



CELEBRATING OUR 2024 TOP WOMEN LAWYERS, LEGISLATORS, AND LEGAL EMPLOYERS IN LEADERSHIP

WBAI President Sarah F. King Honored by Diversity Scholarship Foundation
Presented with 2025 Advocate for Diversity Award

WBAI's PAC Fights for Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance Program in Illinois
Paid Family Medical Leave Affects Women Disproportionately

The Impact of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois on a Judge's Journey
WBAI Played a Pivotal Role in Hon. Corrinne Heggie's Journey to the Bench

Together in Service: WBAI Volunteers at Feed the Community Project
WBAI Pack the Pantry Day of Service at the Ark

Your **bridge to justice.**

Romanucci & Blandin is proud to support the Women's Bar Association of Illinois



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ABOUT WBAI

The Women's Bar Association of Illinois, one of the oldest and largest bar associations in the country, was established in 1914 by nine women lawyers practicing in Chicago. It was founded to promote the interests and welfare of women lawyers and to aid in the enactment of legislation for the common good and the administration of justice. Its activities are divided between advancing controversial social and political issues on behalf of women and the practical need to help its members gain employment. The WBAI was one of the first minority bar associations to extend membership to males, who are valued members.

MEET THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE



Leilani Ana-Maria Pino is a skilled trial attorney. Currently, Ms. Pino is the General Counsel for the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office. She was previously an Assistant State's Attorney at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) in the Municipal Litigation Division. Prior to joining the CCSAO, Ms. Pino was a Managing Attorney at Trunkett & Trunkett, P.C. where she successfully represented corporate clients and financial institutions in consumer and commercial disputes in both state and federal courts.



Tracey L. Schroeder is a seasoned attorney and marketing professional with extensive experience bridging the legal and communications industries. Her legal background includes serving as a Special Assistant Attorney General and Associate Attorney, where she handled a variety of complex legal matters.

With more than 20 years of leadership experience in communications, Tracey has held key roles at prestigious organizations such as Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and the Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund. Her expertise in delivering strategic insights and creative solutions has consistently driven meaningful results. Since 2022, she has served as Editor-in-Chief of the WBAI tri-annual newsletter, a dynamic and multifaceted project requiring meticulous planning and coordination.

Tracey recently launched Schroeder Communications, a firm dedicated to crafting compelling stories and building impactful brands for law firms, businesses, and nonprofits. Drawing on her extensive expertise in law, marketing, communications, public relations, and events, Tracey is committed to helping her clients achieve success and make their vision a reality.



Jane Sitorius is an associate at Barnes & Thornburg, LLP where she practices healthcare law and advises healthcare providers with respect to regulatory, transactional, and general corporate matters. Jane currently serves as a WBAI Director, co-chairs the Newsletter Committee, and participates in the WBAI mentorship program as a mentor.



Join us for the

JUDICIAL RECEPTION 2025

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Honorable Diann K. Marsalek
Circuit Judge, Presiding,
Traffic Division



Honorable Judith C. Rice
Circuit Judge, Presiding,
Domestic Violence Division



Honorable Mary K. Rochford
Appellate Court Justice,
1st District



Honorable Patricia O'Brien Sheahan
Circuit Judge, Law Division,
Trial Section

EVENT DETAILS

Thursday, March 6, 2025
5:00 - 8:00 PM

The Chicago Cultural Center
78 E Washington Street
Chicago, Illinois

Members: \$175
Non-Members: \$220
Government Attorneys: \$125
Students & New Lawyers <2 years: \$95
Sitting Judges: Complimentary

REGISTER NOW



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MEET THE AUTHORS



Courtney A. Berlin is an associate at Clifford Law Offices, where she focuses on personal injury and medical malpractice litigation. With an impressive track record, she has already been sent to trial seven times. A graduate of DePaul University College of Law, Courtney was actively involved in the Jaharis Health Law Institute and served as the Authorities Editor for the 2022-2023 DePaul Journal of Health Care Law. She is a dedicated member of the legal community, actively participating in the WBAI, Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, Chicago Bar Association, and American Bar Association. Additionally, she serves on the Illinois State Bar Association's Torts and Young Lawyers committees and is involved with the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Young Lawyers Committee.



Helen Bloch wears many hats—figuratively and literally. A business owner, mom, arbitrator, and lecturer, she founded the Law Offices of Helen Bloch, P.C. in 2007, an Illinois Certified Female Business Enterprise. Her firm focuses on employment and business law, workers' compensation, and municipal code defense. Helen represents clients across the employment spectrum, negotiates agreements, advises on business start-ups, drafts policies, and provides sexual harassment training. A faculty lecturer for West Legal's Financial Poise, Helen has been included in Super Lawyers for employment law since 2019. She is a Past President of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers and serves on the Alliance of Bar Associations, assisting in judicial candidate screenings. Helen is also active in NAWBO and other civic organizations. A Chicagoan, she is married to an Israeli whose parents are Holocaust survivors.



Caroleann Gallagher is an Irish born Attorney now licensed in Illinois. She is a Partner at Coogan Gallagher and concentrates her practice in personal injury litigation with particular emphasis on medical malpractice, nursing home neglect and abuse, trucking and construction accidents and all aspects of workplace injuries. Coogan Gallagher has offices in Park Ridge, Illinois and satellite offices in Palos Hills, Illinois.

Caroleann was educated in Ireland obtaining her Law Degree from National University of Ireland – Galway and was sworn in as a Solicitor to The Law Society of Ireland in 2004. She worked as a Solicitor in Ireland before emigrating to the United States in 2008 and thereafter took the Illinois State Bar Exam in 2011. Caroleann is married to her Irish born Husband Patrick and they have two daughters, Ava (10) and Ana (8). They live on the Northwest side and are heavily involved in the Irish American Community there.



Nicole Spicer is a Partner with The Law Office of Erin M. Wilson, LLC. Nicole is a licensed attorney in both Illinois and Indiana, with her work focused in all areas of family law in both states. Nicole is a trained Guardian ad Litem in Indiana and Illinois, and a certified Family Law Mediator in Illinois. Nicole has a background working directly with survivors of intimate partner abuse. She has been involved with the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) since 2020. ICADV provides free legal representation to needs-based domestic abuse survivors who need help in family law matters.



Ashley Stead is a dedicated advocate for workers' rights, currently serving as an attorney at McGann, Ketterman & Rioux in Chicago, where she represents individuals and labor organizations in a wide range of legal matters at the local, state, and federal levels. Prior to her current role, Ashley served as Senior Legal Counsel in the Office of the Senate President for the Illinois State Senate Democratic Caucus. There, she was a key architect behind a multi-year legislative package focused on increasing workplace protections against harassment and discrimination following the #MeToo movement. Beyond issues directly related to labor and employment, Ashley worked on several initiatives impacting Illinois families, including drafting and negotiating a legislative package aimed at expanding affordable housing preservation and development, a gun safety initiative to ban "ghost guns", and environmental protections requiring the removal of coal ash byproduct from Illinois lands.



Caidi Vanderporten is a Partner at the boutique family law firm, MAMMAS · GOLDBERG · VANDERPORTEN, in Chicago. Caidi specializes in all aspects of domestic relations law, including divorce, allocation of parental responsibilities, pre and postnuptial agreements, Orders of Protection, Child Support modification and enforcement, Appellate review, and DCFS Administrative Appeals/Child Protection issues. Prior to joining MAMMAS · GOLDBERG · VANDERPORTEN, Caidi was an Assistant State's Attorney in Cook County, where her practice focused on working within the Juvenile Justice and Child Support Enforcement Bureaus as well as on the Felony Review Unit. Caidi graduated from Chicago-Kent College of Law and did her undergraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Caidi has been selected for inclusion in the Illinois Rising Stars list for 2020-2024 and The Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch list for 2021-2024. Caidi's firm was selected as a Best Law Firm in Chicago for Family Law for 2023 and 2024. Caidi has two little boys, Miles (4) and Grant (2) with her husband Steven, a commercial litigator at Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll.



CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES
CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

18TH ANNUAL FREE ETHICS CLE WEBINAR

Thursday, February 20, 2025

2:30-4:30 p.m. CST

Ethics Jeopardy: Answers and Questions

Now in its 18th year, Clifford Law Offices has sponsored free programs on professional responsibility on many subjects — from client communication and trial work to preparing witnesses and social media. The 2025 program, “Ethics Jeopardy: Answers and Questions,” will delve into many subjects confronting lawyers in their daily lives. For two hours, an all-star ethics panel will discuss hypotheticals — some based on real cases — to help lawyers understand how to do the right thing. Issues such as use of artificial intelligence, delegating responsibility to non-lawyers and the use of social media platforms in one’s practice are just some of the hypotheticals that will be posed to the panel of speakers.

The two-hour webinar program will be moderated by Clifford Law Offices founder and senior partner, Robert A. Clifford.



Moderator

Robert A. Clifford

Founder and Senior Partner, Clifford Law Offices

Panelists:

Lea Gutierrez

Illinois ARDC Administrator, Co-chair of American Bar Association Center for Professional Responsibility’s DEI Committee.

Jamie A. Kleppetsch

DePaul University College of Law Director of Bar Passage and Professor of Legal Practice.

Judge Raymond J. McKoski (ret.)

Adjunct Professor, UIC Chicago School of Law; Author, “Judges in Street Clothes: Acting Ethically Off-the-Bench”

This program is available via live web only and registration is required to attend.

To register for this free webcast, visit: [CliffordLawCLE.com](https://www.CliffordLawCLE.com)

Illinois Professional Responsibility Credit: Approved for 2.00 hours of professional responsibility credit from the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism.

For questions, please call Clifford Law Offices at (312) 756-7575 or email programs@CliffordLaw.com.

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EDITOR’S MESSAGE

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



Dear WBAI Members,

In this edition of the WBAI Newsletter, we are thrilled to highlight our theme for the 2024-2025 bar year: *Together in Service*. This theme reflects the power of collaboration, advocacy, and empowerment within our legal community. In this issue, we shine a spotlight on the extraordinary contributions of our members, whose dedication continues to shape the future of law, leadership, and service.

We are proud to celebrate the 2024 Top Women Lawyers, Legislators, and Legal Employers in Leadership, whose remarkable achievements inspire us all. These women are not only excelling in their legal careers but are also paving the way for future generations of women in law. Additionally, we recognize the employers who are creating work environments that support work-life balance and open doors for women’s advancement.

This issue also highlights the relentless efforts of women advocating for paid family and medical leave in Illinois, ensuring that the fight for fair and equitable policies moves forward. Alongside these important legislative victories, we celebrate women who are being

recognized as advocates and trailblazers, receiving well-deserved accolades for their significant impact on both the legal profession and society.

We are also excited to spotlight the increasing number of women taking leadership roles and joining boards across various industries. These women are breaking barriers, asserting their influence, and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.

As we reflect on these acts of service, we are reminded that our strength as a community lies in our collective efforts. Together, we are building a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable future.

Thank you for your continued dedication to WBAI’s mission and for the work you do every day to make a difference. We are excited for all we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

Warm regards,

Tracey L. Schroeder

Editor-in-Chief, WBAI Newsletter

THANK YOU

To our sustaining members

Barry Goldberg
Cindy Fluxgold
Katherine Twardak
Justice Mary Kay O'Brien
Hon. Perla Tirado

Sarah King
Stephanie Rubin
Stephen Komie
Whitney Siehl

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members,

On behalf of the WBAI board, I would like to wish each of you a Happy New Year! As we welcome 2025, I'd like to remind you of our theme for the 2024-2025 bar year: *Together in Service*. This year, we are focused on acts of service—serving our community, advocating for women across Illinois, and building a stronger future for our organization and its members.

Our Commitment to Advocacy and Service:

Women lawyers have a unique opportunity to provide integrated services, education, and advocacy to those impacted by domestic violence, homelessness, and other challenges. Through partnerships with nonprofits such as WINGS, Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and various food assistance programs throughout the state, the WBAI is committed to supporting and uplifting our sisters in need.

Highlights of Our Efforts in Service and Advocacy:

- October:** The WBAI co-hosted the Domestic Violence Legal Summit with the Chicago Bar Association, The Illinois State Bar Association, the DuPage County Bar Association and the WINGS Program, Inc. We explored the societal impacts of domestic violence and discussed our collective role in forging a path forward. The mission of WINGS is to provide housing, integrated services, education and advocacy to end domestic violence. Later in the month, in partnership with the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, the WBAI assisted in the application process for the Girls Lead program. The Girls Lead program, run by the Illinois Council on Women and Girls and chaired by Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton, offers girls in grades 5-12 the opportunity to shadow female leaders in Illinois state government. Participants will learn about leadership and the role of women in government through mentoring and hands-on experiences. 90 girls were accepted into the program from across the state. The WBAI is planning on further supporting the applicants through resume reviews and a Day in Court program.
- November:** The WBAI kicked-off the month with the Annual Top Women Lawyers, Legislators, and Legal Employers in Leadership Awards, recognizing the diverse backgrounds of women who are making major professional contributions through their service in a leadership role in law firms and their advocacy in the Illinois legislature. We also recognized two trailblazing firms with the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Award and Flexible Workplace Award to acknowledge their commitment to supporting women in the legal profession through their proven practices including paid family leave, a cause near and dear to the WBAI's mission. For Thanksgiving, the WBAI partnered with the Puerto Rican Bar Association to support Onward Neighborhood House Food Warehouse by delivering over 100 hams and turkeys donated by WBAI members to support families in

need. The mission of Onward House is to open doors to improve lives and uplift communities through educational, economic and support services including bringing essential benefits to families in need, like healthy, well-balanced meals.

- December:** We participated in the Daisie Foundation's *Holiday Magic Outreach*, which brings joy to underserved communities. Activities included a Wrapping Party and Holiday Magic Experience, where gifts, winter accessories, and holiday treats were delivered to school children with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Faculty and staff also enjoyed a special luncheon and holiday gifts, thanks to our generous volunteers and sponsors. The Daisie Foundation, a nationally recognized nonprofit, empowers under-resourced women and children by providing opportunities and access to vital resources.
- January:** The WBAI started the year by announcing our 2025-2026 partnership with the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) Virtual Legal Clinic. The ICADV is the federally designated statewide coalition of domestic violence services providers for the state of Illinois. They are the network of providers that together make up the statewide voice for survivors of domestic violence and their children in our state. Consistent with our mission to promote and protect the interests and rights of women, the WBAI is committing to assist the ICADV in providing pro bono volunteers to staff its Virtual Legal Clinic. We also hosted the *Feed the Community Project* at The Ark, where volunteers learned about local community needs and supported the organization's mission by sorting and preparing pantry items for distribution. The Ark provides free, life-changing services to Chicagoland Jews facing financial, medical, employment, and emotional challenges. WBAI members also supported Ark's mission through a Supply Drive, donating essential items, including diapers and feminine care products via their Amazon wish list to help bridge critical gaps for those women in need.

The WBAI's Mission and Future:

The Women's Bar Association of Illinois was founded to promote the interests and welfare of women lawyers, advocate for legislation that benefits all women, and support the administration of justice. To achieve these goals, our work spans three branches:

- **The Bar Association**
- **The Political Action Committee**
- **The WBAI Foundation**

In 2025, we will continue working together to strengthen each branch, expand the WBAI's influence, and ensure financial and administrative support for the future of our organization.

Women lawyers are the future, and as WBAI board members, our role is to safeguard this organization and its mission for generations to come.

Get Involved:

We invite you to join us in our mission and actively participate in our efforts. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can make a lasting difference.

Sincerely,

Sarah F. King

WBAI President 2024-2025

Help clients prove their sobriety—for less



Share the promo code **WBAI** with clients for 20% off alcohol monitoring services



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TRACEY L. SCHROEDER

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Before Tracey L. Schroeder even started her first full-time job, she had a clear vision: someday, she'd work for herself. The “how” wasn't clear yet, but her determination was unwavering—and she was ready to figure it out.

