midnight. Over the following weeks, I met with or talked to the families of three of the children in the car – the dead boy, the dead girl, and the brain-damaged boy- -and I learned about a series of tragic decisions that set in motion this terrible accident.

“Parenting middle and high school students, in my humble opinion, is every bit as difficult and time-consuming as parenting young children – but there are very few resources, seminars, or discussions of the issues faced by working women parenting teens.”

Since that time, I have been on a mission of sorts to help parents prepare for the teenage years and then be the best parents they can be as they live with teenage children.

When our children are babies, most of us Mom/Lawyers read about how to take care of babies, about maternity leaves, and childcare, about timeouts and teaching good habits. We try to feed our children healthy food, start them on music classes, and sign them up for baseball and soccer and swimming lessons.

There are many groups and occasions to meet with other parents to

learn about parenting practices and to compare notes about camps, schools, teachers, and after-school activities. As lawyers, we have made many choices about practicing law while parenting, about juggling our responsibilities for our work with our duties as mom, chauffeur, and

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Trailblazers Series (Con’t from Page 1)

interviews with trailblazing women nominated by their peers, including: Cathy Cox, Daisy Hurst Floyd, Justice Carol W. Hunstein, Deborah Johnson, Mary Ann Oakley, Mary Ann Sears, and Chilton Varner.

Each woman has a unique story to tell, relating their experiences from law school to their current professional endeavors.

So, if you have wondered what Cathy Cox thinks about a woman’s chance to be Governor of Georgia or whether the water-cooler rumor about Justice Hunstein fishing in a pool is true, then you will learn a lot

from the Trailblazer Series.

Each Trailblazer has a unique story to share about overcoming obstacles, personal goals, and professional obligation. More importantly, our Trailblazers each offer a word of advice for future generations of lawyers and women in the profession.

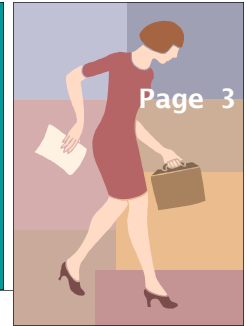
Find out what motivates and inspires these women, these Trailblazers. Perhaps someday, you will be counted as their peer.

Download podcasts from www.gawl.org.

What Are Your Options? Exploring Alternative Careers

There are many more opportunities now for lawyers to find success on their own terms than ever before. Some of these careers are related to the legal profession and some are outside of the law.

*By Anne Whitaker
Counsel On Call*



You spent three years getting your J.D., followed by years of practicing law, only to realize that you are dissatisfied. You may have always thought you wanted to be a lawyer, only to find now that you have become one, you are disgruntled, stressed, and simply can't continue to live the way you are. Or perhaps you went to law school by default, not really knowing much about the practice of law, but you thought that a J.D. degree would open up possibilities for other careers. You found yourself swept up in the current of interviews for a traditional law job and now here you are, practicing law and wondering why.

If either of these describes you, know that you have a lot of company. Many studies show that between 33% to 50% of lawyers today are dissatisfied with their jobs. The biggest reason given for this dissatisfaction is loss of control—over the kind of work they get to do, the interactions they have daily with other people, and their work/life balance.

There Are Many More Opportunities Now For Lawyers To Find Success On Their Own Terms

Regardless of the situation or reason for dissatisfaction, the questions asked are usually the same. "What in the world do I do now? Remain where I am and suffer, abandon my career as a lawyer, or is there an in-between?" Of course, the answers to these questions are different for each person. While many lawyers

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One Bulb at a Time (Con't from Page One)

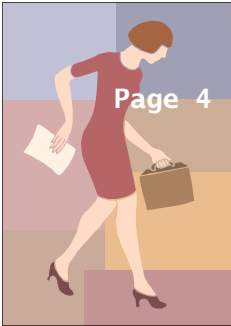
start, right now. As a result, she was inspired to write the Daffodil Principle.

