



## NAWL News

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### Noted

The New York Times reports that with the recession taking its heaviest toll on male-dominated fields such as manufacturing and construction, women are on the verge of surpassing men on the nation's payrolls for the first time in American history.

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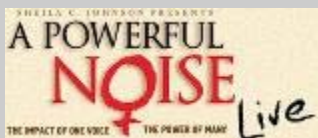
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## March is Women's History Month

NAWL was founded in 1899 and was the first nationwide association of women lawyers in the United States. Throughout its existence NAWL has been an advocate for women's legal rights. In 1912, NAWL campaigned for women's voting rights during the women's suffrage movement. Six years later, NAWL began an initiative to achieve for women the right to serve on juries. More recently through the Women Lawyers Journal, NAWL's quarterly magazine, NAWL has spread awareness on topics including domestic violence, gender bias, and sexual harassment in the work place. Today NAWL continues to be a strong support for women's rights.

## International Women's Day Special Event



Thursday, March 5th, for one night only, in honor of International Women's Day, more than 450 theaters nationwide will be screening "A Powerful Noise" featuring 3 inspiring women who overcome daily challenges to achieve significant victories over oppression. Following the film, in participating theaters, there will be a live town hall discussion between former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, CARE Advocate Christy Turlington Burns, Pulitzer Prize Winning NY Times columnist Nicholas K. Kristof and actress/activist Natalie Portman, as well as the President and CEO of CARE, Helene Gayle.

[More Information](#)

## Feature: NAWL's Legislative Committee

Chaired by Zoe Sanders Nettles, the NAWL Legislative Committee monitors proposed federal legislation with a potential impact on women's legal rights and the practice of law. Developments regarding such legislation are reported to NAWL members in NAWL's weekly E-Blast and can also be viewed on the NAWL website under its Legislative updates ([www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org)). Neither the Committee nor NAWL lobby Congress.

The Committee was very active tracking legislation during the first few weeks of the Obama administration. On January 29, 2009, the Lilly Ledbetter Act was signed into law by President Obama. The Ledbetter law

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addresses the holding delivered by the U.S. Supreme Court last year regarding the time period limitations for women who bring cases for pay discrimination. The Ledbetter legislation will essentially reverse the Supreme Court decision that requires workers to file charges on a pay discrimination claim within the first six months of receiving their first discriminatory paycheck. The Committee is hopeful that President Obama's decision to make the Ledbetter Act the very first legislation signed into law augurs well for similar legislation with a positive impact on women's legal rights. Committee Chair Zoe Nettles expresses it like this: "While we have a ways to go before we achieve equality, it appears this is the beginning of a new day. NAWL through this committee and other committees continues to keep its eye on the prize."

NAWL's Legislative Committee will keep you fully apprised of future legislative developments.

[More Information](#)

## Amicus Committee Update:

NAWL joined Equal Rights Advocates, Irell & Manella LLP, the California Women's Law Center, Legal Momentum, and Women Lawyers of Santa Cruz County as Amicus Curiae in support of Petitioner, Karen L. Strauss in *Karen L. Strauss et al., v. Mark B. Horton, as State Registrar of Vital Statistics et al.* This case involves Proposition 8, a ballot initiative that purports to remove from gay and lesbian persons the right to marry the partner of their choice. Although targeted at gay men and lesbians, mobilized and well-funded groups could attempt to use the same process embodied in Proposition 8 to deprive any number of other disfavored or politically vulnerable groups of Californians of many or even all of their protected rights under the state Constitution.

Through its amicus work, NAWL has been a strong and clear voice for same sex equality. NAWL recognizes that any limitation of civil rights based upon sex or gender, limits the civil rights of all.

[More Information](#)

## Women in the News:

### *President Obama Nominates Dean Elena Kagan and Dawn Johnsen for Key Department of Justice Posts*

President Obama nominated Elena Kagan, currently Dean of Harvard Law School to be Solicitor General. Dean Kagan received the 2008 NAWL Arabella Babb Mansfield award presented in recognition of professional achievement, positive influence and valuable contribution to women in the law and in society. If approved by the Senate, Dean Kagan would be the first woman to hold this position.

President Obama also nominated Dawn Johnsen to be Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel. Ms. Johnsen is currently a Professor of Law at the Indiana University School of Law-Bloomington.

### *Carol Battiste Appointed SVP at LexisNexis*

NAWL Sponsor LexisNexis, a global provider of content-enabled workflow solutions, appointed Carol Battiste Senior Vice President of Privacy, Security, Compliance and Government Affairs. Among her numerous achievements, Ms. Battiste holds an LL.M from Columbia University School of Law, a JD from Temple University and a BA from LaSalle University. She also served 20 years on active duty in the United States Air Force. Carol was previously General Counsel and Chief Privacy Officer for ChoicePoint, now a LexisNexis company.

## In My Opinion:

This month, we interviewed Sharie Brown, litigation partner at DLA Piper, who is Chair of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and Corporate Compliance practice group at DLA Piper, and represents corporations in U.S. and international investigations, audits, and transactional due diligence matters worldwide.



NNews: What is the biggest challenge facing women in business today?

SB: *Today it's continuing to have the opportunity to thrive in an environment where the legal market is contracting and firms (and corporations) are in survival mode. It's easier to give attention to diversity and inclusion (and progressing gender issues) in a law firm or corporation when everyone is busy, making money, and the threat of non-survival is not the focal point. Law firms downsize along with their clients, and diversity can become less of a priority for executive committees and managing partners. It can also become less of a priority for corporate clients to remind law firms that they care about the participation of diverse attorneys on their projects. I believe that today these are things that women have to address.*

NNEWS: What about the work life balance?