After earning dual undergraduate degrees in English Literature and Psychology from Miami University, Tracey launched her career in Chicago advertising, where she quickly thrived. Following her father's advice, she pivoted to pursue both law and business degrees, earning her JD from the John Marshall Law School and her MBA from Dominican University. Although her first experience at a law firm fell short of expectations, it ultimately fueled her return to her true passion: marketing, communications, PR, and events—this time with the added advantage of legal expertise.

With leadership roles at renowned organizations like Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and the American Board of Medical Specialties, Tracey built an impressive career in marketing and communications. She even pioneered a dual attorney/marketing role, blending two worlds most people wouldn't dare to tackle simultaneously.

Since 2019, Tracey has been an active contributor to the Women's Bar Association of Illinois (WBAI), serving on its newsletter committee and eventually stepping into the Editor-in-Chief role. As the Communications & Marketing Officer, she's spearheaded initiatives in social media, email marketing, event planning, and publication

management—all while merging her two passions seamlessly.

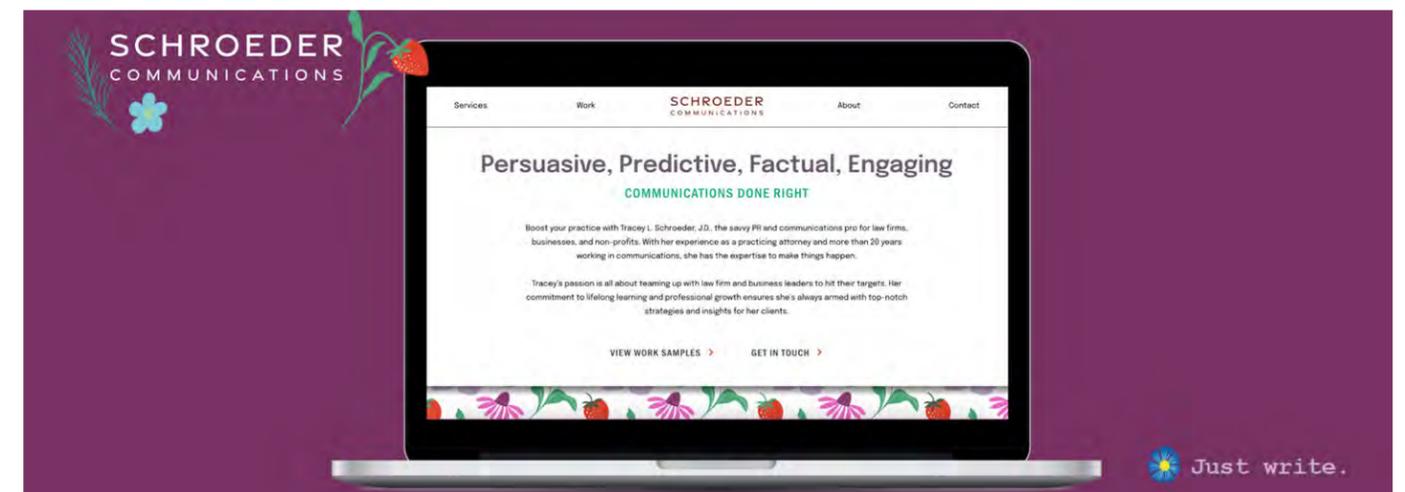
Tracey credits the WBAI with helping her find her community and giving her the confidence to embark on this journey. “I couldn't have done this without the unwavering support of the WBAI,” she says. “It's an incredible honor to work alongside such accomplished women, who have taught me so much and continue to inspire me every day. Watching them break barriers and champion women's rights motivates me to push myself to do more and to do better.”

Now, Tracey is thrilled to announce the launch of Schroeder Communications, where impactful storytelling meets strategic branding. Tailored for law firms, businesses, and nonprofits, Schroeder Communications reflects her 20+ years of combined legal and marketing expertise.

Whether building projects from scratch or racing to meet a tight deadline, Schroeder Communications is here to make your life easier and your business shine. Tracey's creative solutions and thoughtful strategies ensure her clients succeed—because at Schroeder Communications, excellence is the standard, and results are the goal.

Word.

Get in touch:
 Email: Tracey@schroedercomms.com
 Url: schroedercomms.com



FIGHTING FOR PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE IN ILLINOIS

LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

By: Ashley Stead | Bio on page 4



By now, most of us are all too familiar with a sobering fact: the United States remains the only industrialized nation that does not guarantee *paid* leave for parents, individuals recovering from illness, or caregivers supporting a sick family member. The federal Family and

Medical Leave Act (FMLA) offers only unpaid leave with job protections for up to 12 weeks—an option that does not do enough to support the average worker.

From a legal perspective, the deficiencies of the current federal framework are glaring. The FMLA, while a critical first step, is rife with limitations. It excludes employees

working for smaller businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) and fails to cover many part-time or recently hired workers, leaving nearly 40% of the workforce ineligible. Additionally, its unpaid nature disproportionately impacts low-income workers, who are often unable to afford time away from work. These shortcomings highlight the urgent need for state-level solutions to fill the gaps left by federal law, ensuring equitable access to leave for all workers regardless of their income or employment status.

According to a 2023 study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor, as of March 2023, only 27% of civilian workers had access to paid family leave through their employer and 41% of civilian workers had access to

short-term disability insurance through their employer. Among the lowest-wage earners, just 6% have access to paid leave through their employers.

This glaring gap in support is something individual employers and states have attempted to address. Across the country, some individual employers provide a form of paid family and/or medical leave, recognizing the positive impact such programs have on employee morale, retention, and productivity. Employees with access to paid leave are more likely to return to work after taking time off, experience lower levels of stress, and report higher levels of job satisfaction. Despite these benefits, significant portions of the workforce—especially those in low-wage, part-time, or gig economy jobs—remain without access to paid family medical leave.

States, however, have stepped in to address this inequity through innovative paid family medical leave insurance programs. Typically modeled after unemployment insurance, these state-level initiatives offer a lifeline to workers who face qualifying life events, such as welcoming a child, recovering from a serious illness, or caring for a loved one in need. These programs are typically funded through shared tax contributions by employers and employees, ensuring that the system is both sustainable and broadly beneficial.

Illinois, home to a diverse and dynamic workforce, would greatly benefit from adopting such a program. Imagine a system that allows workers to prioritize their health and families without fear of financial ruin. States like California, New York, Minnesota and Washington have shown that paid family leave programs are not only feasible but transformative for workers and businesses alike. These programs reduce reliance on public assistance, strengthen families, and contribute to overall economic stability.

As members of the women lawyers' community, we have a unique opportunity to champion this issue. Paid family medical leave is a critical policy that affects women disproportionately—as primary caregivers, as professionals striving for work-life balance, and as advocates for equity in the workplace. The Women's Bar Association Political Action Committee ("WBAI PAC") (f/k/a "WILPOWER") proudly supports the creation of a paid family medical leave insurance program in Illinois, and we encourage all of WBAI's members to do the same.

WBAI members can help ensure that Illinois becomes a leader in equitable workplace policies, setting a standard

where no one has to choose between their paycheck and their health or family's well-being.

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CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

By: Courtney Berlin | Bio on page 4



As I wrap up my first year as an associate at the Clifford Law Offices, I'm proud to reflect on what has been a year filled with success, growth, and a deepened commitment to our clients. Joining a firm with decades of expertise in complex personal injury litigation, I quickly learned that excellence is not just expected here—it's ingrained in every aspect of the firm's work.

At Clifford Law Offices, we take pride in tackling serious cases and seeing them through to the end. We hold ourselves to a standard of exceeding expectations in every case, to secure the best possible results for our clients. This dedication to excellence has led to many notable verdicts and settlements, many of them record-setting, in a variety of practice areas.