Judge Sara Doyle of the Georgia Court of Appeals recently spoke about the principle at the Women in Law reception honoring female law professors on April 16th. The event was created by and hosted by GAWL's John Marshall Law School chapter as well as the female law student groups from Emory, UGA, Mercer and Georgia State. The entire room of about 45 attendees was as inspired as I was by the story and the principle. It fit squarely with why we had gathered that evening – to honor female professors who each work in her corner of the world to improve the practice for women, one lecture, one student, one class at a time. It was incredible to hear the law students give testament how each honored professor had inspired them -- Professor Lisa Milot of UGA, Professor Sara Stadler of Emory, Professor Karen Sneddon of Mercer, Professor Tanya M. Washington of Georgia State, and Professor Melinda Marbes of John Marshall. Congratulations to these women for this well deserved honor.

I trust that when they look back over their careers, these professors will see a beautiful sea of daffodils, all planted one bulb at a time.

Whether the goal is global, i.e. to see more women leaders in the practice, or individual, such as to make partner, find a new job, be elected to the bench, develop a book of business, or win a case, the path to success is comprised of small incremental steps. Bringing in a new client may seem an impossible task. But it starts with something as easy as joining an organization, like GAWL, and getting involved in a committee or going to an event. Before you know it, you have established a network of friends and colleagues in the practice who can provide mentoring, contacts and referrals. You no longer practice in isolation.

Likewise, improving the practice for women lawyers and seeing more women in leadership roles may seem insurmountable. At the Women in Law reception, Judge Doyle related how she achieved her goal of being elected to the Court of Appeals by starting with small steps and making



Parenting Teenagers (Con't from Page 2)

cheerleader for our children.

For many years, GAWL and other women's organizations have staged programs and seminars focused on the issues facing working parents of young children. Parenting middle and high school students, in my humble opinion, is every bit as difficult and time-consuming as parenting young children – but there are very few resources, seminars, or discussions of the issues faced by working women parenting teens. The national culture is bringing one aspect of this topic—teenage sexuality—to the forefront through movies like “Juno”, through the unfortunate choice of a group of high school girls in Massachusetts to all get pregnant at the same time, through the PBS television expose of teen sexual practices and rampant syphilis in Conyers, Georgia, and through the very public pregnancy of Governor Palin's teenager daughter. As we face a new world of instant access to information and universal communication by teenagers on cell phones, texting and through Facebook, we parents of teenagers may actually be as clueless about our teenagers' choices as our parents were about our choices.

I have been asked by GAWL to write a series of three articles on parenting teenagers. Since that dreadful night in 2004, I have read numerous articles and books about teenagers, have joined the parent education board (P2) at Pace Academy, and have become a parent facilitator of parenting classes for groups of parents of teenagers who attend Pace, Westminster and Woodward. I am not a trained psychologist or therapist, but I have helped many parents who are my clients in my law practice as they deal with the myriad of issues which can arise during the teen years – from drug arrests, to car accidents, to bullying, to cutting, to running away from home, to the complex process of commitments to rehab.

I have learned that, many times, there are no answers, no solutions, and no great miracles of recovery. But there are resources out there to help — therapists who specialize in teenage and family counseling, lawyers who work on education issues, clergy who assist families, support groups, criminal/juvenile lawyers, and school administrators who are willing to get involved.

As parents, generally speaking, our job is to protect our children from harm while fostering the development of competence. As one wise psychologist once told me: “Your job is to get them to college alive and speaking to you.” We must implement the structures and day to day approaches to family life, school, activities, and friends well before our children enter high school in order to have even a fighting chance of maintaining stability for our teenagers as they struggle to become adults. It is a daunting task and one that requires more than just intuition and a wing and prayer. We must monitor our kids, develop and communicate our rules and values, learn to discipline fairly and consistently, and demand accountability, responsibility and dependability.

It is important to try to implement small changes in your family routines and to stick to them day after day in order to make a difference. For example, I use the acronym “TLC” – talk, listen, and chew—as one of my most basic and simple rules. This means, use the dinner hour to actually have dinner together. Even when you are tired after a long day at the office, do something to make dinner special every day. For example, we eat in the dining room every night and have since the kids were babies. I simply laminated the fabric on the chairs and said bring on the spaghetti! As your kids get older, you may have to remind yourself not to argue with them or whine at them at dinner since it may be the only time your family has together to talk. Eat slowly, stretching dinner to 30 minutes, then 45 minutes. Reinforce table etiquette. Don't answer the phone. These are just a few examples of the ways that you can slowly but deliberately create a structure for your family to communicate.

