



National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division



Sister Connection Newsletter

NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION
Women Lawyers Division
SISTER CONNECTION
V O L U M E 3; Spring 2013

CHAIR'S MESSAGE *from* Antoinette Barksdale



been making it happen for many years such as, Constance Baker Motley, Dovey Roundtree, Charlotte E. Ray, Arnette Hubbard and Allie Lattimer.

Although times are much different than they were in the early years of this Division, WLD is just as relevant and necessary today as it was 40 years ago. The WLD provides a safe space for our sisters to share experiences, increase their knowledge, expand their skills, and continue "reaching one" and "teaching one." WLD must continue to meet the changing needs of our membership with high-quality programs and public service to our community. We have inherited a rich legacy from our founders and must remain steadfast in our commitment to support the vision and the principles upon which the WLD was founded for future generations of young Black women attorneys.

We thank you for your continued support and participation of our signature programs and events. I encourage all members to get involve and "Make It Happen." I look forward to working with you this year.

Antoinette Barksdale, Chair

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Greetings ~

It is with great humility that I serve as Chair of the Women Lawyers Division (WLD) for the 2012-2013 bar year. As we ended another successful year in 2012, I was reminded of the great women who have assumed the Chair's position of this wonderful division and their many accomplishments. Every time I think about our theme for the bar year—Women Lawyers: "Making It Happen," I recall those distinguished women lawyers who have

ANNUAL SUPREME COURT SWEARING-IN CEREMONY, May 28, 2013 ~ Washington DC

The National Bar Association (NBA) Women Lawyers Division invites all members of the NBA who have not been admitted to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court to participate in its Annual Supreme Court Swearing-In Ceremony on May 28, 2013. The Ceremony is held annually in an effort to enhance the posture of African American lawyers as legal advocates and to increase the number of minority lawyers who are readily available to represent their clients before this nation's highest court. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Women Lawyers Division's sponsorship of the NBA Supreme Court Group Swearing-in Ceremony.

Applicants must be members in good standing of their highest state court bar for three years prior to admission and must have their applications signed by two members of the

U.S. Supreme Court Bar. The cost of participation in this group swearing-in event is \$350.00, which includes an application fee of \$200.00. Applications are due no later than May 1, 2013. You are encouraged to download the application from the Supreme Court's website at www.supremecourtus.gov. The foregoing is a direct link to the Supreme Court's website, then click on Bar Admissions to access the application. If you are unable to successfully download the application, you may request an application directly from the National Bar Association's Headquarters by mail, telephone, or facsimile.

National Bar Association
1225 11th Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone (202) 842-3900, Fax (202) 289-6170.

U.S. Supreme Court Swearing-In Ceremony (from page 1)

Please note that all applications for participation in the NBA Group Swearing-in Ceremony must be submitted to the NBA office. To facilitate handling, please address your mailed applications to: NBA Supreme Court Swearing-in Ceremony, National Bar Association, 1225 - 11th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20001.

Additional information may be obtained from event chair Iris McCollum Green, Esq., at GREEN & FOUSHEE, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 609, Washington, DC 20036; PHONE (202) 785-1171, (FAX) 785-8108; or the NBA Headquarters.

We Look Forward To Your Participation!!



WLD Continues Proud Legacy of Service With "Respect Yourself" Mentor Program

**Women Lawyers Division
Launches National
"Respect Yourself"
Community Outreach
Program During Miami
Convention**

By Pam Meanes
NBA Vice President of Finance

During the NBA's 84th Annual Convention, the Women Lawyers Division launched its national "Respect Yourself" Community Outreach Program, a mentor program designed to educate and empower young African American girls on the importance of self-

respect and respecting others. Past NBA WLD Chair, Jean Johnson, was inspired with the idea for the program after hearing negative comments about African American girls on a radio talk show. The WLD plans to work cooperatively with the NBA regions and affiliates to help promote and implement the program in their respective geographic areas. For the first program, the WLD partnered with the **Dream Team**, a non-profit organization affiliated with the Spring Valley Middle School (SVMS) in Spring Valley, California.

This year, the NBA WLD has partnered with the **Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association**, **URGENT, Inc.** and **Hands 2 Help, Inc.** The **Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association** (WDFJBA), formerly known as the Black Lawyers Association, is one of the largest minority bar associations in Miami, Florida, and plays a significant role in the Miami legal community.

