



President's Column

Our Terrific, But Not Equal, Women Lawyers

BY BILL MATEJA

March is Women's History Month which reminded me of a November 2023 article I recently read entitled "See Her, Hear Her: The Historical Evolution of Women in Law and Advocacy for the Path Ahead" which speaks to the encouraging, but still unsatisfying, news for women in the law. www.americanbar.org/groups/business_law/resources/business-law-today/2023-november/see-her-hear-her-historical-evolution-women-in-law. I commend this article to everyone's review.

This article reported that women made up less than 5 percent of attorneys in the U.S. from 1950 to 1970, but that number has steadily risen since, to 38 percent in 2022. From 2000 to 2021, women made up close to or more than half of all law students, from 48.4 percent of law students in 2000 to 55.3 percent in 2021. That's right—we now have more females than males in our law school pipelines.

Notwithstanding this positive news, the article goes further to point out that:

But what about the labyrinth of law firms? While women make up 47 percent of associates in law firms, the numbers drastically decrease further up the hierarchy. **Only 22 percent of equity partners and 12 percent of managing partners are women.** And the gender pay gap? It further widens this divide.

However, it is not just about representation in law firms' highest echelons; delving into firm policy perceptions offers more nuanced insights. For instance, **88 percent of male attorneys believe that their law firm acknowledges gender diversity as a priority, while only 54 percent of their female peers shared this sentiment.**

Drilling down further on the gender pay gap, it reported that in 2020, women equity partners were paid 78 percent of male counterparts' compensation on average. What? Really? It also reported that women associates and non-equity received only 95 percent of what their male counterparts received.

Come on, folks. Female lawyers need to make at least the same amount of money as male lawyers. This isn't even a close question. Equal pay for equal work. Likewise, there shouldn't be a disparity between the number of male and female lawyers in the equity and managing partner ranks. Period.

My challenge to my male brethren is this. First, we all need to wake up and recognize we still have a problem. Let's not be complacent in thinking that there isn't a problem simply because you see and hear great things about our female counterparts such as females outnumbering male law students or the fact that this year's presidents and chairs of the State Bar of Texas and Texas Young Lawyers Association are all female attorneys, or you witness the great work of a *myriad* of Dallas female attorneys to include our new Fifth Circuit judge and that Court's first Latina—the Hon. Irma

Carrillo Ramirez—whose investiture will be hosted at our own Arts District Mansion this month on March 27.

Second, let's do something about this inequity. Beyond simply recognizing that things aren't right, it's critical that we be allies. Allyship, allyship, allyship. To borrow again from the "See Her, Hear Her" article, here are things that we men can do:

- Celebrate Achievements:** Actively acknowledge and appreciate the accomplishments of our female peers.
- Promote Equitable Distribution:** Move beyond gendered expectations and ensure fair delegation of responsibilities.
- Champion Safe Spaces:** Advocate for settings where open and unbiased dialogues can thrive.
- Facilitate Networking:** Guarantee that our female colleagues have equivalent access to pivotal career opportunities.
- Encourage Feedback:** Understand that being an ally is an evolving commitment; remain receptive to change.
- Invest in Mentorship and Sponsorship:** Harness your influence to propel the careers of our female colleagues.

Third, follow my lead here and spread the word—that our female lawyers, as a whole, still aren't being treated equally and there is work to be done. To that end, consider supporting the significant work of the DBA's Equality Committee started by former DBA President Paul Stafford and former J.L. Turner Legal Association President, KoiEles Lomas, nurtured by DBA Director, Katie Anderson, and now led by Chair, Cortney Parker, and Vice-Chair, Ashley Jones Wright. DBA We Lead is another avenue in which to show your support by encouraging the women in your firm to apply for the program, supporting those invested in the program, or as I have recently, becoming a mentor. Program Co-Directors Ophelia Camiña and Mary Scott have put together a terrific agenda for the DBA We Lead's 7th year.

You could also consider supporting the Dallas Women Lawyers Association (DWLA) and the Dallas Women Lawyers Association Foundation. DWLA opens its arms to both men and women. And, a gift to the DWLA Foundation ensures the continuity of its programs and the growth of its initiatives which include:

Bar Study Scholarships for law students who have demonstrated a commitment to scholastic achievement while supporting the mission to elevate the standing of women in the legal profession.

Karen D. McCloud Memorial Grant providing resources to assist a solo or small firm woman lawyer with the development of her legal practice

Outreach Grants to organizations that support women and children in the Dallas metropolitan area and surrounding suburbs.

Men, we all know by now that Dallas' female lawyers are at least our equals in the courtroom, boardroom, and beyond, but let's strive to make them truly our equals *in all respects*.

Bill



HEADNOTES

Published by:
DALLAS BAR ASSOCIATION

2101 Ross Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75201
Phone: (214) 220-7400
Fax: (214) 220-7465
Website: www.dallasbar.org
Established 1873

The DBA's purpose is to serve and support the legal profession in Dallas and to promote good relations among lawyers, the judiciary, and the community.

