



# NAWL NEWS

National Association of Women Lawyers®  
The Voice of Women in the Law™

May, 2008

---

Welcome to NAWL News! This is a free newsletter, and we encourage you to pass it on to others who would be interested. To unsubscribe, please hit “reply” and put “unsubscribe” in the subject box.

## **In This Issue:**

Focus On: The Davis Polk Women’s Initiative  
Women in the News  
Glass Ceiling News  
In My Opinion  
Upcoming Events

## **FOCUS ON: Davis Polk’s Women’s Initiative**

Davis Polk has long been a leader among major US firms in hiring and promoting women lawyers and working toward achieving gender equality in the legal profession. In 1971, Davis Polk became one of the first “Wall Street firms” to elect a woman partner. Today, its women lawyers play leadership roles both in client relationships and as the heads of key practice groups and committees throughout the firm.

The Women’s Committee at Davis Polk, a sub-committee of the firm’s Diversity Committee, is driven by a core group of four partners and supported by representatives from the Recruiting, Associate Development and Business Development offices. The team meets regularly to discuss and plan various initiatives designed to promote the opportunities and concerns of women in the workplace. Some upcoming activities include a panel discussion on flex-time issues, a women lawyer and summer associate networking party hosted at the home of a woman partner, and several practice-specific social events.

Another integral part of the firm’s women’s initiative is DPWomen, one of the firm’s six affinity groups geared toward cultivating a workplace that supports gender diversity. DPWomen is open to all lawyers across the firm, women and men, and meets monthly to discuss the unique interests and concerns that women have at the firm and within the legal profession in general, including such topics as career development, mentoring and business development. DPWomen has hosted several internal lunches at which clients or alumnae have come to speak about their influential careers.

In 2007, the Davis Polk women partners hosted an evening of cocktails, with a special appearance by Tony Award-winning singer Audra McDonald, at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Nearly 100 of the firm’s top women clients turned out to help make this a special night. For this occasion, the firm created an annual summer fellowship, in which it sponsors the placement of a New York-area female law student at inMotion. While providing inMotion with an additional staffing resource, the fellowship has enabled the firm to promote inMotion and its vital mission among the broad and dynamic network of Davis Polk’s women corporate and investment banking clients. The

Women's Committee is planning several smaller-scale client events in 2008 and a larger event for 2009.

Along with supporting inMotion, Davis Polk's women lawyers are active in other organizations outside of the firm that address women's issues in the legal profession and in the broader community. These efforts include leading positions with professional associations, not-for-profit organizations and a wide range of educational, civic and cultural institutions. Of particular interest in this context, lawyers from across the firm's practice provide effective and creative pro bono legal assistance to women and families in need, both in this country and abroad, including work with microfinance organizations, and assistance with domestic and immigration issues. In other instances, the firm supports women suffering from human rights violations in Third World countries.

Recently, for example, a female associate at Davis Polk had the extraordinary opportunity to co-supervise a trip to Sierra Leone with the Fordham Human Rights Clinic to conduct a week of field work. The Fordham Human Rights clinic is working with a Sierra Leonean grassroots community justice organization called Timap for Justice (meaning "stand up" for justice) in developing a pilot project for Timap to work against Female Genital Mutilation ("FGM") at the community level. FGM is widely practiced throughout Sierra Leone within secret societies that are politically and socially powerful, making Sierra Leone one of the last frontiers in the campaign against FGM. The Clinic will also write a report for Timap critiquing the current child maintenance laws in Sierra Leone, which do not adequately address the needs of the rural population.

Over the past several decades, Davis Polk has put in place a wide range of policies and practices designed to recruit, support and advance the careers of women at the firm. "While we are extremely proud of what Davis Polk women have achieved at the firm and in the profession, we remain committed to expanding the development and mentoring opportunities for our women lawyers," states Karen Wagner, partner and member of the Women's Committee, "and I am confident that through the consistent efforts of our women's initiative, the women at this firm will all be able to achieve and surpass their professional goals."