URGENT, Inc. — which stands for Urban Renewal Greater Enhancement National Team — is a 501 (c) 3 community based organization founded in 1994 by a small group of concerned urban residents who wanted to see positive change in their Miami community. URGENT started out as a grassroots initiative to inform change through media education and to provide an avenue for open dialogue between community stakeholders on public access television and radio to promote solutions to problems facing urban communities. In 1999, URGENT began direct services, and in 2003, added a community development compo-

ment. URGENT remains committed to promoting solutions to the issues faced by today's urban communities. The organization facilitates several community enrichment programs, including the, Rites of Passage Youth Empowerment Academy, Pregnancy Prevention Project, Youth Empowerment Summer Camp and Youth Empowerment After School Program.

Hands 2 Help, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to involving individuals and agencies to lend helping hands to build a better community in the South Florida area. Hands 2 Help hopes to create a place with activities and support services that will cater to the specific needs of children and their families. Its mission is to build better lives and strengthen communities by providing our youth and their families with the knowledge and skills to be self-sufficient in society. It's motto — Helping Hands, Helping Communities, Helping lives — is exemplified by the many positive self-identity development programs it undertakes, namely. The organization's Passage 2 Womanhood program has the primary goal to educate young ladies on how to successfully handle many issues that can become obstacles at some point in their lives.

Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association members have a longstanding community outreach relationship with the underprivileged teenage girls who are affiliated with URGENT, Inc. and Hands 2 Help, Inc.

On Saturday, July 27, 2013, the NBA WLD will kick-off the "Respect Yourself" Program with a discussion and luncheon with girls from the abovementioned organizations. The program will be held from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Fontainebleau Miami Hotel. WLD Program Chair, Pamela Meanes, Esq., and Co-Chair, DeMonica Gladney will moderate the program, which will include a dynamic panel discussion by several WLD lawyers and judges who will share their personal struggles and challenges as African American women and in the legal profession. Following the discussion, the girls will have an opportunity to talk one-on-one with the women lawyers and judges.

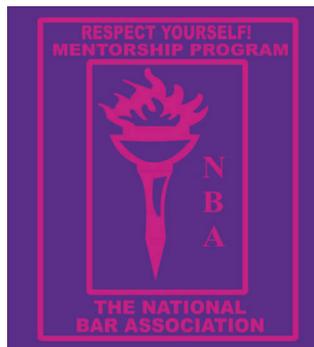
Respect Yourself Mentor Program - You Can Help!

MENTOR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Eight young women will be selected from each of the above-mentioned organizations and will be named the "Miami Dream Team" in honor of the first group of mentees. Accordingly, WLD will need sixteen women to serve as mentors. If you are willing to serve as a mentor, your responsibilities will include the following:

- 1) contacting your assigned mentee at least once before and after the program; and
- 2) attending the program on July 27, 2013.

To sign up as a mentor, please contact the Program Chair, Pamela Meanes, at pmeanes@thompsoncoburn.com on or before April 15, 2013. You will receive a letter outlining your responsibilities and the name of your mentee. After the deadline, we will open participation to other NBA women who may not be members of WLD.



NON-MENTOR ATTENDEE OPTIONS

The Program is open to all WLD members. We ask that, if you plan to attend but do not plan to serve as a mentor, you cover the costs of your lunch. To sign up as a non-mentor attendee, contact Program Chair, Pamela Meanes, at pmeanes@thompsoncoburn.com or Co-Chair DeMonica Gladney at demonica.d.gladney@exxonmobil.com on or before May 3, 2013. If you would like to purchase a "Respect Yourself" t-shirt (\$10), please contact Pamela on or before May 3, 2013.

DONATIONS REQUEST

You can also help by contributing donations for this year's goody bags. These member contributions are an important part of the Respect Yourself Experience. We would appreciate your contribution of 16 of any of the following or other items:

- Compact mirrors
- Diaries/journals
- Pens
- Book markers
- Water bottles
- Inspirational gifts with the word "Dream"
- Gift cards (e.g., \$5 or \$10)
- Back Packs/tote bags
- Thank you cards

Please confirm by email to Pamela Meanes at pmeanes@thompsoncoburn.com or DeMonica Gladney at demonica.d.gladney@exxonmobil.com if you will be able to donate by April 26, 2013. We will need the items in advance of the program, but no later than June 28, 2013.

Thanks in advance for your generosity and support. We look forward to your participation — See you in Miami!

