

**Women & The Law
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, November 4, 2015 12:30pm
DSBA Offices**

IN ATTENDANCE: Natalie Woloshin, Kathleen Miller, Kathleen Murphy, Kyle Evans Gay, Stephanie Habelow, Christine Demsey, Patricia Enerio, Tamika Crawl-Bay, [By Phone] Lauren McCreary, Michelle Quinn, Brenda Roberts, Kelley Huff, Rebecca Byrd, Sara Bussiere, Sharon Morgan, Lauren Cirrinicione, Tiphonie Miller, Rebecca Byrd

I. Approval of minutes from the October 7, 2015 meeting

Kyle Gay made a motion to approve the minutes, and Christine Demsey seconded. The motion carried.

II. Good and Welfare

A. Delaware Commission on Women

Kathy Miller noted that Smith, Katzenstein & Jenkins recently hosted a successful forum run by Elise Millman from the Delaware Commission on Women. Approximately 20 women, some from the Section, participated in an active and helpful discussion. The participants filled out a survey, and that same survey may also be submitted to the entire WAL section through Survey Monkey or some other electronic means. The Co-Chairs would ask all members to take a few minutes to fill out the survey, which will be compiled into a report to be sent to the Governor by students at the University of Delaware. The Delaware Commission on Women is part of the Schriver report, a nationwide effort focused on women from all walks of life from across the country.

B. New Judicial Appointments

Kyle Gay noted that Tamika Montgomery-Reeves had been nominated as Vice Chancellor on the Court of Chancery. Christine Demsey noted that Governor Markell had also nominated two women for positions on the Family Court. Jennifer Ranji was nominated to replace Judge William L. Chapman Jr., and Danielle Blount was nominated to replace Commissioner Mary Ann Herlihy.

Members of the Section agreed that the Section should consider hosting an event honoring the three appointees, much like the DSBA past presidents' reception for Justice Valihura. Tamika Crawl-Bey advised that the MJL Section was planning to host an event in January, and that perhaps the Sections could work together. Those interested in helping with the event should contact Tabatha Castro.

Christine Demsey noted that Governor Markell continues to value public service in making his appointments, and that applicants for judicial positions should be sure to point out their service to the community and to the bar.

C. Supreme Court Joint Committee on Work Life Balance

Trisha Enerio sought feedback from the Section on the work of the Supreme Court Joint Committee on Work-Life Balance. The Committee's first project is to recommend whether our State courts should institute a filing deadline as has been done at the Federal level. Trisha asked whether the Section would be willing to take a position on a filing deadline, and wanted to solicit informal feedback from the group to get a sense of member's opinions. She noted that the Committee is also looking at other ways the Courts could make the practice of law easier, that is to say more balanced, for practitioners.

Natalie Woloshin noted that before e-filing, the Superior Court deadline used to be by close of business, a/k/a when the courthouse closed. It also used to be that the Court would take two weeks off around Christmas without exception.

Kathy Miller noted that the transition in District Court has been nice and has not been the disaster that many practitioners anticipated.

A majority of the Section members present at the meeting endorsed a filing deadline.

Stephanie Habelow suggested that part of the problem is that lawyers themselves need to manage their own schedules to ensure work is done on time.

Kelley Huff noted that everybody works differently, and that procrastination is not always the problem. By the time lawyers who are in court all day get back to the office, they need the night to get their work done. Also, some people prefer to be able to go home to take care of their families and then go back to work whenever they need.

Kathy Miller likes the 6pm deadline because work slows down and the phones stop ringing around that time. She commented that it's nice to know that you aren't going to be in the office at 1am.

Trisha Enerio asked if there was a way that the Section could formally submit an opinion. Kyle Gay mentioned that we could discuss at a Wellness luncheon. The Section leadership could also provide a recommendation for the Section to vote on.

Christine Demsey noted that the Superior Court and Chancery used to take all of August off.

Trisha Enerio said that the Supreme Court did not schedule any oral arguments in August.

Natalie Woloshin added that the Superior Court has no blackout dates, but when they try to schedule hearings and trials at certain times, many participants aren't available.

D. DSBA Standing Committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession

Tamika Crawl-Bey announced that the DSBA Standing Committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession was reforming to address issues affecting women attorneys, multicultural attorneys, LGBT attorneys, and attorneys with disabilities. For those who want to participate, there will be an initial meeting on November 18th at the DSBA. This Committee will hopefully have a great impact on the whole bar. One project they are considering it to track statistics about individuals taking or passing the Delaware bar exam.

III. Committee Reports

Natalie Woloshin reviewed the committee assignments and responsibilities. If you want to join a committee or if you were placed on the wrong committee, contact a Board member.

A. Awards

Natalie Woloshin reported that the Awards Committee is considering nominations for the Hall of Fame of Delaware Women. President Judge Jan R. Jurden has been nominated. For those interested in joining, the Awards Committee meets and collects information to make a recommendation to members of the Section, who then vote on the nomination.

B. Legislative

Rebecca Byrd shared that the Legislative Luncheon is tentatively scheduled for March 10 or 17, 2016. A list of legislation that was introduced last year, and that is carrying over to this session will be discussed by the Legislative Committee to see which issues the Section may want to support. One issue of interest is the push for paid maternity and paternity leave for state employees.

Natalie Woloshin added that the Legislation Luncheon is a terrific event where section members get direct access to legislators. An example of a past initiative was the human trafficking bill. Last year the Luncheon was a mini Senate hearing.

Christine Demsey expressed some concern that the tentative date is so close to the Retreat, and the some Section members may not be able to take off both days in March to participate.

C. Advocacy

Stephanie Habelow noted that the Advocacy Committee planned to meet at 12:30pm on November 13th at Morris James. All interested Section members are welcome to attend.

IV. Bylaws

Natalie Woloshin suggested that in the interests of time, the Section should address proposed amendments to bylaws at a future meeting.

V. Appointment of Vice Chair

Natalie Woloshin, on behalf of the Executive Board, suggested that the Section vote to fill the vacant Vice-Chair position. The Executive Board has created good momentum, but would benefit from having a Vice-Chair share the responsibilities of managing the Section's business. It's also beneficial for the institutional memory of the Section to have leadership in the pipeline.

Kathleen Murphy was nominated as Vice-Chair. A majority of the Section members present voted to approve Kathleen Murphy's appointment as Vice-Chair of the Section for the 2015-2017 term.

The meeting was adjourned.