

# President's Column: Celebrating Women Lawyers



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I was thrilled when Bob Tomaso offered me the opportunity to write this month's President's column in celebration of women lawyers. While not knowing then exactly how best to express my gratitude to all our amazing women leaders, as I sit here in the shade at my daughter's softball game, I feel like I can sense their leadership and strength.

Much like our bar leadership, I am so inspired by these strong, competitive and supportive girls. In the last game, my daughter and her team pulled together to get out of a tough jam where the bases were loaded with nobody out. It was motivating to watch the team support each other – cheering, yelling encouraging words, and backing up a play to make sure that a teammate did not fail. The girls never gave up, and got the job done, and that reminds me so much of our women lawyers here in St. Louis.

As I witnessed these girls encourage each other, working together as a

team, I immediately thought of two supportive teams in the St. Louis legal community:

First, the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis (WLA), formed in 1976. WLA's mission is to advance women in the legal profession, promote diversity, equality and justice and improve the status of women in the community. Second, BAMSL's Women in the Legal Profession (WILP) Section. Formed in 1980, WILP promotes women in the legal field professionally and personally. WILP provides members with the opportunity to connect and interact with others, offering support, and growth. All members of BAMSL are welcome to join this Section at no additional charge – simply update your membership online.

Their entire reason for being is to cheer on the next generation of women lawyers. This year, the Chair of WILP, Sarah Bardol, also is on the Board of WLA, so be on the lookout for some great collaborative events to support female attorneys this year.

Prior to the formation of these organizations, there were no women members of the Supreme Court (neither federal nor Missouri) and now there are three female members of each illustrious bench. While WILP and WLA cannot take credit for these appointments, their efforts undoubtedly laid the groundwork to support the advancement of women in the Judiciary.

And that work has been fruitful. Today in St. Louis, women make up approximately 30 percent of the judiciary, and in the Eastern District, women make up almost 50 percent of the federal judiciary.

In addition to the deep bench of female judges, we also have so many All-Star Women in our legal community – too many to include all of them here, but I wanted to highlight some key leadership roles women hold today:

- **Government:** Top lawyers for both the City (City Counselor Sheena Hamilton) and the County (County Counselor Beth Orwick)
- **Higher Education:** The top attorneys for both Saint Louis University (Vice President and General Counsel Danielle Uy) and Washington University (Vice Chancellor and General Counsel Monica Allen)
- **Federal Criminal Practice:** In the Eastern District of Missouri, the top prosecutor (United States Attorney Sayler Fleming) and top defender (Federal Public Defender Nanci McCarthy) are women. (And I would be remiss if I did not mention Catherine Hanaway, the Chair of Husch Blackwell)

I am excited to follow the great accomplishments of our women lawyers for years to come. As we celebrate the advancements, there is still a lot of work for our organizations to support and promote our women colleagues.

As in softball, we all know that you cannot win without a team behind you and I could not be more proud to be a member of this incredible team of women lawyers in St. Louis. I look forward to cheering us all on as we continue our efforts in keeping our women lawyers at the top of their game.