1972-2012: WLD Celebrates 40th Anniversary in Grand Style

by Sharon E. Strickland, WLD Chair 2001-2003



The Year of 2012 was very busy and exciting year for the Women Lawyers Division as we celebrated the **40th Anniversary** at the NBA Annual Convention in Las Vegas. We want to thank our Immediate Past Chair, DeMonica Gladney; the WLD Anniversary Committee, the WLD sponsors, WLD members, who planned, attended and or participated in any of our Anniversary events. We are also very grateful for the support of our Immediate Past NBA President, Daryl

Parks and the staff of the NBA office.

Anniversary celebration events began with our 31st Annual NBA-WLD **Supreme Court Swearing-In Ceremony, Reception and Luncheon** in Washington D.C. on May 29, 2012. Attorney Allie Lattimer, one of the founders of the WLD, was the Supreme Court movant and our luncheon speaker. She inspired us all by sharing her own story of her professional life.

The Annual NBA Convention was held July 14-19 2012. We arrived in Las Vegas, open to the affirmation that our Division still bears fruit suited to our purpose. We are devoted to lifting others up, and our Respect Yourself Program on Saturday, July 14 was the embodiment of that dedication and devotion for every one of our participants. We partnered with two social service groups located in Las Vegas for a mentoring exercise to benefit adolescent and teen-age women.

Anniversary activity proceeded with the **Woman to Woman Roundtable** gathering on Saturday evening July 14, 2012.

It was deeply meaningful when we retreated, among ourselves. Our topic was "Straight Talk. Can I Get a Little Respect". We addressed, securing Respect for Myself, Respect for My Sister and Respect from my brother.

We entertained the NBA, when we invited them to our **40th Anniversary Reception**. Everyone was welcome while we saluted all of the lovely female Presi-



dents of the NBA and the Past-Chairs of WLD. It was a wonderful reunion and quite a celebration of the accomplishments of the women in the NBA-WLD. The WLD sponsored a CLE seminar led my dynamic successful women. Our topic was geared to educate, and promote economic empowerment – "Practicing at the Top of Your Game: How Are You Branding Yourself?"

The Signature WLD Event of the Convention was our **Annual Networking Breakfast** held at 7 A.M. on Tuesday. Notwithstanding the early hour we gathered with new energy and purpose. We awarded and recognized the contributions of several persons who embody WLD principles that strive to serve our constituency, and protect the rights and dreams of colored persons everywhere. The NBA-WLD left the convention motivated by our renewed commitment to follow the leadership of our new WLD chair, Antoinette Barksdale in the path of our theme for 2012-2013: **"Women Lawyers: Making It Happen."**

National Bar Association Legacy Ball Celebrates the Inauguration of President Obama

On Saturday, January 19, 2013, the National Bar Association held a Legacy Inaugural Ball to Celebrate the inauguration of President Barack Hussein Obama into his second term as President of the United States. The international world community of color all took pride and pleasure to witness President Obama's re-election, which was broadcasted on the world stage. President Obama is a person who holds down the office that symbolizes many positive images worldwide. He is a strong, intellectual leader with integrity who by his reflection mirrors all the success and achievement of persons of color in world history. The National Bar Association will remember this weekend as the Obama/King Weekend of 2013. WLD Chair, Antoinette Barksdale, and Past-Chair Iris McCollum Green were among the NBA principals that orchestrated this event. Dressed to impress, NBA members and guests enjoyed delightful food and tapped their toes to silky smooth soul and jazz music. The Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., fired the imaginations of everyone present. This atmosphere, and an IMAX screening and exhibition honoring the Tuskegee Airman, inspired us to sense the promise of our own potential of 2013.

We were humbled by the remarks of Tuskegee Airman LeRoy Bat-



tle from Maryland, pictured here with NBA President John Page. Michael Stoudemire, a member of President Obama's staff, offered remarks. WLD members may recognize him because he attended the WLD breakfast in July 2012, representing the

White House. Everyone was impressed with the Souvenir Plates which were etched with the description of the occasion. The NBA and our friends took the time out to praise the legacy of our President, as a bridge builder, closing the gaps between races and genders and generations which weaved unity among United States citizens. The 2013 NBA Inaugural Ball was our opportunity to participate and celebrate an American milestone.

