

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**KAREN E. RICHARDSON**  
PRESIDENT

### IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	1
Kudos & Congratulations.....	2
Calendar of Events.....	3
Gender Equity.....	4
Member Highlight.....	5



Dear Members –

As I enter the half way point in my term as president, I remain inspired by the enthusiasm exhibited by our membership.

That enthusiasm was infectious at our 8 Minute Mentoring Program, which so clearly demonstrated to me the value of a Women's Bar Association to the professional development of women attorneys— whatever our personal experiences and individual accomplishments, there will always be so much we can learn from each other!

Our informal networking dinners offer a wonderful opportunity for our members to meet each other and enjoy local cuisine—if you were not able to attend at either Taste of India or Shogun, we hope you can join us at Shanghai Red's on March 16th.

Turning to educational endeavors, we will present a Negotiation Skills CLE presented by Dr. Melissa Wanzer at the Women's Business Center at Canisius College on March 8th from 3:00 -5:00PM. This seminar will review fundamental negotiating principles and demonstrate how we can apply these principles to successfully negotiate on behalf of ourselves and our clients.

On April 15th, our Chapter will have the honor of hosting the New York Court of Appeals at a luncheon to present Chief Judge Kaye with the M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award for Lifetime Achievement. While we normally present this Award at our Annual Installation Dinner in September, Judge Kaye suggested this date to coincide with the Court of Appeals' trip to Buffalo. This will be the first time that the Court of Appeals has sat outside of Albany, providing Western New York with a

unique opportunity to personally observe New York's highest Court at work.

On the evening of April 14th, Chief Judge Kaye will present the Justice M. Dolores Denman Award at the UB Law Alumni Annual Dinner. This Award was established by our Chapter to assist a graduating law student with daycare expenses during the bar exam study period in recognition of the fact that Justice Denman

was a single parent who graduated at the top of her law school class. Our Chapter welcomes this opportunity to highlight Justice Denman's many accomplishments and our ongoing commitment to the Law School at the Alumni Annual Dinner.

Chief Judge Kaye has established several Commissions to receive input from practitioners regarding a variety of practice areas. As part of our advocacy efforts, an

ad hoc committee is finalizing written comments to the Commission to Examine Solo and Small Firm Practice. A copy of our comments will be posted on our web site once they are finalized.

The Matrimonial Commission will be conducting hearings in Buffalo on Thursday, April 21st. If you are interested in participating on the ad hoc committee to respond to this Commission, please send me an e-mail at [president@wnychapter-wbasny.org](mailto:president@wnychapter-wbasny.org).

As part of our advocacy efforts within the larger community, our Chapter is collaborating with members of the

**PLEASE SEE "PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE" ON PAGE TWO**

“There will always be so much we can learn from each other!”



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONT'D FROM FRONT PAGE)

Medical Society of the County of Erie to create a Women Physicians/Attorneys Task Force to advance the health and status of women within Erie County through education, advocacy, and coordination of services. The Task Force is planning a seminar on April 30th entitled "Falling Thru The Cracks—Women and Depression," which will address medical treatment, legal implications and available community resources for women with depression and attorneys representing them.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson noted long ago, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." As we strive for progress with respect to these and other issues, I thank you for your continued enthusiasm!

Sincerely,



Karen Richardson  
President

### E-MAIL ALERT

Our Chapter routinely advises members of upcoming events, job opportunities, or other time sensitive information via e-mail. If you are not receiving such messages, either we do not have your correct e-mail address or your server is blocking our messages. If you would like to be included, please check if WBASNY messages are being blocked and/or send an e-mail message to us at [president@wnychapter-wbasny.org](mailto:president@wnychapter-wbasny.org) to be added to our e-mail list.

### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

#### PRESIDENT

Karen Richardson

#### PRESIDENT-ELECT

Lisa M. Mueller

#### TREASURER

James M. Gerlach

#### SECRETARY

Hilary C. Banker

#### STATE DIRECTORS

Hilary C. Banker

Lisa M. Mueller

Roseanne J. Moran

Dianna L. Ramos

#### LOCAL DIRECTORS

Natalie A. Grigg

Elizabeth Harned

Carolyn C. McGrath

Jessica V. Murphy

Kelly J. Philips

Kristen M. Smith

Elizabeth R. Wright

#### IMMEDIATE

#### PAST PRESIDENT

Melissa H. Nickson

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

#### ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Holly Baum

#### AWARDS

Hilary C. Banker

#### BY-LAWS

Hilary C. Banker

#### DIVERSITY

Lindy Korn

& Lenora B. Foote

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Suzanne E. Tomkins

#### FINANCE

James M. Gerlach

#### GENDER BIAS/ WORK RELATED ISSUES

Candace K. Vogel

Melinda R. Saran

#### JALBCA

Kathleen Sweet

#### JUDICIARY

Dianna L. Ramos

Melinda R. Saran

#### LEGISLATIVE

Dianna L. Ramos

#### LONG RANGE

#### PLANNING

Sheri L. Mooney

#### MEMBERSHIP

Roseanne J. Moran

#### NEWSLETTER

Jessica V. Murphy

#### NOMINATIONS

Lisa M. Mueller

#### PROGRAMS

Natalie A. Grigg

Elizabeth Harned

Carolyn C. McGrath

Kelly J. Philips

Kristen M. Smith

Elizabeth R. Wright

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bridget O'Connell

#### UB LAW LIAISON

Tammy L. Smith

#### WEB SITE

Georgette Hasiotis

### NEWSLETTER DESIGN

Jason Tedeschi

[sabrenaut@yahoo.com](mailto:sabrenaut@yahoo.com)

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:** Michelle Bullock, Julie Grogan, Georgette Hasiotis, Lisa Mueller, Bridget O'Connell, Karen Richardson and Tiffany Szymanek.

## KUDOS & CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- Hon. Rosalie S. Bailey for receiving an award from the Christian Women's Council for outstanding dedication and commitment to the community.
- Hon. Barbara Howe for receiving the Sisterhood Legal Award from the National Conference for Community and Justice.
- Hon. E. Jeanette Ogden for being selected as the 2004 Woman Lawyer of the Year by the Women Lawyers of Western New York.
- Lenora B. Foote for being elected President of the Minority Bar Association.
- Sheri L. Mooney for being named partner at Damon & Morey, LLP.
- Tasha E. Moore for being elected Corresponding Secretary of the Minority Bar Association.

- Denise E. O'Donnell for being honored by the New York State Bar Association with the 2005 Ruth G. Schapiro Memorial Award.
- Paulette Ross for being elected Recording Secretary of the Minority Bar Association.
- Sandra Styka for receiving favorable reviews from the Autism Research Review International, a monthly publication of the Autism Research Institute, on her book "Vaccine Victims Proving Your Case to the Special Masters". Copies of this book can be ordered by calling (716) 876-7648.
- WNY Chapter State Director, Elizabeth R. Wright for being elected to chair the Board of Directors of Parent Network, Western New York, a non-profit agency.

Past Chapter President Holly S. Baum and JALBCA Committee Chair Kathleen M. Sweet

*Courtesy of Bridget M. O'Connell*



Hon. Rosalie S. Bailey and WNY Chapter President Karen Richardson.

*Courtesy of Bridget M. O'Connell*



Hon. Diane Y. Devlin, Aja Devlin and Hon. Sharon Townsend.

*Courtesy of Bridget M. O'Connell*



Renata Kowalczyk, Stephanie Elliott and Jennifer Hemming.

*Courtesy of Bridget M. O'Connell*

## GILDA'S CLUB OPENS ITS DOORS

On November 2, 2004, Gilda's Club Western New York opened its doors as a community resource.

Thanks to our Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert (JALBCA) Chair, Kathleen Sweet, Gilda's Club's Executive Director, Mary Beth Karr, and Development Director, Nancy Holiman, our members received an educational tour of the beautifully renovated mansion on Delaware Avenue on November 22, 2004. Special thanks to our judicial members for supporting this event, including the Hon. Sharon S. Townsend; the Hon. Rosalie S. Bailey; the Hon. Diane Y. Devlin; and the Hon. E. Jeanette Ogden.