In 2024, we obtained the following verdicts:

- \$56 million – Bradley M. Cosgrove and Craig J. Squillace on behalf of a 39-year-old mother of four who bled to death following a negligent surgical procedure that went unnoticed. This is the highest verdict or settlement against a plastic surgeon in the state of Illinois, according to the Jury Verdict Reporter.
- \$9.53 million – Brad M. Cosgrove and Thomas J. Tomasik on behalf of a suburban mom stemming from the negligent care of a cardiologist, electrophysiologic, and an advanced practice nurse over a period of 16 months leading to her death.
- \$6.35 million – Keith A. Hebeisen and Courtney A. Berlin on behalf of a west suburban man who had a heart transplant following undiagnosed coronary ischemia.
- \$6.47 million – Sarah F. King and Joseph T. Murphy on behalf of a 58-year-old man who suffered debilitating injuries due to a malpositioned hip implant.
- \$40 million – Bradley M. Cosgrove, Charles

A. Haskins, and Devin J. Piper on behalf of a 37-year-old man who suffered from a hypertensive stroke as a result of a Managed Care Organization's physician's failure to properly diagnose, manage, and treat high blood pressure. This is the largest medical malpractice verdict in the history of Illinois involving injuries from a stroke.

Notable firm settlements from 2024 include:

- \$16 million – Robert A. Clifford, Sarah F. King and James C. Pullos on behalf of a 68-year-old man who was killed in a motor vehicle crash involving construction equipment on an Illinois highway.
- \$19.5 million – Kevin P. Durkin, Susan A. Capra, Tracy A. Brammeier, and Thomas J. Tomasik on behalf of an infant boy who sustained permanent brain damage due to a delayed cesarean section operation.
- \$12.245 million – Richard F. Burke on behalf of a 35-year-old man who was killed when he was struck by a tractor-trailer truck in a trucking warehouse terminal.
- \$30.2 million – Bradley M. Cosgrove and Marta K. Davidson on behalf of a woman suffering from Wernicke's encephalopathy due to a failure to diagnose and treat her. A simple supplementation with Vitamin B1 would have prevented permanent disability.
- \$8 million – Keith A. Hebeisen, Sarah F. King, and Courtney A. Berlin on behalf of a 60-year-old man who underwent multiple surgeries to treat complications of necrotizing pancreatitis caused by negligence of a surgeon failing to shrink a tumor before abdominal surgery.

Robert A. Clifford, founder and senior partner of Clifford Law Offices, continued to serve as Lead Counsel in the civil litigation pending in federal district court in Chicago on behalf of the victims of



the Boeing 737 MAX8 crash in 2019. Firm partners, Kevin P. Durkin, Tracy A. Brammeier, and John V. Kalantzis, are also a part of the team representing the families of the victims of the crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 in their lawsuits for wrongful death against Boeing.

Outside the courtroom, we celebrated our ongoing commitment to the legal community and continued efforts to empower women within the field. In 2024, Erin Clifford received the Law Bulletin Media's 5th

Annual Women In Law Award; six attorneys were named to Best Lawyers Women in the Law List; two partners were named 2024 Crain's Notable Women in the Law; Shannon M. McNulty was named to 2024 Illinois Super Lawyers Top 50 Women List; and Sarah F. King was sworn in as President of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois. Clifford Law Offices also had the privilege of welcoming another talented female attorney, Julia C. Brosnahan. As the new year begins, I am eager to embrace another year filled with success!

BUILDING A PATH TO THE BENCH: THE IMPACT OF THE WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS ON A JUDGE'S JOURNEY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

By: Leilani Ana-Maria Pino | Bio on page 3



In 1923, Mary Bartelme made history as the first woman judge in Illinois when she was elected to the Cook County Circuit Court. Now, 101 years later, more than 75% of the judicial candidates on the 2024 Cook County Judicial Election ballot are female. This remarkable shift reflects significant progress in achieving gender equality within the Illinois judiciary. The WBAI celebrates this milestone, particularly in a year when several of its active members were elected to the bench. Notably among them, the Honorable Corinne Cantwell Heggie, who served as the Association's 103rd President from 2019-2020.



Corinne graduated from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and DePaul University College of Law. After graduating from law school, she worked in Big Law, where she was eventually named a partner. Later she became an owner and practitioner at Heggie Wochner Law Firm LLC. In addition to being both a seasoned attorney and small business owner, Corinne dedicated years to serving on the WBAI Board, advancing

its mission to protect and promote the interests and welfare of women lawyers. Her enduring support for her fellow bar associations and her many accomplishments were celebrated by multitudes in the legal community. In 2015, *DePaul Magazine* named her one of its "14 under 40," and in 2017, *Best Lawyers* named Corinne a "Woman of Influence" nationally in the legal profession. In 2020, *Chicago Lawyer Magazine* and *The Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* recognized her as a member in their inaugural class of "Salute! Women in the Law," an honor now awarded annually to 50 female attorneys for their work mentoring and promoting other women in the profession, their success in the legal community and being examples of leadership. After practicing law for over 20 years and being found qualified or highly qualified by every participating bar association, Corinne was appointed to fill an At-Large vacancy in 2023. She went on to win the countywide election in 2024.

In her WBAI leadership roles, Corinne chaired events and committees in service to the organization, and she continues to be a steadfast supporter. While the Association credits Judge Heggie for its many successes over the years, she, in turn, acknowledges that the WBAI played a pivotal role in her journey to the bench. As Judge Heggie reflects, "My involvement with the WBAI contributed to my journey to the bench in many ways. There is one contribution, however, to which my mind always returns. WBAI membership helped me build a community within the legal profession." According to Judge Heggie, it was this community that grew and fostered her ability to develop business, meet clients, and create friendships. She also credits this community for assisting her judicial endeavors: "In 2023, this community was invaluable when I ran for a county-wide judicial vacancy and continues to enrich me today; a gift for which I am deeply grateful."

The WBAI extends its appreciation to Judge Corinne C. Heggie for her invaluable contributions to the Association, which have had a broader impact than the organization, but to the Cook County legal community.

REMEMBERING OCTOBER 7, 2023

PRESS

The WBAI released the following statement on the one-year anniversary of the heartwrenching events of October 7, 2023:

As we mark the somber anniversary of the tragic events of October 7, 2023, we remain horrified by the violence and mourn the loss of all innocent men, women and children involved in the conflict in the Middle East. We grieve with those who are mourning the loss of their loved ones. As we did over a year ago, we implore the international community to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all hostages still in captivity. We stand in solidarity with our local bar associations and remain committed to working together to eradicate hate and pray for peace.



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FLASH UPDATE

JOIN US FOR HAPPY HOUR IN HER HEELS!

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The Women's Bar Association of Illinois (WBAI) is thrilled to announce the return of **Happy Hour in Her Heels**, the signature event of The Force of Lawyers Against Sexual Harassment (FLASH).

and harassment, and show solidarity. Don't have heels? No problem—donations of gently used heels or funds are welcome and appreciated.

All proceeds from this event will benefit WINGS, Illinois' largest provider of housing and integrated services for survivors of domestic violence.

FLASH: Advocating for Change

FLASH is a coalition of Illinois legal professionals and bar associations dedicated to combating sexism, sexual harassment, and sex-based discrimination within the legal community. Through advocacy, education, and peer support, FLASH strives to foster a zero-tolerance culture and create a safe, respectful environment for all.

Sign the Pledge!

Support FLASH's mission by signing the pledge at flashillinois.com/pledges, committing to the prevention of sexual harassment and fostering an Illinois legal community free of misconduct.

Don't miss this empowering and entertaining event—register now for a "well-heeled" good time!

When: Wednesday, March 12

Where: Hubbard Inn, 110 W. Hubbard St.

Why: Celebrate International Women's Month and raise awareness and funds to combat sexual harassment and support survivors of domestic violence.

This lively and impactful evening will feature:

- Networking with Illinois legal professionals
- Cocktails and appetizers
- Friendly competitions, including "Highest Heel" and "Best Strut"

Why Heels?

We encourage men to attend in high-heeled shoes to confront gender stereotypes, raise awareness about sexual violence

HAPPY HOUR IN HER HEELS

MEN! WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO WEAR HEELS TO THIS EVENT!

Join us for a High-Heeled Happy Hour to advocate for an end to sexual harassment and support WINGS domestic violence shelter.