In the next segment of this three part series, I will be writing about communicating your values, setting

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What Are Your Options? (Con't from Page 3)



decide to keep plugging along, silently suffering, many are choosing to make a change. In the past 15 years that I have been coaching lawyers in their career choices, I have seen many lawyers transition from a traditional law practice into successful and fulfilling careers in a multitude of other areas.

Some of these careers are related to the legal profession and some are outside of the law. There are many more opportunities now for lawyers to find success on their own terms than there were when I left the practice of law in 1991 to start my company.

Many successful law-trained professionals have gone on to contribute great things beyond the traditional practice of law. You would be amazed at the number of former practicing lawyers you may know of already. Some famous examples include Mahondas Gandhi (Indian political/spiritual leader), Tony La-Russa (St. Louis Cardinal's manager), Herb Kelleher (chairman of Southwest Airlines), David E. Kelley (television and film producer, Richard Thalheimer (president of the Sharper Image), Rossana Brazzi (actor), and Fred Graham (CBS TV reporter). Once you start looking for them, you will find many other

examples—they write novels, operate businesses, run schools, counsel people, and develop real estate, to name a few.

Lawyers Have A Superb Background And Work Experience That Will Assist In Pursuing Many Other Careers

What are your options outside of the traditional practice of law? What job can you get with a law degree? I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that there is no list of other careers I can give you that are definite options for you—your options are unlimited and the sky really is the limit. You can do pretty much whatever you want to do. Lawyers have been able to move into almost every field that exists.

The truth is that a legal education is one of the most challenging, broadening educational experiences there is. We have a superb background through our legal education and work experience that will assist in pursuing many other careers.

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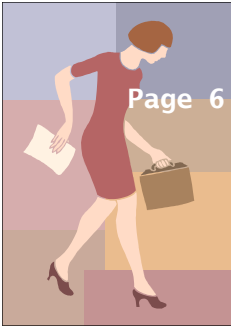
Parenting Teenagers (Con't from Page Four)

limits, and implementing consequences for poor teenage behavior. As Mom/Lawyers, many of us are great at arguing, negotiating, mediating and documenting disputes in our law practices, but we have less success setting rules, implementing those limitations, and then following through with our teenagers.

The world of the teenager is more complicated than ever before. Our ideas of appropriate behavior have changed, along with societal responses to inappropriate behavior. In the Bible, it says that "If a man has a wayward and defiant son, who does not heed his father and mother, and does not obey them even after they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the public place of his community. They shall say to the elders of his town, 'This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.' Thereupon, the men of his town shall stone him to death. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst and all Israel will hear and be afraid." Deuteronomy 21:18-21.

Fortunately, we are not expected to stone our wayward children to death but we do need to have plans in place for parenting our teenagers. For now, take the small step of implementing a family dinner most evenings and look for an article next month on establishing and enforcing your family rules and values for your teenager children.

Elaine Levine is an attorney with Beard Levine & Dickman, LLP, specializing in Wills and Estate Planning and is a former President of GAWL (1989-90). She is the mother of Olivia, age 23, who graduated from Harvard in 2008 and is working as an investment banker at Barclays Bank in New York; Eleanor, age 20, a sophomore volleyball player at Williams College in Massachusetts; and Theodore, age 15, a freshman football and lacrosse player at Pace Academy. She is married to attorney James D. Levine, a partner at McKenna Long & Aldridge. Elaine has been practicing law for 27 years, has been married to Jim for 25 years, and has been parenting for 23 years!



What Are Your Options? (Cont' from Page 5)

For some, that is also the bad news—the options are limitless. There is no list of other careers for which lawyers may get hired, and no one-size-fits-all formula. It overwhelms many to hear that, as most professionals want a ready-made list of careers for former lawyers that guarantees they can find something else. It is no wonder it's overwhelming—it is very different from the law school experience.

Deciding where to go after graduation was much more structured and established. There was a set list of places to go, roles to play, and a procedure to follow. Once you realize that the traditional list of options has failed you, it's natural to want someone to hand you another list. Even if there was such a list, I wouldn't recommend that approach. You would probably end up in another stressful, unfulfilling job.