Gilda's Club Western New York has raised more than \$2.6 million of its \$3.2 million campaign to fund the renovations and program expenses for its initial three years. Proceeds from our event were donated to Gilda's Club and WBASNY WNY Chapter members are encouraged to support Gilda's Club through charitable contributions, volunteering, and referrals of individuals who might benefit from their supportive programs. Membership in Gilda's Club is free and members are not solicited for donations. For further information, visit [www.gildasclubwny.org](http://www.gildasclubwny.org) or call (716) 332-5900.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MARCH

**Tuesday the 8th:** Negotiation Skills CLE Seminar with Dr. Wanzer at Canisius College's Women in Business Center from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Saturday the 12th:** Stress Reduction through Yoga at East Meets West Yoga, starting at 1 p.m. Cost is \$12.00 per participant. Space is limited to the first 25 members who RSVP to [wbasnyevents@yahoo.com](mailto:wbasnyevents@yahoo.com).

**Wednesday the 16th:** Networking Dinner at Shanghai Red's. 6:00 p.m. for cocktails, 6:30 for dinner. RSVP by March 14th to [wbasnyevents@yahoo.com](mailto:wbasnyevents@yahoo.com)

### APRIL

**Friday the 15th:** Awards Luncheon for Chief Judge Judith Kaye. WBASNY members to receive invitations early. Space will be limited. Watch your e-mail and your mail box for updates and invitations and RSVP ASAP.



WBASNY November Networking Diners at India Gate Restaurant (clockwise from the top): Karen Richardson, Greta Williams Suneson, Katherine Bestine, Kathleen Garvey, Holly Baum, Melissa Nickson and Andrea Love.



## BOARD GENDER EQUITY REMAINS UNBALANCED

The Erie County Commission on the Status of Women has released its 2004 report entitled "Gender Distribution on Not-For-Profit Boards Located within Erie County." The Commission surveyed 150 not-for-profit agencies with annual budgets of \$1 million or greater; 114 completed the survey. Overall, women accounted for 36% of the representation of both directors and officers of the responding organizations, despite the fact that women comprise 52.2% of the population in Erie County and 49% of the Erie County labor force. Women achieved the greatest representation (41.7%), on Boards of Human Service Organizations. The underrepresentation of women was greatest on Boards of Community/Business organizations (13.9%).

This is the third time that the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women has compiled this report. Sixty organizations have responded to all three of the surveys (1996, 2001 and 2004), with no significant improvement in female representation. Nine of these 60 organizations achieved the Commission's "Recommended Range" of 47 to 62% female



representation in 2004.

Although there was also no significant improvement in female representation within the Boards of the 81 organizations who responded to both the 2001 and 2004 surveys, twelve of these organizations attained, and eleven exceeded, the Commission's "Recommended Range" of 47 to 62% female representation in 2004. Of the 114 organizations responding to the 2004 survey, eighteen attained, and fifteen exceeded, the Commission's Recommended Range surveys.

In an effort to improve gender representation within the Boards of Directors of not-for profit organizations, the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women has created a Talent Bank

for women who wish to serve as Directors to register their interest and qualifications for service for consideration by not-for-profit organizations seeking to fill board vacancies with qualified women. Access the Talent Bank, as well as a complete copy of the Commission's Report, is available at [www.erie.gov/csw](http://www.erie.gov/csw).

## 8 MINUTE MENTORING PROGRAM



UB Law Student Monique S. Blackwood gets to know Lindy Korn.

*Courtesy of Karen Richardson*

On Thursday, November 11, 2004, approximately 50 law students and attorneys participated in our Chapter's first annual 8 Minute Mentoring program, which afforded participants an opportunity to speak with 8 accomplished attorneys one-on-one for 8 minutes each. It was an energizing evening for both participants and mentors, who shared strategies for practice development, maintaining work-life balance, and networking. Several participants sent letters and e-mails expressing appreciation for this event.