<p>EVENT DETAILS:</p> <p>Wednesday, March 12, 2025 5:30 - 7:30 PM Hubbard Inn, 3rd floor 110 W Hubbard Street, Chicago</p>	<p>TICKETS:</p> <p>WBAI, Decalogue, FLASH, or LLL Members: \$50 Catwalk Strut*: \$55 Non-Members: \$65</p> <p><small>*This option is for men who pledge to wear heels and strut down the catwalk at this event.</small></p>	<p>REGISTER:</p> <p>bit.ly/4gLcKFT</p>
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Do you want to be a sponsor? Contact us at wbai@wbaillinois.org for details.

WHITNEY K. SIEHL RUNS CHICAGO MARATHON & JOINS CARA BOARD

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS - OCTOBER 13, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



Congratulations to WBAI Immediate Past President Whitney K. Siehl on completing her 12th Chicago Marathon on October 13th—her 16th marathon overall!

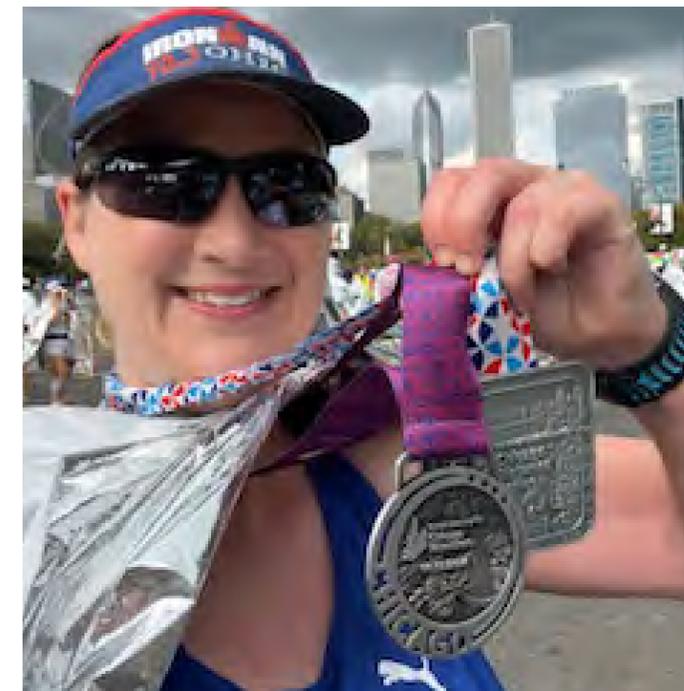
One of the highlights of this year's marathon for Whitney was the incredible support from familiar faces along the course, especially from the legal community and fellow Bar Association leaders. Reflecting on the experience, Whitney shared, "I got an extra boost to the finish line seeing and high-fiving Huy Nguyen, President of the Asian American Bar Association, Dora Cornelio, Immediate Past President of HLAI, and Sarah Toney, 3rd Vice President of ISBA! The support of bar presidents is invaluable, both in our careers and personal lives, and that camaraderie truly lifted me up this year."

Congratulations are also in order for WBAI Past President Karie Valentino and WBAI past board member Meredith Rudolfi, who successfully completed the 2024 Chicago Marathon as well!

Beyond her marathon accomplishments, Whitney recently joined the board of the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA), a nonprofit dedicated to serving and advocating for the local running community. CARA, considered Chicagoland's premier running club, offers training, racing, educational programs, social events, and volunteer opportunities to runners of all levels.

A passionate advocate for running, Whitney has volunteered with CARA as a marathon group leader and pacer since 2017. In recognition of her commitment, CARA awarded Whitney the Lincoln Park Training Location Service Award in 2021 for her outstanding contributions. In their press release, CARA praised Whitney's dedication, stating, "Driven by her passion for guiding first-time marathoners to achieve what they once thought was impossible, Whitney Siehl embodies the spirit of our mission."

Congratulations, Whitney, on these incredible achievements and your continued contributions to both the legal and running communities! Read the CARA press release here.



WHITNEY K. SIEHL NAMED HONOREE FOR LAW BULLETIN MEDIA'S 5TH ANNUAL TOP WOMEN IN LAW, LEADERS LEANING IN AWARDS

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS - NOVEMBER 7, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



A heartfelt congratulations to WBAI Immediate Past President Whitney K. Siehl for being named one of the distinguished honorees for Law Bulletin Media's 5th Annual Top Women in Law, Leaders Leaning In Awards!

Selected from more than 300 nominations, Whitney earned this recognition for her unwavering commitment to advancing women in the legal profession, her exemplary leadership, and her outstanding

professional achievements. Honorees were chosen from a diverse array of sectors, including law firms, nonprofits, government agencies, private and public companies, healthcare, businesses, and institutions.

Whitney was celebrated at a cocktail reception on November 7th at Prime & Provisions during the second annual gathering for the Top Women in the Law Awards.

Congratulations to Whitney on this well-deserved honor!



WBAI PRESIDENT SARAH F. KING HONORED WITH 2025 ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY AWARD FROM THE DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS - JANUARY 16, 2025

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



WBAI President Sarah F. King received a distinguished honor on January 16th, being awarded the prestigious 2025 Advocate for Diversity Award by the Diversity Scholarship Foundation! This distinguished recognition celebrates her unwavering commitment to advancing, advocating for, and championing diversity and inclusion within the legal profession.

The award was presented during the Foundation's 2025 Unity Award Gala at the JW Marriott Chicago, where leaders in the legal community came together to celebrate this significant achievement.

A heartfelt and resounding congratulations to Sarah on this well-deserved honor—your dedication inspires us all!



WBAI PAST PRESIDENT DEANE B. BROWN CELEBRATES 16TH YEAR ON THE TOP 50 ILLINOIS WOMEN SUPER LAWYERS LIST

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS - JANUARY 27, 2025

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



In 2025, WBAI Past President and HSPRD Shareholder Deane B. Brown celebrates her sixteenth appearance on the Top 50 Illinois Women Super Lawyers list. This year also marks her thirteenth consecutive selection as a Top 100 Illinois Super Lawyer, a recognition bestowed by her peers.

With nearly 35 years of legal experience, Deane has built an esteemed reputation within Chicago's legal community. She is widely recognized for her skilled representation of executives and high-level employees in all facets of employment law, including severance negotiations, employment discrimination claims, non-compete disputes, and executive employment agreements.

Deane exemplifies HSPRD's commitment to delivering world-class legal representation. Her strategic and relentless advocacy, combined with her dedication to achieving successful outcomes for her clients, has earned her the admiration and respect of her peers. Congratulations to Deane!

ISBA PRESIDENT SONNI CHOI WILLIAMS APPOINTED CIRCUIT JUDGE

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS - JANUARY 28, 2025

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



Congratulations to ISBA President and WBAI member Sonni Choi Williams on her appointment as Circuit Judge in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Third Subcircuit. She will succeed Judge John C. Anderson, who was elected to the Third District Appellate Court.

Effective February 10, 2025, this appointment highlights her unwavering dedication to public service and her commitment to promoting fairness and justice in the legal system.



PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous sponsors whose unwavering support empowers the WBAI to advance its mission with renewed determination and commitment. Your contributions are instrumental in helping us promote and protect the interests and welfare of women lawyers, foster a spirit of camaraderie and mutual assistance among our members, and advocate for legislation that serves the common good. Through your support, we are better equipped to champion justice and safeguard the rights of women, ensuring that our collective efforts continue to make a meaningful impact. Thank you for being a vital part of our journey and for sharing in our dedication to these crucial causes.

WBAI Premiere Sustaining Partner



CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES®

Clifford Law Offices is recognized as one of the leading law firms in Illinois and nationally for handling complex personal injury and wrongful death cases, including medical malpractice, aviation litigation, product liability, premises liability, and transportation litigation. The firm has also built a strong reputation in class action and whistleblower cases, as well as in commercial litigation.

WBAI Prestige Sustaining Partners

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Cassiday Schade is a prominent litigation law firm based in Chicago, with a strong presence across the Midwest. They are dedicated to delivering exceptional and efficient legal representation, serving as national or regional counsel for clients dealing with widespread exposures. Their extensive experience spans nearly every area of civil litigation, allowing us to cater to a diverse clientele. Their attorneys offer extensive trial experience and strategic case preparation to companies of all sizes.