You Need To Know Whether You Are In The Wrong Career Or Just The Wrong Job

So what is a lawyer to do? First, you need to do some self-assessment about what is causing your dissatisfaction and what it is that you want in your career.

Take some time, either by yourself or with the assistance of a career coach, to figure out what matters most to you. You need to know whether you are in the wrong career or just in the wrong job. Are you dissatisfied with the practice of law entirely or is it really the place where you are working or your colleagues who are creating the problem? Or perhaps it is the schedule that you are keeping, the long hours, and lack of balance.

Once you have assessed what is important to you and what you really want to be doing, then you can decide if you are going to be able to achieve those things as a lawyer. Do you need to switch practice areas? Working as a lawyer doing labor and employment law could be as different from being a divorce lawyer as it is from many of the non-legal jobs. Or maybe you still like practicing law but it takes so much out of you that there is no time left for anything else.

If you could find a way to have more work/life balance, you might actually like practicing law again. Don't give up on being a lawyer until you have done some self-assessment and examined the possibilities for change.

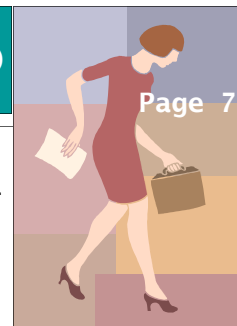
*Figure out
what
matters
most to you.*

Career Options Within The Law

If you have decided that you want to continue to practice law in some manner, start thinking outside of the box and consider what changes would make you happier. Would changing practice areas give you more of what you want?

Explore that option and maybe even do pro bono work to experience it first-hand before making a change. Maybe you need to switch to a smaller firm, explore part-time work options, or approach your employer about telecommuting. Do you want to start your own solo practice or small firm? This is not for everyone but is very rewarding for many. There are also opportunities with the government, with nonprofits, for-profit corporations, and universities.

Another avenue to consider is practicing law on a contract basis. I have seen this alternative blossom since the late 1980s from a new option considered strictly for lawyers who couldn't land a regular job, to a viable and fulfilling career choice for very talented lawyers. I can tell you of many examples of lawyers through the years who have decided to practice law this way, from those with four years of experience to former partners and general counsels. Some want to have more control over their lives and more work/life balance. They enjoy the predictable hours contract work affords, while still being able to do substantive work and work with great people. If you chose to do it through a company that specializes in this kind of placement, it is critical to make sure that you choose the firm carefully and work with one that has the same professional standards that you do.



Your reputation is one of your most valuable assets, and working with a well-respected company on contract assignments that are in line with your career goals is a key part of making this path a good option for you.

Working on a contract basis can also allow you to explore nontraditional and non-law career alternatives, which we will examine next. Many of my clients have practiced on a contract basis as a stepping stone to a new career. Some have used the additional free time that contract work affords them to write books, return to graduate school, do volunteer work to test a new area of interest, or to turn the heat up on their career search. Others have used it to fund starting a new business. If you have decided that you no longer want to practice law in any shape, fashion, or form and you want to look at careers where you can wear a completely different hat, then it is time to research what your nontraditional options are. You can look at what is available in law-related areas, and those that are completely outside of the law. The following is an overview of these options to get you thinking about what you might want to explore next.

Law-Related Careers

There are a variety of career options that are connected to the practice of law. Some of them require a J.D. and some do not. There are positions in almost every type of organization and every employment sector that are related to the law, including the private, public, nonprofit and international areas. There are few places where lawyers do not work these days. Great inroads have been made over the past 15 years and the opportunities continue to expand. This is where you can put your creativity to use.

Do some research through general career websites, networking, and informational interviewing to learn more about a particular option and how it meshes with your goals and your personal vision for your life. Remember that there are many skills you have developed as a lawyer that are transferable to other fields. For example, lawyers have developed good analytical skills, oral and written communication skills, and negotiation skills. Research, critical thinking, and attention to detail are all skills that are honed in law school and in practice. Your problem-solving skills will continue to help you in many other professions and roles.