### **Women in the News:**

*Texas Lawyer* reports that a new women-owned firm in Dallas, Spencer Crain Cabbage Healy & McNamara, formed by five veteran lawyers, opened its doors May 1. The five lawyers -- all were previously partners in big firms in Dallas -- do litigation, labor and employment law, business immigration work and dispute resolution. Founding partner Jennifer Jackson Spencer says the time is right to launch a majority-women-owned firm in Dallas: "It just seems like a lot of the companies ... had committed to diversifying their legal firms."

**Please send us your stars so that we can share and celebrate their achievements.**

### **Glass Ceiling News:**

A recent article by Mauricio Velasques of the Diversity Training group reports: "Women today are leaving the corporate sector in vast numbers-twice the rate of men. They are not leaving to tend to their families but rather to seek positions that are more satisfying and rewarding or start up their own business. According to a study released last year by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners, women own approximately 7.7 million firms; an increase of 43% since 1990. Women are forming new businesses at double the rate of men. In turn, big companies are losing valuable players. This loss is becoming more and more costly to organizations that have invested time and money in their employees. It would serve both organizations and women to reexamine the obstacles that prevent females from advancing and from being valued in the workplace."

### **In My Opinion:**

In this column, we solicit opinions on issues pertinent to women from our readers. In this issue, we spoke with Heather King of Boies, Schiller & Flexner, Washington, DC, and Pam Privett of Weston, Benshoof in Los Angeles.

**NNews:** *How do you feel law firms will evolve over the next ten years?*

**HK:** Law firms are facing the same issues that all companies are facing at the executive level and that is how to become more flexible and accommodating to retain a large part of their talent pool – working moms. This is not

aspirational, it's a bottom line reality of firms keeping talent in today's workforce. I recently read that 65% of women in senior management positions have children, so these women leaders have kept their jobs and are raising a family. Add to that the fact that more than 50% of law firm graduates are women and it's clear that law firms are really feeling the pressure to adapt when, after years spent training them, women have children and may find that their workplace is not flexible enough to accommodate that life change. If these talented women feel they must choose between being a good mother and being a good lawyer then an inevitable brain drain occurs; in recent years these highly educated women are increasingly choosing to "opt out," assuming they have the economic freedom to do so, and stay at home with their kids. It's a false choice for the women and it leaves the law firms dissatisfied too. Law firms and all of corporate America must continue to rewrite the rules over the next ten years to avoid this brain drain and keep women long-term. A lot of them are already working toward that goal. Some firms – like mine – do not force women to make this choice. They approach each lawyer's situation individually and work to create an environment where productivity remains high while allowing a great deal of flexibility so that we can balance our personal lives with competitive careers – that is a large part of why I chose to work there.

**PP:** It seems like the process that's going on now is likely to continue. Law firms like ours, about 70 attorneys – seem to be merging out of existence at a pretty good clip. There have been some articles recently on successful mid-sized firms who have avoided the merger craze. The mid-sized firm remains a viable option, but it does require a great deal of focus and discipline to succeed in that arena. I think the model of large national and international law firms, and then smaller, focused "boutique" firms will continue.

**NNews: *What was the biggest obstacle you overcame in your career?***

**PP:** I've been fortunate in that all of the places I've worked have been very open to women professionals, promoting them well. There still are quite a few clients who have the idea of who their lawyer is going to be – usually a tall male in a three thousand dollar suit, which is an image women attorneys have to overcome. Also, as a mother, I find it tough to balance my career and kids. I didn't have my first child until my career was well established, which helped a little bit, but it's still tough. To be a partner in a firm, a high earner, command and grow a book of business, and provide excellent service to clients, all before my kids' bedtime, is an enormous challenge. In college, my female professors talked so much about the challenge of balancing work and family. I didn't really understand why until I was in that situation. It's a huge deal, and still more for women than men.

**HK:** I started working for Senator Clinton in the U.S. Senate in 2001 when she was first elected and I loved it but I had always wanted to go to law school too. I decided to go to law school at night, part time, while maintaining my job for Senator Clinton. Doing my job well and continuing to actively build my professional skills in the Senate while attending law school at night for three and a half years was definitely a balancing act. However, I would not have been able to succeed if my workplace had not been so supportive.