Why Fair Pay is About More than Fairness

by Hanna Bergqvist Jackson*

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Equal Pay Act. At the time of the Act's ratification, Congress recognized that paying women a discriminatory salary burdened "commerce and the free flow of goods in commerce," and prevented the "maximum utilization of available labor resources."¹ Unfortunately, today the debate regarding equal pay focuses more on fairness than on the socioeconomic benefits that would be obtained by equal pay. People simply believe that it is unfair to pay women less for performing the same jobs as men simply because they are women. However, by using an argument premised on fairness-, a much more powerful rationale is lost. Equal pay not only benefits the women receiving a higher salary and their children and spouses, it also benefits their employers, service providers, and merchandisers. In fact, it benefits the entire economy and society at large because the increased spending would stimulate the economy and reduce dependence on public assistance.² Therefore, the issue of pay discrimination is about much more than fairness.

In order to forcefully argue for equal pay, the focus of the debate should be shifted away from fairness and towards a more socioeconomic approach. By altering the framing of the debate in this way, measures like the proposed Paycheck Fairness Act will have an improved chance of ratification. In other words, if employers and decision makers are made aware that everyone should be concerned about pay discrimination and not just women, the slow progress towards equal pay may finally gain the strength it needs and deserves.

THE CONTINUED WAGE GAP

The last fifty years have been revolutionary for women's rights

and women's roles in society. In 1960, 96 percent of lawyers and 94 percent of doctors were white men. Today, white men only account for 61 percent of lawyers and 63 percent of doctors.³ When former Supreme Court Justice Sandra O'Connor graduated from Stanford Law School ranked as third in her class, the only private sector position she could get was one as a legal secretary.⁴ Today, women account for 45.4 percent of law firm associates (but only 19.5 percent of partners and 15 percent of equity partners).⁵ Women today are better educated than men, and they have been for more than two decades. Since the early 1980's, women have earned more bachelor's and master's degrees than men, and today women earn more doctoral degrees than men do.⁶ Women's participation in work outside the home is now equal to that of men and women's earnings are increasingly important to their families' survival and well-being.⁷

Yet, women still make significantly less than men when performing the same work. When the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963, women earned only about fifty-nine cents of every dollar men made.⁸ Today, women make an average of seventy-seven cents of every dollar men make.⁹ This means that fifty years of legislation against pay discrimination has not brought women more than eighteen cents closer to equality.¹⁰ Some argue that women's entrance into traditionally male-dominated professions could be a reason for the wage gap, and that time will close the gap as women earn the same experience and seniority as their male colleagues. However, contrary data shows that men earn more than women—even in professions that have been female dominated for a long time, such as education and nursing. For example, female elementary and middle school teachers earn 85.7 percent of what their male colleagues earn, female social workers earn 89.6 percent, and

Why Fair Pay is About More than Fairness... continued

However, contrary data shows that men earn more than women—even in professions that have been female dominated for a long time, such as education and nursing. For example, female elementary and middle school teachers earn 85.7 percent of what their male colleagues earn, female social workers earn 89.6 percent, and secondary school teachers 91.4 percent of their male colleagues' salaries.¹¹ The pay gap persists even after factors such as choice of college major (men tend to major in fields such as engineering and computer science, which often lead to higher-paying jobs than typical female-dominated majors such as education and the social sciences) and numbers of hours worked have been accounted for.¹² The result is an otherwise unexplained pay gap that can only be the result of gender discrimination.¹³

WHY PAY DISCRIMINATION IS NOT JUST A WOMEN'S ISSUE

The significant change in women's role in society over the last fifty years affects American society at large. With women today comprising half of the U.S. workforce, it would be naïve to think of the pay gap as only a women's issue. It is an issue that directly affects half of the U.S. workforce and indirectly a much larger part through those worker's dependents. For example, in the typical married American household today, the wife's salary accounts for over one third of the family's income. In 2008, 38.1 percent of all American working wives made as much or more than their husbands. In addition, because the industries that were most affected by the Great Recession were male dominated industries, women's earnings have had an increasingly important role for many families since 2009. In 2009, women were the only employed adult in one out of three families with children. Women's salaries are also increasingly important to unmarried women and their children. Today, over one quarter of working mothers are single moms and the sole earner of the family.⁹

The importance of women's salaries for the American society is further illustrated by the fact that women today make up 77.4 percent of workers in education and health services, which is the fastest growing sector of the U.S. economy. In fact, women comprise the majority share of all but three of the fifteen occupations with the largest projected employment growth between 2006 and 2016. Moreover, women-owned businesses grew at twice the pace as male-owned businesses in the years between 1997 and 2007.⁹