Many thanks to Tammy Riddle and Kelly Philips for organizing this successful event and to our mentors for volunteering their time: James Gerlach, Karen Kaczmariski, Lindy Korn, Barclay McCauley, Lisa McDougall, Antionetta Mucilli, Lisa Mueller, Kelly Phillips, Marybeth Priore, Karen Richardson, Anna Marie Richmond, Tammy Riddle, Rebecca Ritchie, Daniel Sperrazza, Diane Tiveron, and Arthur Ziller.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Submissions for the Spring 2005 WBASNY-WNY newsletter must be received by Friday, April 17, 2005 at 5:00PM. Submissions must include the author's name and telephone number. Electronic submissions are preferred, either e-mail or disk. MSWord and WordPerfect formats are acceptable. All items will be edited and published, space permitting, at the editor's discretion. Submissions may include: articles of importance to the WBASNY membership; congratulatory notes for accomplishments by WBASNY members; opinion letters to the editor. Ideas for other items, articles and/or columns are always welcome, and strongly encouraged. If you have any questions or comments, need additional information, or wish to submit items for publication, please contact:

Jessica V. Murphy

E-mail: [newsletter@wnychapter-wbasny.org](mailto:newsletter@wnychapter-wbasny.org)

*Note: Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not reflect the opinions of WBASNY, the Western New York Chapter, the Officers and Directors, or the editor.*

## SHEILA SCHWANEKAMP: STILL BLAZING TRAILS

Sheila Weir Schwanekamp is a past president of our chapter who served for two consecutive terms from 1986 to 1988. Schwanekamp, who has had a long and varied career with the N.Y.S. Office of Court Administration (OCA), State Supreme Court, Erie County, now serves as a Matrimonial Referee, Associate Court Attorney. Last year, Administrative Judge Sharon Townsend appointed Schwanekamp to serve as coordinator of domestic violence projects and issues for the Eighth Judicial District. As a matrimonial referee in the expedited matrimonial part of Supreme Court and post-matrimonial program involving custody/access cases, Schwanekamp's duties include the development and administration of post-matrimonial programs in Supreme Court, Erie County; conferencing and mediating resolution of issues of custody and visitation with represented and self-represented litigants in matrimonial part and Erie County Family Court; hearing and reporting on non-custodial matrimonial cases; and the research and writing of proposed decisions in these matters. Schwanekamp is a member of several local and state boards and remains committed to numerous community affairs and legislative initiatives.



Sheila Weir Schwanekamp

Reflecting upon her involvement in the WNY chapter of WBASNY since its inception in 1983, Schwanekamp speaks of the profound changes in the legal profession that were just beginning at that time. She points to the fact that the number of women entering the legal profession was on the rise and then comprised about thirty-five percent of total law school enrollments. Schwanekamp noted the simultaneous growth of the organization with what would eventually become the primary issues of a generation of women and the ones that have driven her own professional growth.

Schwanekamp further elaborated about the rich, early years of our local chapter. Schwanekamp was invited to join the local chapter of WBASNY by Denise O'Donnell, who was then serving as confidential law clerk to Hon. M. Dolores Denman. Both O'Donnell and Denman were dynamic role models and strong proponents of WBASNY and especially of the start-up WNY chapter. Schwanekamp cites to specific WNY chapter initiatives that fostered lifelong associations with issues and ideas for many of our members, for example, during this time, Denise O'Donnell served as chair of the local chapter's legislative committee, which rapidly established itself as the statewide lobbying voice for WBASNY. Among the initiatives addressed by this commit-

tee were positions on domestic violence, child support, and family/medical leave.

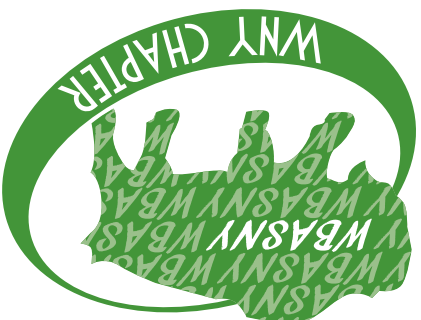
As with the contemporaries she so frequently cites, the roots of Schwanekamp's professional interests may be traced to the committees of our chapter in its early days. The WNY chapter of WBASNY formed a special committee to survey parental leave policies in area law firms, an issue which had not been addressed by any other legal organization. A comprehensive report containing recom-

mendations for attorneys and law firms was issued by the Parental Leave Committee under the strong leadership of then Chair Marilyn Zahm, who now serves as a United States Administrative Law Judge with the Social Security Administration Office of Hearings and Appeals in Buffalo, NY. In the nearly twenty years since the issuance of that seminal document, this matter continues to be explored by our profession and by WBASNY. Most recently, the Capital District published the results of its parental leave survey report of law firms in the October/November issue of the WBASNY state-wide newsletter, and our own chapter published an article discussing the Family and Medical Leave Act in its October 2004 newsletter.