**NNews: *Do you have any traits that you feel give you a professional edge?***

**HK:** I really love people. I also enjoy public speaking and seek out opportunities to do so. Perhaps most importantly, I grew up in the Midwest and was raised to take great personal pride in developing that "Midwest work ethic."

**PP:** Two things – one is an almost obsessive attention to detail. In the transactional practice, the details are everything. Second, my ability to telescope back and forth from the big picture to the smallest detail.

**NNews: *What is your definition of a good day?***

**PP:** My favorite days are ones when I can get a lot done. Part of the down side of heading my practice group is that I end up being the "go to" person for a lot of questions. I have a total open door policy, which is a great way for everyone to learn and interact. While that's part of the culture I've built in the group, it often keeps me from accomplishing as much as I'd like. I enjoy days when I can knock through a lot of work.

**HK:** Getting a lot accomplished at work, and then spending quiet time with my boyfriend and my dog.

**NNews: *If you weren't going to be a lawyer, what would you be?***

**HK:** I would be a public policy advisor.

**PP:** In my next career, I would love to run a foundation. It's an idea I've had for a while – not an impossible task for a lawyer, and it really appeals to me.

**NNews:** *What book have you read most recently that you would recommend to others?*

**HK:** There are two books. One is *Nickled and Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich. It's written from the perspective of an undercover journalist who sets out to survive as a member of the working poor workforce and describes the difficulty with getting by on a minimum wage salary in the U.S today, even working several jobs. She also wrote a companion book called *Bait and Switch* in which she again goes undercover, but this time into the white-collar workforce and her book explores the difficulty that even the highly educated experience in finding and keeping a job.

**PP:** I read a lot – about 30 novels a year, but one of the recent best is *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*, by Marisha Pessl. To be honest, I found the title so intimidating that the book sat on my shelf for months before I read it. It's a fascinating story about a young girl with a genius level IQ, whose mother died when she was young, living with a college professor father. It's about her last year in high school, and involves a murder mystery. I really enjoyed it.

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

**PP:** One of the women who was key to the early women's rights movement. Elizabeth Blackstone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer – they lived in such a difficult time for women, and it was assumed that they weren't entitled to education. Those women were so brave and so visionary.

**HK:** I've had dinner with her – Hillary Clinton. But I would love to have dinner with her again. There is even more to talk about now.

**NNews:** *Favorite food?*

**PP:** Let me be extremely specific. The best burrito in the known universe is served at La Tacquiera, in San Francisco, on Mission at about 25<sup>th</sup> Street. I never go anyway near the Bay area without figuring out how to get over there for a burrito.

**HK:** Curry chicken.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Connect, Listen, Learn—June 11, 2008—Necessary Dreams: Ambition in Women's Changing Lives-** As summer is upon us many will have time think about our life, direction and what is important. Necessary Dreams by psychiatrist Anna Fels, will help you do this. In a thought provoking and engaging style Fels explores the different aspects that ambition plays in our life and our tendency to have mixed feelings about this important motivator. She discusses the forces that promote and impede the development of ambition in women's life and encourages us to claim the dreams that are necessary for a fulfilling existence. To register, please send an email of interest to [nawl@nawl.org](mailto:nawl@nawl.org)

**Tuesday, July 15, 2008 NAWL Networking Reception benefiting: The Bottomless Closet** Start NAWL's Annual festivities by making a difference! Join old friends and make new ones at NAWL's Networking Reception on July 15 from 5:00-7:00 at McDermott Will & Emery, 340 Madison Avenue (between 43rd & 44th), benefiting **The Bottomless Closet**.

Simply put a few gently used fashion accessories-- business appropriate shoes, scarves, jewelry, purses—in your suitcase. Then bring them to the event and use them to accessorize suits provided by LexisNexis. Enjoy the company of your fellow NAWL colleagues while helping to give women returning to work a fashionable “leg up.” Questions? Contact Salila Yohn at [syohn@axiomlaw.com](mailto:syohn@axiomlaw.com).