Lastly, even though women still earn less money than men, they are in charge of the majority of household spending. Women control nearly three quarters of household spending, which translates to over \$4 trillion annually.¹⁴

These numbers clearly show the crucial role of women's earnings for both their families' well-being and for the potential growth of the economy. With women accounting for half of the U.S. workforce, their salaries comprising one third of their family's income, and with women dominating the fastest growing sectors of the American economy, the importance of women's salaries cannot be stressed enough.¹⁵

Forbes contributor Lisa Gates, who discovered that she was being paid less than a male predecessor, points out that by being paid 32 percent less, she was also 32 percent less able to participate in and stimulate the economy by, for example, paying a housekeeper, buying a car, contribute to charity, or travelling to spend time with family.¹⁶ Economist Heidi Hartmann further illustrates the economic impact of unfair pay by estimating that the elimination of the gender wage gap would cause a stimulus effect that grows the U.S. economy by at least 3 to 4 percent. Hartmann compares these numbers with the \$800 billion economic stimulus package that

Congress passed in 2009 which is estimated to have grown the GDP by less than 1.5 percent.¹⁷ Moreover, by reducing the number of working women earning unfairly low wages, their dependence on public assistance would also be reduced.¹⁸

THE PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

On January 23, the Paycheck Fairness Act, approved by the House of Representatives in 2009 but twice rejected by the Senate, was reintroduced in the House. The Paycheck Fairness Act was designed to improve the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by, for example, replacing the clause "any other factor other than sex" in the Equal Pay Act with "a bona fide factor other than sex, such as education, training, or experience."¹⁹ It would require the employer to show that the differing salary is truly caused by something other than sex, related to job performance, and consistent with business necessity. The bona fide factor requirement would make employers unable to defend any actions that may actually be "based on sex," such as a man's stronger salary negotiation skills or higher previous salary.²⁰ The Paycheck Fairness Act would also prevent employers from firing their employees for sharing salary information with their colleagues, a rule that would be important because it would enable employees to find out about existing pay disparities.²¹ Moreover, this rule would allow compensatory and punitive damages for any breach.

Opponents to the Paycheck Fairness Act have voiced concerns that the bill would place an unfair burden on employers and that their increased liability could "have a chilling effect on wage growth and hiring at a time when business should be encouraged to increase both."²² It has also been argued that the Paycheck Fairness Act would "mak[e] it difficult for employers to defeat frivolous lawsuits, foster[] larger class action cases, and creat[e] an unprecedented level of remedies regardless of the intent to discriminate."²³

Reevaluating how women's earnings are so important to both their immediate families and the economy, these arguments should be addressed and discussed. For example, when programs designed to raise workers' wages in female-dominated job classes were implemented in twenty states in the late 1980's, women in some states gained considerably in non-female-dominated jobs as well as in female-dominated jobs. Therefore, it appears that "the pay equity process stimulated wage increases for women in all jobs."²⁴ Moreover, pay transparency will, among other things, improve employees' work effort and productivity, and will enable employers to correct pay disparities before becoming entangled in expensive litigation.²⁵ By focusing on the economic stimulus that the bill is likely to bring rather than its fairness, its proponents would make a stronger argument for the bill's necessity. Obtaining the necessary support for the bill requires meeting the antagonists' arguments and convincing them of the bill's socioeconomic benefits, rather than trying to convince them of the unfairness of pay discrimination, which no one is questioning.

The shift in legislative framing towards the socioeconomic benefits of equal pay and away from the unfairness of paying women less than men may be required to gain the support necessary to pass important laws such as the Paycheck Fairness Act. Therefore, it is of greatest importance to keep emphasizing that "[t]he gender wage gap comes at a cost to the economy as a whole."²⁶ Women not only have a dominating

Why Fair Pay is About More than Fairness... continued

CONCLUSION

The shift in legislative framing towards the socioeconomic benefits of equal pay and away from the unfairness of paying women less than men may be required to gain the support necessary to pass important laws such as the Paycheck Fairness Act. Therefore, it is of greatest importance to keep emphasizing that “[t]he gender wage gap comes at a cost to the economy as a whole.”²⁶ Women not only have a dominating purchasing power and thereby serve as critical financial decision makers for their households, they also play an increasingly important part in the American labor market. When women are being paid discriminated salaries, they bring home fewer dollars to their families and they have less dollars to spend, with a slower economic growth as a result. It is therefore necessary to stress that eliminating the gender pay gap has the potential to improve not only the conditions for women and their families, but also to strengthen the American economy.