SB: *I do not believe that there is ever any true balance for working wives and mothers. I think balance is an aspiration, not a reality. Certain aspects of one's life are always out of balance. For example, sometimes a project deadline at work requires more time and is a priority; at other times, one's family or civic obligations require a great deal more time and attention. We juggle and decide what balls we will focus on when too many balls are thrown at one time. (We do not control the balls or when they are thrown- -we just decide what we will try to catch, and hope the rest do not fall too far from our reach.) Employers should understand that emergencies or important commitments arise, and that the work environment should be flexible enough for those to be accommodated. It's obsolete to require an attorney to be in a single place and have face time every day, every hour, in order to be viewed as effective in his or her job. Providing flexibility is critical - with technology today, you can deliver a work product from just about anywhere in the world, and clients don't care if you're at the firm or in your home office. But the word "balance" is not a word that I would use in this discussion. Perhaps work- life management is a better term.*

NNews: What was the biggest obstacle or roadblock you encountered in your career?

SB: *All women have obstacles and roadblocks. The key is to recognize whether the roadblock is temporary or long term, and then develop a strategy for working around it (long term), waiting it out, or knocking it out the way (short term). Sometimes you'll need help in dealing with the roadblock, so women need to figure out who to trust with their candid concerns. In every situation where I experienced a roadblock, there was someone to help - all different sorts of people from different genders, age groups, and levels (CEOs and secretaries). The help with road blocks could have come from a woman, but often it was from a man. I have found that a confident strong man who is in a position of authority can quite readily become a champion for a talented woman who is facing roadblocks. So whether the champion is a woman, or more likely, a man, working women should recognize and take their champions where they find them. I feel lucky over the course of my career to have benefited from more than one champion whose "blocking", along with my hard work, allowed me to*

*progress and achieve my potential.*

NNEWS: What is your most memorable or significant accomplishment as a lawyer?

SB: *A project that requires rigorous analysis, an even temperament under stressful circumstances, management of numerous personnel, overseas travel to non-Western locations, exotic cultures, intense labor and writing, long hours, impossible deadlines, unpredictable outcomes, high stakes, and a clear client objective provides me with the greatest professional satisfaction. I have spent most of my recent career conducting internal investigations and reviews around the world for public companies (US and non US) and multilateral organizations into possible bribery, corruption, and trade regulatory violations related to foreign agents, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, as well as whistleblower allegations about suspected fraud and financial misconduct. But, there is no one project or matter that is my most significant accomplishment. I note, however, that I do take particular satisfaction in working with and mentoring talented young people- -male and female. But, I understandably relate to talented young women in a way that I do not with the men. It is quite satisfying to see the young lawyers that I work with come into their own professionally.*

NNews: Who is the most admirable woman in business today?

SB: *I particularly admire the woman who recruited me to this law firm (Ann Ford); but, I am also a fan of several of my female clients working in male dominated businesses (oil and gas; defense contracting). I have also become an admirer of the Chairperson of the FDIC since the onset of the financial crisis.*

NNews: What is your definition of a good day?

SB: *A good day is when I come in, I am able to do the work I set out for myself, I can see the results of my efforts, and I'm not distracted by 50 other things that don't progress the firm, my client's interest, or some project or family matter that I am working on. A good day is feeling like I have added value and achieved what I set out to do. It can be servicing a client, making progress on an article or presentation, making time for a young attorney who needs guidance, and always remaining connected to what is happening with my family.*

NNews: What person in history - ancient or recent - would you be most interested in having dinner with?

SB: *Two people - if they could be together, alive - Abraham Lincoln and Barak Obama. I think it would be a fascinating dinner for me; probably for the two of them as well.*

NNEWS: Other thoughts for women?

SB: *I want women to start thinking more about their value to an organization, and combine that with discussions about family and work. To me, as an observer, when the only discussion professional women have is about the work/family issue, and I hear them say that money isn't that important to them, I believe that women lose an opportunity to be recognized and more highly valued within their organization. Women should be recognized in proportion to your contributions- -which are considerable. Most employers recognize workers through the compensation system; so women should make sure that they are properly compensated.*

## Fourth Annual Selma Moidel Writing Competition

The National Association of Women Lawyers® (NAWL®) has established the

annual Selma Moidel Smith Law Student Writing Competition to encourage and reward original law student writing on issues concerning women and the law. Entrants are invited to submit a paper on issues concerning women's rights or the status of women in the law. The author of the first-place essay will receive a cash prize and the winning essay will be published in the Women Lawyers Journal. Entries must be received by April 30, 2009.

[Guidelines](#)

## Recommended Reading:

*Basic Black: The Essential Guide for Getting Ahead at Work (and in Life)*

by Cathie Black



Cathie Black is president of Hearst Magazines, and writes an amusing and thoughtful take on what it takes to get to the top of your profession. She admits to her mistakes and learns from them, and the advice she gives is accurate and timely, right down to which rules you can break. It is candid and personalized; an excellent guide for any woman at any stage of her career.

## Survey for a study of the Female Business Traveler

NAWL Members are invited to participate in an international survey for a study of the Female Business Traveler. Conducted by Francine Newth, part of the Management Faculty in the School of Business at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island, the purpose of this study is to research the current needs, characteristics and behaviors of women who travel on business in the US or anywhere in the world. All data is confidential and the results will be published in an academic journal. The study focuses exclusively on women who travel on business. The deadline to respond is March 5, 2009.

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