ROMANUCCI BLANDINI LAW

Romanucci & Blandin is a nationally recognized trial practice headquartered in Chicago, dedicated to advocating for victims of negligence, abuse, and wrongful death. With decades of experience, they have achieved numerous verdicts and settlements for their clients, including many significant and record-setting awards. Their team of skilled attorneys and staff approaches every case with compassion, diligence, and excellence, ensuring that clients can focus on caring for their loved ones and themselves during difficult times of serious injury or personal loss.

WALLACE MILLER

At Wallace Miller, their core beliefs are centered around Relationships and Results. When individuals are seriously injured or killed due to others' negligence or fall victim to fraud, there is always a compelling story to be told. They focus on building strong relationships with their clients, gathering detailed and case-specific information to effectively present the story and achieve the best possible outcomes.

“AN EVENING WITH A PIONEER”

RECENT EVENTS - SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

By: Nicole Spicer | Bio on page 4



At first glance when I picked up the book “The Watergate Girl: My Fight for Truth and Justice Against a Criminal President” by Jill Wine-Banks, I noticed her outfit. Believe me, I get it, that is not the point of the book or of the important work she has done in her career. But that

picture captured a moment in time, it had the feel of the 1970s fashion, and it depicts a woman smiling even as she dealt with the press regularly during an unbelievably crazy political and legal era. After spending an evening with the author as part of the Special Author event presented by the Decalogue Society and co-hosted with the CBA Alliance for Women, the ISBA Standing Committee on Women and the Law, and the WBAI on September 25, 2024, I had new appreciation for the cover photo and truly how purposeful that choice of photo was. Ms. Wine-Banks brought up the title of her book in her discussion. She was appalled that her publishers at first suggested “Watergate Girl” because she was not and is not just a girl. Her publishers pointed out that it was important because the term “girl” captured that time too, and during her time as a young attorney she and her female colleagues were indeed often referred to as “girls.” I love this. I don’t love the diminutive term, but I love that her story illustrates a time and a history that we female lawyers should be aware of. Partly to appreciate how far we collectively have come, but also to notice and thank those who came before us and truly pioneered being a woman in law.

Jill (she was so down to earth I feel like she would be okay with my informal use of her name) gave us a truly fascinating night of stories from not just her time on the Watergate trial, but the hurdles she had faced in gaining employment as a female attorney. Some examples of the absurdity she faced? Questions asked at an interview: What kind of birth control do you use? How many kids do you plan to have? WHAT? It was all I could do not to audibly gasp at the birth control question. Today that question at an interview would be ripe for a lawsuit, but for Jill at that time it was normal and accepted.

Our evening with Jill was filled with so many great stories that I literally filled up three pages of notes for my article. The lovely thing is that you don’t need to have an evening with Jill to really get an idea of how unique it was to be a female lawyer in the 1970s and 1980s. You just need to read her book!

The book is filled with fascinating stories about what it meant to lose faith in the United States President (a novelty in the 70s), to battle to be taken seriously and equally with her male counterparts, to build a career while also suffering through a difficult and disappointing marriage. Her personal side of the book really underscores how amazing it is that she achieved everything she did. Leaving a marriage at that time was not taken lightly and being a career woman was a novelty. Jill did it all with grace and humor, and to this day she keeps fighting the good fight.

I think we, as women, think of the really BIG names for female pioneers in law, like Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Sandra Day O’Connor. You know what? Jill Wine-Banks is now on my list of females that every single woman going into legal practice should know about. What Jill did was groundbreaking and scary and difficult and to this day, she is STILL doing it. She participates regularly in two podcasts, she works as a commentator for MSNBC, and she still fights for the ERA. I grew up in the 80s so I know about the ERA, but for those generations younger than me, do you know what the ERA is? (hint, it stands for Equal Rights Amendment). Do you know how hard women fought for it? And did you know we STILL aren’t truly equals in the eyes of the law? We have come a long way, such a long way since Jill began practicing as a young woman. But you know what? There is still work to be done and I for one am thankful Jill is out there still speaking up, speaking out, and sharing what it took to get there.

Go read the book, I promise, you won’t regret it.



GOLDPLAITED

RECENT EVENTS - OCTOBER 16, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



On October 16, the WBAI proudly hosted an evening of networking and glamour at Goldplaited Salon in River North. Attendees mingled, sipped on rosé, and enjoyed makeup and hair touch-ups before stepping in front of the camera for headshots with talented photographers. Each guest left with a

digital copy of their favorite headshot, beauty tips and tricks for busy women, and memories of a fun night out with old and new friends.

Complimentary headshots were provided by Gerber+Scarpelli Photography, with wine generously sponsored by MG V Law Firm. Light appetizers were also served, adding to the evening’s convivial atmosphere.

Thank you to our generous event sponsors, Planet Depos, Trustpoint.One, Coleman Law, PC, and Goldplaited Salon for making the evening possible!



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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUMMIT

RECENT EVENTS - OCTOBER 29, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The WBAI was proud to co-host the Domestic Violence Summit, which took place on October 29th at the Union League Club of Chicago and featured keynote speaker Denise Brown. The summit benefited WINGS, one of Chicago's key providers of housing, integrated services, education and advocacy to end domestic violence. The program featured various panels on the current Domestic Violence problem, understanding the systems involved and the path forward through legislation and needed intervention. Panelists included Senator Cristina Castro, Justice Jesse Reyes, and Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis, among many others. This impactful event addressed domestic violence as a critical issue affecting not only individuals directly involved but also their families, communities, and society at large.

The summit highlighted that domestic violence does not discriminate—it impacts people across race, age, gender, and religious lines, and it can occur regardless of education or socioeconomic status. Moreover, domestic violence often perpetuates further violence, underscoring the urgency of addressing this issue comprehensively.

The legal community's role in shaping systems that support survivors of domestic violence was a key focus of the event. Attendees explored how legal professionals, in collaboration with stakeholders from law enforcement and social service agencies, can advocate for meaningful change and provide essential support to survivors. This summit served as a platform for critical discussions on how the legal system can make a lasting difference in addressing domestic violence.



MENTORING CIRCLES OFFER SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE FOR NEW ATTORNEYS AND LAW STUDENTS

RECENT EVENTS - NOVEMBER 11, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



In January 2024, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the Illinois State Bar Association's Women and the Law Committee, and the Chicago Bar Association's Alliance for Women launched the Mentoring Circles program, connecting law students and early-career attorneys with experienced mentors in a supportive, low-pressure setting.

The program aims to foster authentic connections and long-term relationships between Chicago-area law students, new attorneys, and mentors. Mentees attend for free, and experienced attorneys are encouraged to volunteer as mentors.

The program was developed by WBAI Immediate Past President Whitney K. Siehl, who was inspired by the impact mentors had on her career. Siehl hopes to make the legal journey easier for those coming after her and believes Mentoring Circles provide invaluable guidance and encouragement.

Participants gain career advice, build connections, and share experiences with others at similar career stages. Siehl shared that moments of mutual support—like mentees discussing their nerves about starting new positions—are central to the program's success.

Mentoring Circles lay the groundwork for longer-term mentoring relationships. After passing the bar, Illinois attorneys in their first five years of practice can participate in year-long mentoring programs, earning CLE credits and further enhancing their legal careers.

The program's first meeting of the year took place on November 11th at DePaul University, with a robust turnout and extremely positive feedback.

Siehl and program leaders hope that today's mentees will one day return as mentors, completing the circle of support and guidance.





Top Women Lawyers, Legislators, & Legal Employers in Leadership Awards



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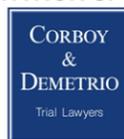
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2024 TOP WOMEN LAWYERS, LEGISLATORS, AND LEGAL EMPLOYERS IN LEADERSHIP AWARDS (TWLIL)

RECENT EVENTS - NOVEMBER 13, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



On November 13, the WBAI proudly hosted its annual awards reception to honor the remarkable achievements of women leaders and recognize employers committed to fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and work-life balance in the legal profession. Held at Chicago Winery, the event celebrated individuals and organizations making significant contributions to leadership and innovation in the field.