*Hanna Bergqvist Jackson is an LL.M. student at Brooklyn Law School. Originally from Sweden, she is a graduate of the University of Stockholm Law School. Hanna relocated to New York in 2008 and worked as a journalist before she decided to pursue her LL.M. Her focus lies in employment law, and, in particular, employment discrimination.

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8. *How the Paycheck Fairness Act Will Strengthen the Equal Pay Act*, NAT’L WOMEN’S L. CTR. (May 2012), <http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/broadpaycheckfairnessfactsheet.pdf>.
9. a. b. c. *Id.*
10. More strikingly, between 2001 and 2011, the wage gap decreased less than one percent. *Unaffordable: the Wage Gap in Every State*, NAT’L WOMEN’S L. CTR. (Apr. 2012), http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2012equalpayfactsheets/allstates_equalpaystatefactsheet.pdf.
11. Eisenberg, *supra* note 6, at 975.
12. CHRISTIANNE CORBETT & CATHERINE HILL, AM. ASS’N OF UNIV. WOMEN, GRADUATING TO A PAY GAP: THE EARNINGS OF WOMEN AND MEN ONE YEAR AFTER COLLEGE GRADUATION (Oct. 2012), available at <http://www.aauw.org/graduatetopaygap/>.
13. REP. CAROLYN B. MALONEY, MAJORITY STAFF OF THE JOINT ECON. COMM., INVEST IN WOMEN, INVEST IN AMERICA: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF WOMEN IN THE U.S. ECONOMY (Dec. 2010) hereinafter INVEST IN WOMEN, INVEST IN AMERICA], available at http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/?a=Files.Serve&File_id=57cfa04-f297-4c61-964b-6321af47db03.
14. See generally *id.*
15. Men and women today are much more likely to graduate with debt compared to their parents and grandparents. This is especially troublesome for women, who will face a discriminated paycheck once they begin their post graduation employment. Even though they paid the same amount for their degree as their male peers, they will make less money and their student loan repayments will therefore make up a larger part of their earnings. These women will have less money to spend on themselves and their families. Therefore, women and their families struggling with unpaid debt also lack the ability to stimulate the economy. A large debt further discourages risk tolerance and the ability to start new businesses. John Tozzi, *Easing Student Loan Burdens for Entrepreneurs*, BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK (Oct. 26, 2011), http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/running_small_business/archives/2011/10/easing_student_loan_burdens_for_entrepreneurs.html.
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23. *Id.*
24. Heidi I. Hartmann & Stephanie Aaronson, *Pay Equity and Women’s Wage Increases: Success In the States, A Model for the Nation*, 1 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL’Y 69, 82 (1994).
25. Eisenberg, *supra* note 6, at 1008.
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Wiley A. Branton Reception Honors Distinguished Attorneys



The Women Lawyers Division co-sponsored the Wiley A. Branton Reception on Thursday, November 1, 2012, at DLA Piper in Washington, DC, where National Bar

Association President John Page presented the annual Wiley A. Branton Award to three distinguished attorneys. The Branton Award is presented to persons who have demonstrated leadership on the cutting edge of law for civil, social and economic justice. This year's honorees were Eleanor Holmes Norton, U.S. Congresswoman for the District of Columbia; Larry Gibson, professor of law at the University of Maryland's Francis King Carey School of Law; and Benjamin F. Wilson, managing principal of the law firm Beveridge & Diamond.

The Reception followed the 24th Annual Wiley A. Branton Issues Symposium, held in conjunction with, and on the grounds of, the Howard University School of Law. The topic for the Annual Wiley A. Branton Issues Symposium was "Protest and Polarization: Law and

Debate in America 2012."

The Wiley A. Branton Award was named in honor of attorney and civil rights activist Wiley Austin Branton, an Arkansas native and a former dean of the Howard University School of Law who achieved national prominence when he served as the chief counsel for the Black plaintiffs in the 1957 Little Rock Desegregation Case. During his long and distinguished legal career, he made significant contributions in the voting rights arena as both a public officer and private citizen. In 1962, Mr. Branton was unanimously selected as the first executive director of the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project, based in Atlanta, Georgia. The Project was a cooperative effort that successfully registered over 600,000 Black voters in eleven states and helped create the momentum for the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Mr. Branton also served as the executive secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson's Council on Equal Opportunity, and, as a chief aide to Humphrey and Johnson, traveled throughout the South encouraging Blacks to register under the 1965 Voting Rights Act. From 1972 to 1974, Branton served as head of the Voter Registration Fund, a non-partisan organization created to provide funding to tax exempt organizations in support of voter registration activities. Wiley Austin Branton served as dean of the Howard University School of Law from January 1, 1978 to September 2, 1983.

