

Committee on Women in the Law 2015-2016 Year Summary

The Committee on Women in the Law (CWIL) had a very active year in 2015-2016. Our various subcommittees hosted many programs, made legislative priority recommendations to the bar, and honored trailblazing women in New York State. Here is a short summary of our accomplishments in the 2015-2016 year.

CWIL Committee Co-Chairs

Ellen Makofsky

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Legislative

In 2015, the Legislative Subcommittee focused their efforts on advancing the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, Bill S. 786. Introduced by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY-D), the bill would ensure a worker a family and medical leave insurance benefit payment when a family or medical need arises. The subcommittee prepared a 26-page report and made presentations to the NYSBA Executive Committee and House of Delegates for consideration. The NYSBA Executive unanimously approved the report that was also approved by the House of Delegates in November 2015. The NYSBA also voted to make Paid Leave a 2016 NYSBA Legislative Priority and has now commenced a lobbying effort to advance Paid Leave legislation in the United States. The CWIL also celebrated the Women's Equality Act being signed into law by NYS Governor Cuomo in 2015, which the subcommittee previously drafted Memos of Support, and in particular, on Equal Pay legislation, advanced with the support of NYSBA's Government Affairs office. Finally, in 2016, recognizing the need to modernize our laws in the digital age, the subcommittee prepared a memorandum in support of the proposed NYS legislation combatting the non-consensual distribution of intimate images over the internet.

Legislative Chair: Susan L. Harper

Best Practices

The Best Practices subcommittee prepared an a very successful exhibit honoring women who have paved the way for women lawyers' professional development in New York State. The Trailblazers Exhibit was displayed in the following locations:

1. CUNY School of Law in September 2015
2. Elder Law and Special Needs Section Fall Meeting in Saratoga Springs in October 2015
3. CWIL event in Fort Orange Club, Albany in October 2016
4. SUNY Buffalo Law School in November 2015
5. NYSBA's annual meeting in January 2016

6. Syracuse University College of Law in February 2016
7. Hofstra University School of Law in February 2016
8. New York State Capital in March 2016
9. Touro Law in March 2016
10. NYSBA House of Delegates meeting in Cooperstown, NY in 2015

Honoree Judge Judith Kaye and Shirley Adelson Siegel, was honored at a reception the NYSBA summer meeting in Cooperstown. Honoree Maryanne Freedman also received the award but did not appear in person.

Best Practice Co-Chairs: Maureen Bezuhly and Monica Ruela

Annual Meeting

This year, the Annual Meeting sub-committee prepared and presented a program at the NYSBA Annual Meeting on January 25, 2016 called “Calling All Women: Increasing Opportunities for Women Attorneys in Start Up, Financial Services and Tech Companies.” Sarah Feingold, Special Privacy Counsel to Etsy was our keynote speaker. The full day program was divided into three panels and focused on (1) everything you wanted to know about breaking into these fields from veterans, (2) the nuts and bolts of working with startup and tech companies, and (3) ethical obligations and risks in these fields. We had 66 registrants. The program was a success and we received a lot of positive feedback.

Annual Meeting Co-Chairs: Terri Mazur and Carol Villegas

Awards

During the Annual Meeting luncheon, the CWIL’s 2015 Kay Crawford Murray Award was awarded to Dolores Gebhardt of McCarthy Finger and the 2015 Ruth Shapiro Award was awarded to Dean Patricia Salken, Dean of Touro Law School.

Awards Co-Chairs: Jacqueline Hattar and Elyssa Kates

Programming and Events

Programming and Events Subcommittee held five fabulous events in 2015-16, including:

- July 23, 2015 - CWIL New Member Welcome Event at Chelsea Wine Vault
- September 1, 2015 – Path to Leadership Event featuring Rhonda Joy McLean and co-sponsored by ACC-NYC Women’s Group at Kirkland & Ellis
- November 18, 2015 - PES Networking and Planning Night at Wine 30
- April 7, 2016 – Practicing Your Poker Face and Other Negotiation Skills featuring POKERprimaDIVAS Founder Ellen Leikind at Lowenstein Sandler

- June 23, 2016 – FORWARD program co-sponsored by the Coalition of Women’s Initiatives in Law at The Farm Soho

Programing and Events Co-Chairs: Penny Williams and Suzanne Galbato

Women on the Move

On October 26, 2015 the Women on the Move subcommittee hosted the program, “Navigating a New Path” at Fort Orange Club in Albany. Hon. Karen Peter (Presiding Justice, Appellate Division, Third Dep’t) and Mayor of Albany Kathy Sheehan were the keynote speakers. The program focused on transitioning between public/private sectors. We had 63 registrants.

Women on the Move Co-Chairs: Linda Redlisky and Debra Hamilton

Publicity and Branding

The branding sub-committee has worked to 1) research and communicate to the Committee what a branding campaign entails; 2) explore how branding could benefit CWIL both within NYSBA and in the community at large; 3) seek out the advice and expertise of professionals in the field; 4) understand how branding would overlap with and impact various other sub-committees within CWIL.

Publicity and Branding Co-Chairs: Rosalie Walters, Anastasia Wincorn, Elizabeth Champnoi

We would like to thank all of our subcommittee co-chairs for their hard work this year, NYSBA, 2015-16 NYSBA President Dave Miranda, General Counsel Kathy Baxter, Robyn Ryan, Kim McHargue, and the NYSBA Government Affairs Office for their generous support of CWIL’s work.