The WBAI recognized four Top Women Lawyers in Leadership, two Top Women Legislators in Leadership, one Top Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Employer, and one Top Legal Flexible Workplace Employer.

2024 Top Women Lawyers in Leadership Award Winners:

- Lizzy Diaz-Ortiz** – VP/Senior Manager, Hispanic/Latino Banking Segment, BMO
- Michelle M. Kohut** – Partner, Corboy & Demetrio
- Jennifer Ries** – Partner, Hall, Prangle, & Schoonveld, LLC
- Valee L. Salone** – Attorney, Law Offices of Valee L. Salone

2024 Top Women Legislators in Leadership Award Winners:

- Senator Sara Feigenholtz** – Illinois State Senator, 6th District
- Senator Celina Villanueva** – Illinois State Senator, 12th District

2024 Top Legal Employer Awards:

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – **Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP**
- Flexible Workplace – **Croke Fairchild Duarte & Beres**

Congratulations to all the recipients of the 2024 Top Women Lawyers, Legislators, and Employers in Leadership Awards, and heartfelt thanks to our sponsors for their generous support!

Photos continue on pages 30-31.





12TH ANNUAL MINORITY BAR CLE CLE RECENT EVENTS - NOVEMBER 21-22, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The WBAI was thrilled to sponsor the highly anticipated Annual Minority Bar CLE Conference on November 21-22! This dynamic event offered the perfect blend of earning CLE credit and staying ahead of key issues impacting you and your clients.



Part 1 kicked off in Chicago with engaging sessions and invaluable networking opportunities with colleagues, while Part 2 brought the convenience of learning directly to you with a live webcast you could enjoy from home or the office.



Whether you attended one day or both, this conference delivered essential insights on today's hottest legal topics. Don't miss your chance next year to be part of this exciting and impactful event!




Join us for our
Annual Meeting
Wednesday, March 19, 2025 | 5:30 - 6:30 PM
Register now: bit.ly/3000709



WBAI AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS LLL HOLIDAY COCKTAIL PARTY

RECENT EVENTS - DECEMBER 5, 2024

By: Caidi Vanderporten | Bio on page 4



For the third year, our Domestic Relations Committee hosted its holiday cocktail party for family law attorneys, judges and law students on December 5th. Our event was generously sponsored by Keepr, who brought breathalyzer

devices to demonstrate their product and technology. Sage Counsel, True Test Labs and the Ringler Engels Team also sponsored the event, which featured holiday themed cocktails and even a mocktail as a nod to Keepr. Thanks to all who came this year; it was a wonderful party and brought over 100 of us together before the holidays!





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CIVIL LITIGATION COMMITTEE COOK COUNTY JUDGES' NIGHT

RECENT EVENTS - DECEMBER 5, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The WBAI Civil Litigation Committee was thrilled to host the highly anticipated Cook County Judges' Night on December 5th! It was an exciting evening where attendees had the unique opportunity to mingle with Cook County Law Division Judges and

First Municipal Judges, who preside over motion calls and trials, all while enjoying delicious wine, appetizers, and lively conversation with fellow litigators.

A big thank you to our incredible event sponsors, Hall Prangle & Schoonveld LLC and Wais, Vogelstein, Forman, Koch & Norman, LLC – your support made this unforgettable night possible!



BWLA HOLIDAY PARTY RECENT EVENTS - DECEMBER 10, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The WBAI was honored to attend and support the BWLA's Annual Holiday Party on December 10th. The festive event featured live music, engaging holiday icebreakers with prizes, and a wonderful opportunity to give back to the community.

In the spirit of the season, attendees participated in assembling Blessing Bags, filled with essential items for individuals experiencing homelessness. These thoughtful bags included hats, gloves, scarves, socks, toiletries, and a warming center directory. Guests were encouraged to take a bag to gift to someone in need, while any remaining bags were distributed to a local shelter, extending the impact of the event.

It was a celebration of joy, connection, and purpose—a perfect way to spread holiday cheer while supporting a meaningful cause.



Save the date

WBAI 111th Annual Installation Dinner

Celebrating Incoming WBAI President Katie Twardak and the 2025-2026 Board of Directors

June 26, 2025 at The Drake Hotel



Katie Twardak
Attorney, Tomasik Kotin Kasserman, LLC

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Environmental Litigation

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DAISIE FOUNDATION HOLIDAY MAGIC - CHICAGO WRAPPING PARTY & HOLIDAY MAGIC EXPERIENCE

RECENT EVENTS - DECEMBER 8 & 11, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



For the third year, the WBAI proudly joined the Daisie Foundation's *Holiday Magic Outreach*, an initiative designed to bring joy and hope to underserved communities. The event featured a Wrapping Party and Holiday Magic Experience, where gifts, winter accessories, and holiday treats were delivered to children at a deserving Chicago Public School. With the help of Mr. and Mrs. Claus, the school was transformed into a festive wonderland, complete with music, dancing, presents, and holiday cheer. The surprise transformation was a heartwarming sight, made possible through months of careful planning.

"Watching the kids walk into their gym, which has been transformed into a winter wonderland and the room is just full of energy and love, and filled with people who want to celebrate them, is the best part of this event," shared Caroleann Gallagher, WBAI 2nd VP. *"Seeing their faces as they open surprise after surprise is a very welcome reminder of what the holidays should be about, and this event truly is my favorite of the year"*.

Teachers and staff were not forgotten—they enjoyed a special luncheon and received holiday gifts, all thanks to the generosity of volunteers and sponsors who helped make the event possible.

The Daisie Foundation, a nationally recognized nonprofit, is dedicated to empowering under-resourced women and children by creating opportunities and providing access to critical resources. The organization was established in honor of Daisie Robinson, a single mother who worked tirelessly to raise eight children while working two jobs. Daisie's unwavering belief in the power of community inspired her to teach, uplift, and challenge other women to reach their fullest potential. Known for spreading joy and kindness, often unexpectedly, Daisie's legacy lives on through the foundation that bears her name.

By partnering with organizations nationwide, the Daisie Foundation continues Daisie's mission, spreading joy and empowering women and children in need—ensuring her light and kindness endure.

The WBAI is already involved in planning the Daisie Foundation's *Holiday Magic Outreach 2025* so please stay tuned for details!



ISBA MULTI-BAR HOLIDAY RECEPTION HONORING THE SUPREME COURT

RECENT EVENTS - DECEMBER 13, 2024

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The WBAI was delighted to sponsor the Illinois State Bar Association's highly anticipated Multi-Bar Holiday Reception Honoring the Supreme Court of Illinois on Friday, December 13th, at the elegant JW Marriott Hotel. Held in conjunction with the ISBA and Illinois Judges Association Joint Midyear Meeting, the event was a grand celebration of the season and the legal profession.

In this festive and sophisticated setting, lawyers and judges mingled with the esteemed Justices of the Illinois Supreme

Court, sharing in camaraderie, hospitality, and lively entertainment. The evening featured a special program recognizing the Justices, with inspiring welcome remarks delivered by Justice Joy Cunningham, adding a personal and memorable touch to the celebration.

It was an unforgettable evening of connection and celebration, highlighting the best of Illinois's legal community during the holiday season!



WBAI CHRISTMAS PARTY AND PAST PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

RECENT EVENTS - DECEMBER 18, 2024

By: Leilani Ana-Maria Pino | Bio on page 3



On December 18, 2024, the back room tucked away at The Dawson was filled with lively conversation, holiday cheer, and great food as WBAI's current Board gathered with its former Presidents for the Annual Holiday Party. During this special event, the past Presidents shared their wisdom and stories offering invaluable advice on leadership and perseverance. The festive atmosphere, filled with warmth and camaraderie,

provided the perfect backdrop for these seasoned leaders to reflect on their experiences and the challenges they overcame. Their advice resonated deeply with the current Board members, reigniting energy and enthusiasm for the new year ahead. WBAI's current Board is poised to take on 2025, motivated by the guidance shared at the Past President's Reception. WBAI is committed to carrying on the legacy of excellence these former leaders have long embodied.