Past recipients of the Wiley A. Branton Award include the Hon. James E. Clyburn, Dr. Dorothy Irene Height, Elaine Jones, Esq., the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. and The Little Rock Nine.

WLD Chapter Profile

GWAC: The Greater Washington Area Chapter

In October 1972, just two years after the founding of the National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division, a group of African-American women lawyers in the District of Columbia metropolitan area began organizing a chapter of the new new division. In September of 1976, the Greater Washington Area Chapter—GWAC—elected its first officers as the first local chapter of the NBA WLD. Over the years GWAC's membership has grown from approximately 20 to a high of 400 members. Members include law school students, recent law school graduates, practicing and retired attorneys, judges, and attorneys working in non-legal professions. GWAC became an affiliate chapter of the NBA in 1994 and has been named Affiliate Chapter of the Year on several occasions, most recently in 2011.

GWAC's purpose is to address the concerns of the District of Columbia metropolitan community with an emphasis on African-American women in the legal profession. In furtherance of its purpose, throughout the year, GWAC sponsors many programs for its members and others in the community, including tutoring and enrichment programs for girls in the District of Columbia Public Schools and an outreach program for residents of the Washington Center for Aging Services. One of GWAC's major efforts has been devoted to establishing and endowing a program for law students. Through the Legal Intern Placement Program (LIPP), GWAC secures and financially subsidizes finances summer employment for selected law students.

GWAC has served as an active participant with many legal, governmental and community groups throughout the area, such as the D.C. Commission for Women, the National Committee on Pay Equity, the

Women's Bar Association, and the National League of Women Voters. Participation in these and similar organizations allows GWAC to influence and assist the community at large and carry its messages to a wider audience. GWAC has also taken a keen interest in judicial and executive appointments, recommending many of its members for appointments, and others, to these vacancies.

GWAC in 1994 organized its own American Inn of Court – the Charlotte E. Ray American Inn of Court is the first African-American Inn of Court named after an African-American woman. In 1993, GWAC established the GWAC Foundation, Inc. ("the Foundation") to further its charitable endeavors. The Foundation received its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service in 1995. That same year, GWAC provided the Foundation with its original endowment. The work of the Foundation is performed entirely by volunteers with no paid staff. As an independent charitable organization, the Foundation's objective is to empower the African-American community. Since its founding, the Foundation has provided funding for numerous community outreach and charitable projects, such as GWAC's Legal Intern placement Program and the D.C. Children's Advocacy Center.

The Foundation and GWAC have hosted an annual awards program that recognizes women trailblazers in the law with the Charlotte E. Ray Award, named in honor of the first African American woman lawyer in the United States.

Learn more about GWAC at gwacbar.org.



Greater Washington Area Chapter

WLD Chapter Profile

GSCBWLA: The Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association

The Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association (GSCBWLA), formerly the National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division Dade County Chapter, was formed in 1985. The association's mission is to address the concerns of women lawyers as they relate to the social, economic, political and moral needs of the community.

For over twenty-six years, the association has been a network of attorneys dedicated to community service and the professional development of its members. The association has placed a strong emphasis on community service through its community seminars, free neighborhood legal clinics and programs educating and empowering youth and the mentorship of law students. The association is also known for its support of its members' growth and development within the legal profession. With this support, our members have achieved many "firsts" within Florida as lawyers within law firms, corporations, government agencies and the judiciary.

In 2005, the association voted to be renamed in honor of community activist Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry, who was the first Black female attorney to practice in Dade County and the first Black female legislator in the State of Florida. Throughout the association's existence, it has grown and its reach has expanded. Although it began as a Dade County bar association, GSCBWLA currently represents over 350 men and women law students, lawyers and judges throughout the State of Florida. Learn more at gscbwla.org.



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The Women Lawyers Division (WLD) of the National Bar Association was established in 1972 as a vehicle for women in the practice of law to address the issues and problems that particularly affect, interest and concern African American women.