During her tenure as president, Schwanekamp enjoyed the benefits of an extremely active membership that led to frequent engagement with the statewide organization and to notable early successes. For example, the newly established chapter was allocated one state representative to WBASNY, a position served by Linda Nenni, our first state representative. Ann Evanko served as WBASNY Treasurer, WNY Chapter's first state level officer.

Soon after, Schwanekamp served the statewide WBASNY Judiciary Committee on two occasions: Schwanekamp sat on the committee that reviewed the U.S. Supreme Court nominations of Robert Bork, the report for which became part of the Congressional Record during the nomination process, and she later co-chaired the committee charged with reviewing the nomination of Anthony Kennedy.

Schwanekamp believes that WBASNY was and continues to be unlike any other professional legal organization in that it addresses issues that affect women in the legal profession as well as the effect of our work on family life. Indeed, Schwanekamp maintains that the vitality of the local chapter and its impact on our working lives now depends upon a new generation of women lawyers to "continue the great tradition of dedication to improving the quality of the legal profession and the quality of life for those we represent."



**WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION**

**OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

**WESTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER**

P.O. Box 1012

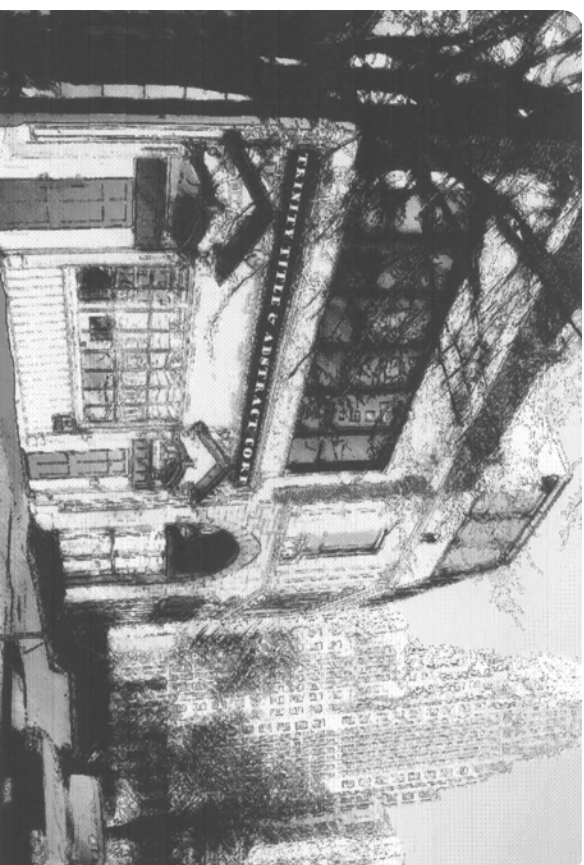
Niagara Square Station

Buffalo, NY 14202-1012

**BOOKMARK US AT:**

***www.wnychapter-wbasny.org***

Find out more about our chapter events and programs. Send us your news! All submissions for a posting on our site, should be e-mailed to our Web Chair at: [website@wnychapter-wbasny.org](mailto:website@wnychapter-wbasny.org)



## **TRINITY TITLE & ABSTRACT CORP.**

WESTERN New York's 100% WOMAN-OWNED

TITLE AGENCY & SEARCH COMPANY

**NOT THE BIGGEST. JUST THE BEST.**

74 NIAGARA STREET

BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202

PH. (716) 842-0333 • FAX (716) 842-1902

AUDREY J. CZESAK  
PRESIDENT & CEO



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS AS A UNITED VOICE  
FOR OUR MEMBERS