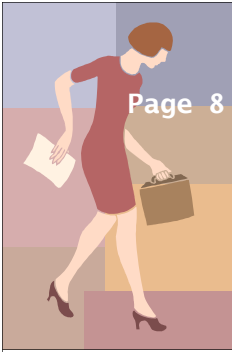
If you have practiced in-house, you often have developed some of the same skills that are required in non-lawyer jobs: business acumen, management skills and industry expertise. Consider corporations, trade and professional associations, large and small businesses. Take a look at federal, state and special district governments; international organizations; colleges and universities; and law firms. Politics, international business, and compliance or regulatory bodies are additional areas to examine. What kinds of roles can lawyers play in those settings? Common ones include consulting, mediation, journalism, sales, contracting, and legal administration. The most obvious are bar associations and law firms that have a variety of needs, for which former lawyers are well suited. So do companies who provide services and products to lawyers such as computer software companies, financial planners, staffing agencies, and legal publishing companies.

Start examining all of the various companies and positions that are related to the practice of law and generate a running list. Then check it out to see if any of them interest you.

Non-Law Career Options

If you want to consider options completely unrelated to law, the choices are even broader. Using a J.D. to go into a career outside of the law is becoming more common. According to a survey by NALP, nearly 10% of new law graduates are going into non-legal careers. There are no studies that show which jobs outside of the law are the most satisfying or successful for lawyers, but there are some areas that our legal training can point us towards.

Your legal experience can transfer very well into the communications fields, including creative and technical writing, contracting, reporting, training, editing, writing novels, publishing, and public relations. There are



One Bulb at a Time *Conclusion*

small connections that turned into statewide support on election day. I would like to thank Judge Doyle for sharing her story with the reception attendees and inspiring each of us. For GAWL, it starts smaller as well with finding open leadership positions for women to run for, and providing them with the leadership skills to achieve these positions. It continues with supporting women on the run for the bench or the State Bar by disseminating candidate information and getting out the vote to our nearly 1,100 members. Soon, we see more GAWL members on the run for office, including the six GAWL members who recently ran for open positions on the State Bar Board of Governors – Elizabeth Fite, Dawn Jones, Laura Kurlander, Whitney Mauk, Jill Pryor and Rita Sheffey. I congratulate each of these women for putting their names in the ring either as for re-election or as a new candidate. GAWL was proud to do its part to help support them. I hope to see each of these women and other GAWL members in leadership positions in the State Bar and elsewhere. Under the Daffodil Principle, do one simple thing every day or every week or every month to work at and achieve your goal, “one bulb at a time.”

Christian Torgrimson proudly served as the 2008-2009 GAWL President. She is a partner with Pursley Lowery Meeks LLP, practicing in eminent domain and real estate related litigation. Contact her at 404 880-7180.

What Are Your Options? *Conclusion*

also many positions in the business world for which lawyer’s skills can be of value including director, analyst, human resources, and the compliance area. In real estate, lawyers can transfer their skills into real estate development or become an agent or a broker. Many lawyers decide they want to be their own boss and so start their own businesses. You can also consider using your teaching or training skills in another field, or if it’s counseling you enjoy take a look at doing that as a psychologist, corporate coach, or career counselor.

Just a reminder that you first need to spend some time deciding which interests, skills, and abilities you want to take with you into your next career. You can then do some market research to identify what careers and roles would offer you those opportunities. Take the planning and strategic thinking that comprises so much of what you do as a lawyer and focus it on analyzing “what is out there.” You can read a good general resource book that surveys other fields in detail, and contact your undergraduate career services center as well. Once you have identified a few options, do informational interviews to learn more about them and how they mesh with your goals and your personal vision for your life.

Most People Make A Gradual Transition Instead Of A Leap—It Helps To Have Support

A word of caution here. You may encounter a case of “paralysis by analysis” when you are looking at too many options. There is a natural resistance to change, no matter how much you may need it and want it. It helps to have someone else’s support and guidance with the assessment process and creating an action plan.

Consider using a career coach or get the support of a friend who is going through a career change as well. There are also a multitude of resources you can tap into, including books on alternative careers for lawyers, websites that are lawyer specific and materials on generic career options. Most people do not make a drastic change overnight. The majority of my clients who have made successful career changes have done it a step at a time—a gradual transition instead of a leap.

Just asking the questions “What else do I want to do?” and “Where can I do that?” is a powerful beginning to making a change.

"The only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life is often merely the will to try it and the faith to believe that it is possible." - Richard M. DeVos