**Wednesday, July 16, 2008 NAWL Annual Luncheon**  
**Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, New York**

Over 1,100 attendees enjoyed the spectacular 2007 Annual Luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York,

where we celebrated NAWL's achievements and honored NAWL award recipients! The 2008 will be even bigger and better! This gala luncheon will take place in the grand ballroom at the historic Waldorf-Astoria in New York City on Wednesday, July 16, 2008. We will honor Dean Elena Kagan of Harvard Law School; the DuPont Legal Department; Helaine M. Barnett, President of the Legal Services Corporation; the Hon. Deborah A. Batts of the Southern District of New York; and Professor Suzanne B. Goldberg of Columbia Law School. NAWL is also offering a number of dynamic programs in conjunction with the Annual Luncheon, including a CLE. To register, please click [here](#).

**Wednesday, July 16, 2008 Ethical Issues in Inside/Outside Counsel Relationships** 9:00 – 11:15 a.m. • \$75 • 1.5 Ethics/.5 Substantive Credits applied for -- Nixon Peabody LLP, 437 Madison Avenue, New York, NY  
Sponsored by: LexisNexis@Mealey's™

Before heading to the NAWL Annual Luncheon, join your colleagues for a stimulating CLE program on building a strong in-house/outside counsel relationship consistent with ethical obligations. This program will review, among other things, the factors considered by corporate counsel when engaging outside counsel; conflict of interest issues; the duty of confidentiality; and the arbitration of client-attorney disputes. To register, please click [here](#).

**Wednesday, July 16, 2008 Flexing the Workplace: New Ways to Get Work Done & Build Careers** -- 3:00-5:00 p.m. -- Davis Polk & Wardwell, 450 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Complete your day at this exciting, interactive roundtable moderated by Lisa Belkin, "Life's Work" columnist of the New York Times and contributing writer to the New York Times Magazine. Learn how to win the war for talent by rethinking the way work gets done. Find out how the FACTS and Mass Career Customization frameworks can help you facilitate work/life balance, increase loyalty and productivity and enhance flexibility while maintaining billable hours and meeting economic demands. To register, please click [here](#).

**November 6-7, 2008 Fourth Annual General Counsel Institute -- Westin Times Square, 270 West 43rd Street, New York, New York**

This popular event is targeted to experienced and motivated women in-house counsel who want to build top-tier professional and management skills. This year's conference will focus on what it takes to not only support the business, but to provide leadership in the face of the tumultuous economic and political developments that will undoubtedly shape where companies -- and careers -- are headed.

Offering plenary and workshop sessions on key issues of significance to in-house counsel and the chief legal officer, and training in the skills that foster both personal and departmental success, GCI is a unique opportunity to network with a dynamic group of women in-house counsel from across the country.

Previous attendees have represented a range of businesses from Fortune 50 corporations to governmental entities, not-for-profits and small private companies. Hear GCs and other professionals discuss, in a collegial environment, the knowledge and skills you need to grow professionally. Watch the NAWL website ([www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org)) for registration details. For sponsorship information please call 312-988-6186.

**As always, with deep thanks to:**

**Premier Sponsors:**

Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP

Davis Polk & Wardwell

Dickstein Shapiro LLP

Fenwick & West

Jackson Lewis LLP  
Kirkland & Ellis LLP  
K&L Gates

**Gold Sponsors:**

Baker & McKenzie LLP  
McDermott Will & Emery LLP  
Weston Benshoof Rochefort Rubalcava & MacCuish, LLP  
Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP

**Sponsors:**

Carlton Fields  
Duane Morris LLP  
Epstein Becker & Green, P.C.  
Holland & Knight LLP  
Jones Day  
Latham & Watkins LLP  
Powers & Frost LLP  
Starnes & Atchison  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP  
Townsend and Townsend and Crew LLP  
Wolf Block



**National Association of Women Lawyers®**

321 North Clark Street, M.S. 15.2

Chicago, Illinois 60606

Telephone: 312/988-6186

Fax: 312/988-5491

Email: [nawl@nawl.org](mailto:nawl@nawl.org)

Website: [www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org)

NAWL is  
the voice of women in the law™

If you no longer wish to receive informational emails from NAWL, please reply to this email placing "unsubscribe" in the subject line.