We warmly congratulate

Our Partner Michelle Kohut



on being recognized as a

2024 Top Women Lawyers in Leadership Honoree

and we congratulate all the other honorees!

CORBOY & DEMETRIO
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WOMEN'S LITTLE CHRISTMAS (“NOLLAIG NA MBAN”)

RECENT EVENTS - JANUARY 8, 2025

By: Caroleann Gallagher | Bio on page 4



The WBAI hosted its Third Annual “Nollaig na mBan” event at the Dearborn on January 7, 2025. I hail from Ireland and I introduced this heartfelt and lovely tradition to the WBAI 3 years ago, and the event is now a favorite for our members and board. “Nollaig na Mban”

is a tradition celebrated in Ireland on the 12th and final day of Christmas, January 6th. Traditionally in the 1900s, when more of the household and family chores were not as evenly divided as they are (or should be) now, January 6th was carved out as a day where Moms and women of the home were allowed and encouraged to rest, kick back and celebrate getting through the chaos of the holidays with their female friends.

While today we hope that the gender imbalance is not as prominent as it was in the 1900s, we all know and recognize that women are still very much “the makers of the merriment”. No matter how supportive our other halves are, women are generally still the ones taking on the burden of making the holidays just right for family and friends. This burden is immense and far-reaching, ranging from grocery shopping, preparing food, decorating our homes, baking the cookies, buying the children’s gifts, planning childcare for school holidays, acknowledging teachers and coaches, buying the matching pajamas for that Christmas Eve photo, sending out Christmas cards, nibbling the carrots and moving that damn Elf all over the house!

More recently, “Nollaig na Mban” became an opportunity for women to get together after the chaos of Christmas, to gather with their female friends and raise a glass to each other in camaraderie and support. I have celebrated this tradition, along with my mother and grandmother for years

in Ireland, and I am so glad to bring this lovely tradition to our USA hearts.

Every year, I have read this poem at the event to remind us all of what is really important over the holidays and to remind us all that our hard efforts do not go unnoticed. One day we will watch our children and grandchildren recreate these memories for their children, which will be an unforgettable sight and will reinforce for us all why - we will do it all again next year!

It will be YOU!

They don’t know it yet, but when they’re grown and starting their own Christmas tradition, it will be you they mirror.

Your family recipes will grace their holly dressed tables and the classic punch you spiked will come out after lunch. They’ll search for the same candle scent that you burned to get that nostalgic smell that is woven into their memories. They will play the carols that feel like home, that feel like you. Their children’s handmade snowmen and reindeer will be hung with pride just like theirs were, and carrots will be nibbled on Christmas Eve in the same way you did it all those years ago.

Morning elves, phantom sleigh bells and Santa photos will create the same joy and excitement for their kids that you created for them.

When they think of Christmas, it will be YOU. It will be YOU they emulate, YOU they will remember. YOU they will want to be for their kids.

You’re their memoires.
You’re their magic.
You’re their Christmas!



WBAI FEED THE COMMUNITY PROJECT & PACK THE PANTRY SUPPLY DRIVE

RECENT EVENTS - JANUARY 12, 2025

By: Helen Bloch | Bio on page 4



Whoever has attended a traditional Passover Seder is familiar with the verse, “[a]ll who are hungry, let them come and eat.” It is a commitment to welcome and include people in need. The phrase is a reminder that hunger can mean more than a lack of food, as those of us who volunteered at the Ark as part of the WBAI’s Pack the Pantry event learned on January 12, 2025.



The Ark, founded in 1970, is where Chicagoland’s Jewish families and individuals in need find free and confidential services. The Ark does not receive government funding: 98% of its funding is private. According to a 2020 Metropolitan Chicago Jewish population survey, 1 in 5 Jewish families struggle to make ends meet. The Ark services approximately 600 households per month. Not only does it provide food assistance and stock a pantry at its Chicago and suburban locations, it also provides employment, medical, dental, mental health, financial counseling, spiritual, and other assistance. In 2024, it gave out 8,500 prescriptions to its clients. While most of its medical services are provided by volunteer medical professionals, dentistry is a different story. Since Medicaid



does not provide dental services, many of its clients neglect their teeth, to the point that many were too embarrassed to attend job interviews the Ark helped them find. Realizing the critical need for dental care, the Ark pooled sufficient resources to hire a dentist. As such, most of the medications it provides stem from dental related care dispensed from its pharmacy, which is staffed by 3 licensed pharmacists.

Prior to the volunteer event, the WBAI advertised the Ark’s wish list so that folks could help those in need whether they could attend in person or not by sending items to the Ark through Amazon. Also, attendees could bring feminine hygiene products and diapers in person. While the event benefited the Ark, it was a wonderful opportunity for WBAI folks to get together for a great cause with friends and family in a casual setting. The volunteers included the Puerto Rican Bar Association President Patti Cintron-Bastin and her spouse, judges, a WBAI vendor, and kids. A great time was had by all sorting and stocking about 1,000 cans of green beans while learning of the needs of those who receive services from the Ark. Attendees got to tour the warehouse and see the inner workings of the food prong of the Ark’s services.

To learn more about the Ark, schedule a volunteer opportunity, or a simple collection drive, visit arkchicago.org or contact Dawn Lieberman, Director of Community Engagement and Education, dlieberman@arkchicago.org.



CLE: DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO PARENTHOOD: LEGAL PLANNING AROUND ADOPTION, IVF, SURROGACY AND BEYOND

CLE RECENT EVENTS - JANUARY 14, 2025

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The Women’s Bar Association of Illinois was honored to host a CLE program on January 14th, delving into the legal complexities of modern paths to parenthood. The session explored adoption, in vitro fertilization (IVF), surrogacy, and other family-building options, equipping attorneys with valuable insights to navigate this evolving area of law.

Featuring an esteemed panel of experts—Michele Katz, Co-Founder of Advitam IP, LLC; Dena Levy, Esq., Family Law Attorney at Levy Law Solutions; and the Honorable Lisette C. Mojica, Associate Judge of the Cook County Circuit Court—the program provided essential tools for advising clients and addressing the unique challenges of family formation.



2025 DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION UNITY AWARD GALA & 21ST SWEARING-IN OF BAR PRESIDENTS CEREMONY

RECENT EVENTS - JANUARY 16, 2025

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



On January 16, the Diversity Scholarship Foundation hosted its 18th annual Unity Award Gala at the JW Marriott Chicago, a premier fundraising event that celebrates individuals making a significant impact in the legal community and beyond, with a focus on embracing diversity and its core ideals.

A heartfelt congratulations to WBAI President Sarah F. King, who was honored with the 2025 Advocate for Diversity Award. This prestigious recognition highlights her

steadfast dedication to advancing diversity and inclusion within the legal profession.

The evening's highlight was the presentation of scholarships to talented and deserving law students from across Illinois. In 2019, the Foundation awarded 14 individual scholarships, continuing its mission to support the next generation of legal professionals. Additionally, over 50 bar associations were represented during the annual Oath of Diversity and the Swearing-In of Bar Presidents, led by Circuit Court of Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans.



CLE: NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: FINANCIAL PLANNING

CLE RECENT EVENTS - JANUARY 28, 2025

By: Tracey L. Schroeder | Bio on page 3



The WBAI was delighted to host a CLE on January 28th featuring WBAI member and financial advisor Bonnie Mangold, JD, who shared valuable financial planning strategies for the New Year. Drawing from her experience as a comprehensive financial advisor and former Big Law litigator, Bonnie focused on practical steps to set ourselves up for financial success in 2025, with an emphasis on navigating the new tax rules.

Her presentation offered actionable, easy-to-digest insights designed to make financial planning approachable and empowering, all within a safe and judgment-free environment. We extend our gratitude to Bonnie for her expertise and commitment to helping women achieve their financial goals.



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POINT of DIFFERENCE STRATEGIES

CFDB is proud to be the Women's Bar Association of Illinois' Top Flexible Workplace Legal Employer Award. Thank you to the WBAI for your commitment to fostering an inclusive, flexible work environment where legal professionals thrive.

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