

## **NAWL Celebrates Women in Law at Annual Meeting & Awards Luncheon**

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Law firms, corporations, and governments benefit in a myriad of ways when **women are at the helm**. Nevertheless, women are still the minority at most leadership tables. Despite three decades of approximately equal enrollment of men and women in law schools, the percentage of women general counsels in Fortune 500 companies is still in the low twenties and the percentage of women equity partners in the AmLaw200 is still only in the mid-teens. The 2014 **National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL)** Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon, *“Women Belong at the Table: Leading with Courage and Confidence”* examined the reasons behind the leadership gap and what it takes to be a courageous, confident, and effective leader. Held July 24 at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City, the program featured prominent in-house counsel, professors, private practitioners, and government lawyers who explored concrete skills, best practices, and actionable solutions relevant to women lawyers in all legal disciplines who are looking to take and make the most of their seat at the table.

Throughout the morning, participants explored ways to enhance their leadership skills and to make room for themselves at the table. During *“Women Worry, Men Don’t – How to Own Your Seat at the Table,”* panelist Dr. David Dunning, Professor of Psychology at Cornell University, presented academic research and findings on the subject of confidence, which fostered an interactive discussion between the audience and panelists. Panelists Deborah Froling, 2013-14 NAWL President and Partner with Arent Fox, and Michele Coleman Mayes, General Counsel & Secretary at The New York Public Library, spoke of their personal experiences in law firm and in-house roles, responding to questions and offering advice to the standing-room only audience. Take-aways from their personal stories included “calling out” bad behavior when it’s seen, coping strategies for emotional responses and how to recover from setbacks to always “fall forward”.

Attendees at the *“Women in the Boardroom: Advancing Women Lawyers into Director Positions”* panel discussion, focused their attention on the importance and effect of gender diversity on corporate boards. Panelists Roberta D. Liebenberg, Senior Partner with Fine, Kaplan and Black, R.P.C., Mary Ann Hynes, Senior Counsel at Dentons, and Elisse B. Walter, Former Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Committee (SEC), along with Moderator Hillary A. Sale, Walter D. Coles Professor of Law and Professor of Management at the Washington University School of Law, identified pathways to board membership and highlighted *Direct Woman*, an organization specifically designed to get women lawyers on boards of directors. Panelists discussed their board experience

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and gave pointers on utilizing networking and business contacts to secure board positions.

As the day continued on, attendees were treated to dynamic and passionate discussions on topics that truly resonated with the crowd. The session *"It's Not Magic--Learn the Tricks to Creating, Maintaining, and Growing Your Book of Business"* featured Erica Berthou, Partner at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, Beth R. Kramer, Partner at Chadbourne & Parke LLP, and Deirdre Stanley, Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Board Secretary with Thomson Reuters. Moderated by Patricia K. Gillette, Partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, the panelists shared insights on successful pitching, how to develop long-term relationships with clients and the characteristics of successful rainmakers. Audience members and panelists shared a lively discussion on a variety of other topics, as well, including how to bounce back from a "no". The panel emphasized that regardless of one's personal background, it is possible to become successful at developing a book of business by focusing not only on becoming an expert in the field, but by maintaining long-term connections with people, both personally and professionally.

Attendees at *"Your Seat at the Table: The Power of Negotiating and the Art of Persuasion"* enjoyed a session designed to empower women to become better negotiators – within ethical bounds. Featuring panelists Angela Beranek Brandt, Partner at Larson-King, LLP, Joan Stearns Johnsen, Mediator and Arbitrator with JSJ Mediations, and Zhora Tejani, along with moderator Jennifer Mendelsohn, Managing Director at Huron Legal, the session centered on building negotiation strategies and emphasized the skills and knowledge needed for effective negotiation. Attendees were engaged as they discussed two scenarios, determining the best courses of action amid ethical concerns when negotiating as an agent or a principal. Besides sharing their personal "war stories" and best practices, the speakers addressed certain stereotypes and myths about women and their reluctance to negotiate. They also discussed available resources, including Professor Charles Craver's negotiation toolkit, which provided some insights on getting to "yes".

Further evidence of what women can achieve, the awards luncheon hosted over 800 attorneys from around the country celebrating and honoring leading lawyers, legal departments, and NAWL members who made exceptional contributions to improve and diversify the profession. Honorees included:

**Anita Hill, Professor of Social Policy, Law, and Women's Studies, Brandeis University**  
ARABELLA BABB MANSFIELD AWARD

**Honeywell International, Inc.**  
PRESIDENT'S AWARD

**Kim M. Keenan, General Counsel, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**  
M. ASHLEY DICKERSON AWARD

**Robert J. Grey, Jr., Executive Director, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity**  
NAWL LEAD BY EXAMPLE AWARD

**Lauri A. Damrell, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP**  
**Babette V.E. Orenstein, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc.**  
**Lesley Weber (posthumously), Allstate Insurance Company**  
VIRGINIA S. MUELLER OUTSTANDING MEMBER AWARDS

In the final session of the day, a highlight of the meeting, “*Leadership by Design: Lessons from Law, Social Science and Life*,” NAWL honoree, Professor Anita F. Hill, along with her fellow panelists, Joseph M. Sellers and Kalpana Kotagal, Partners at Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll, addressed the challenges and opportunities confronting women in the workplace who seek to lead. Professor Hill discussed her views on how the interplay of culture, race, ethnicity, class and gender weighs disproportionately on women, while Mr. Sellers emphasized the important role that existing leaders play in creating a supportive or hostile workplace climate for women and the difference they can make in helping other women succeed and lead. Ms. Kotagal shared her personal experiences as a female attorney, mother and law firm partner. Attendees were eager to hear more from the speakers and hopefully, will continue to reflect on the topics throughout the coming weeks and months.

“Amazing”, “informative”, “interactive” and “beneficial” are just a few of the words used to describe NAWL’s 2014 Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon. The program and awards luncheon were testaments to the work NAWL has done for more than a century. NAWL is steadfastly committed to the professional development and achievement of women in the law, with a main focus on attaining parity for women lawyers. NAWL’s long-standing and ongoing efforts to address inequality in the workplace and the courtroom have made a huge impact on securing the rights of future generations of women, showcased by the award recipients and attendees at this year’s event.

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