OFFICERS

President: Bill Mateja
President-Elect: Vicki D. Blanton
First Vice President: Jonathan Childers
Second Vice President: Sarah Rogers
Secretary-Treasurer: Chelsea Hilliard
Immediate Past President: Cheryl Camin Murray

Directors: Stephanie Almetter (President, Dallas Women Lawyers Association), Katie Anderson, Lauren Black, Rob Cañas, Joe Coniglio, Amanda Cottrell, Kristine Cruz (President, Dallas Asian American Bar Association), Stephanie G. Culpepper (Chair), Terod Hall (President, J.L. Turner Legal Association), Hon. Martin Hoffman, Nicole Muñoz Huschka, Andy Jones, Haleigh Jones (President, Dallas Association of Young Lawyers), Jennifer King (Vice Chair), Edward Loya Jr. (President, Dallas Hispanic Bar Association), Derek Mergele-Rust, Hon. Audrey Moorehead, Timothy Newman, Hon. Rebecca Rutherford, Kandace Walter, and Elissa Wev (President, Dallas LGBT Bar Association)

Advisory Directors: Chelsea Hilliard (President-Elect, Dallas Women Lawyers Association), Thomas McMillan (President-Elect, Dallas LGBT Bar Association), Bernice Medlin Pruettingkara (President-Elect, Dallas Hispanic Bar Association), Elizabeth "BB" Sanford (President-Elect, Dallas Association of Young Lawyers), Kandace Walter (President-Elect, J.L. Turner Legal Association), Ashley Yen (President-Elect, Dallas Asian American Bar Association)

Delegates, American Bar Association: Rhonda Hunter, Aaron Tobin

Directors, State Bar of Texas: Brittney Harrison, Krisi Kast, Paul Stafford, Robert Tobey, Aaron Tobin

HEADNOTES

Executive Director/Executive Editor:
Alicia Hernandez
Communications/Media Director
& Headnotes Editor: Jessica D. Smith
In the News: Judi Smalling
Display Advertising: Annette Planey, Jessica Smith

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Ted Huffman and John Koetter
Co-Vice-Chairs: Graecen Daniel and Jay Spring

DBA & DBF STAFF

Executive Director: Alicia Hernandez
Accounting Assistant: Jessie Smith
Communications/Media Director: Jessica D. Smith
Controller: Sherri Evans
Events Director: Rhonda Thornton
Executive Assistant: Elizabeth Hayden
Executive Director, DBF: Elizabeth Phillip
LRS Director: Biridiana Avina
LRS Interviewer: Giovanna Alvarado, Esteban Hernandez
LRS Program Assistant: Marcela Mejia
Legal Education Coordinator: Viridiana Rodriguez
Director of Marketing: Mary Ellen Johnson
Membership Director: Shawna Bush
Programs Assistant: Victoria Martinez, Araceli Rodriguez
Publications Coordinator: Judi Smalling
Texas High School Mock Trial & Law Related Education: Melissa Garcia

DALLAS VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROGRAM

Director: Michelle Alden
Managing Attorney: Holly Griffin
Mentor Attorneys: Kristen Salas, Katherine Saldana
Paralegals: Whitney Breheny, Miriam Caporal, Tina Douglas, Molly Jakkamsetti, Carolyn Johnson, Suzanne Matthews, Andrew Musquiz, Alicia Perkins
Program Assistant: Laci Payton
Community Engagement Coordinator: Mariela Martin
Secretary: Charnese Garrett

Copyright Dallas Bar Association 2024. All rights reserved. No reproduction of any portion of this publication is allowed without written permission from publisher.

Headnotes serves the membership of the DBA and, as such, editorial submissions from members are welcome. The Executive Editor, Editor, and Publications Committee reserve the right to select editorial content to be published. Please submit article text via e-mail to jsmith@dallasbar.org (Communications Director) at least 45 days in advance of publication. Feature articles should be no longer than 800 words. **DISCLAIMER:** All legal content appearing in Headnotes is for informational and educational purposes and is not intended as legal advice. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Dallas Bar Association.

All advertising shall be placed in Dallas Bar Association Headnotes at the Dallas Bar Association's sole discretion.

Headnotes (ISSN 1057-0144) is published monthly by the Dallas Bar Association, 2101 Ross Ave., Dallas, TX 75201. Non-member subscription rate is \$30 per year. Single copy price is \$2.50, including handling. Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, Texas 75260.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Headnotes, 2101 Ross Ave., Dallas, TX 75201.



JOIN US AT THE ADM

DBA'S FIRST-EVER ST. PATTY'S CELEBRATION

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 5:00-7:30 P.M.

*Come for green beer, Irish stout, featured mocktails, snacks, games,
music by McLeod Duo and a shamrockin' good time!*

First 100 attendees through the door get a commemorative t-shirt!

NEW MEMBER CELEBRATION

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 5:00-7:00 P.M.

*Join us as we honor our newest members
and newly licensed attorneys!*



