



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Women's History Month

by Barbara Harris Chiang

March is Women's History Month in the United States, designated by Congress in 1987 to acknowledge and to recognize the undeniable fact that women play integral roles in every facet of society.

This year, 2009, marks 89 years since the 19th Amendment was ratified, finally giving the vote to half of the US adult population. The amendment's ratification in August 1920 was the culmination of some 70 years of public struggle, ridicule, scorn and for some of the suffragettes, unlawful imprisonment.

And the fight for equality continues today. There remains much work still to be done.

Every member of Queen's Bench is an example of what women are capable of achieving — not just as women, but as people: educated, intelligent, open-minded, forward-thinking PEOPLE.

Personally, I'm proud to be a successful woman lawyer, but I am prouder still to be a lawyer, who happens to be a woman.

I say this because we should not and must not continue to encourage statements based on gender first, before anything else. To do so would be extending the notion of gender bias.

Throughout history, women have led and been successful, acting with intellect, courage and conviction. Others followed and respected them not because they were women, but because they were the best in their fields and held the promise of better futures for everyone, regardless of gender.

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Meet the 2009 Queen's Bench Board Of Directors!

Barbara Harris Chiang, President

Barb is a litigator whose practice focuses on employment cases including sex, age, race, disability discrimination, sexual harassment and wrongful discharge, and commercial litigation. She is a partner at the law firm of Dillingham & Murphy, LLP. Barb graduated from Missouri State University (f.k.a. Southwest Missouri State University) and obtained her J.D. from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Law in 1997. She practiced law in Missouri for two years before moving to California. Prior to law school worked as an investigator for the Missouri Attorney General's Office in the Consumer Protection Division. In her spare time, Barb spends time with her husband Bill, daughter Mia (6) and son Carson (3).



Amee A. Mikacich, First Vice President

Amee is a partner at the firm of Filice Brown Eassa & McLeod, LLP in Oakland, California. Her practice includes general litigation and trial work, with emphasis in the areas of product and premises liability, toxic tort, employment law, and public entity defense. Amee has been a member of Queen's Bench since 1997 and is serving in her third year as a member of the Board of Directors.



Sophie Froelich, Second Vice President

Sophie is a litigation partner in the San Francisco office of Nossaman, LLP. Prior to joining Nossaman, Sophie clerked for a federal district court judge, then practiced products liability law for three years. Currently, Sophie's practice focuses on general commercial litigation and public agency law. She obtained her J.D. from the New York University School of Law in 1999 and her B.A. from Columbia University in 1994.



Rebecca Hooley, Treasurer.

Rebecca is a Deputy County Counsel for Contra Costa County. She handles matters related to taxation, property assessment and estate administration. Prior to joining the County Counsel's Office, she was a litigation associate at the firm of Bingham McCutchen. Rebecca received a J.D. from Columbia Law School in 2000



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2009 QB Board

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and a B.A. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from U.C. Santa Cruz in 1993. Rebecca joined Queen's Bench in 2004 and has been active as Co-Chair of the Scholarship Committee.

Lisa A. Freitas, Secretary.

Lisa is an associate with Hanson Crawford Family Law Group in San Mateo. Her practice focuses on family law matters, including dissolution of marriage, division of assets and debts, and custody issues. Prior to joining Hanson Crawford, Lisa practiced general corporate litigation for five years - first at Fenwick & West LLP and then at Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP in San Francisco. Lisa earned her J.D. from University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 2003 and her B.A. from UCLA in 1997. Lisa has been a member of Queen's Bench since 2004 and is serving in her second year as a member of the Board of Directors.



Sarah M. King, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

Sarah is Of Counsel at Tufts, Stephenson & Kasper, LLP, specializing in trust and estate planning, probate, and tax law. Prior to joining Tufts, Stephenson & Kasper, Sarah was a Director at Howard Rice Nemerovski Canady Falk & Rabkin in San Francisco, an associate attorney at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison in New York, and a law clerk to the Honorable Warren J. Ferguson on the Federal Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Sarah received her J.D. from Stanford Law School and her B.A. from Allegheny College.



Vanessa Hierbaum, Director.

Vanessa has been a partner with KAYE•MOSER•HIERBAUM LLP since 2007. Prior to joining former KAYE•MOSER as an associate in 2000, she was an associate with the Law Offices of Iris F. Mitgang, a prominent family law firm in the East Bay. Vanessa's practice includes all aspects of family law including marital dissolutions, support, complex asset characterization and division and high conflict custody disputes. Vanessa's practice also includes probate and trust litigation and estate planning. Vanessa obtained her J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 1996.



Pamela Markert, Director.

Pamela has been with the law firm Gold Bennett Cera & Sidener LLP since 2006. Her practice focuses on securities fraud and antitrust class action litigation. Prior to her work at Gold Bennett, she worked for more than five years at a large law firm. She represented clients ranging from individuals, partnerships, and closely-held corporations to multinational companies in business, consumer and general liability matters. Prior to her career in law, Pamela worked at SunGard Financial Systems, Inc. providing technical direction to clients for a comprehensive investment accounting and portfolio management system for client portfolios totaling more than \$27 billion. While at SunGard, Pamela spent a year in Washington D.C. providing on-site client support for the capital markets division of the Resolution Trust Corporation. Pamela holds a B.S. in Business Administration, Finance, from California State University, Northridge, and a J.D. from Santa Clara University School of Law.



Annie O'Donnell, Director.

Annie is an associate at the firm Hedani, Choy, Spalding & Salvagione, LLP in San Francisco. She has been with this firm since she graduated from law school, and is now in her 6th year. Her practice focuses on general civil litigation, lien negotiations, and plaintiff's personal injury. She obtained her J.D. from McGeorge School of Law, and her B.A. from the University of California, Davis. Annie joined Queen's Bench in 2003, and has been involved in the Business Development Committee, which she will co-chair for a second time this year. This is her first year on the Board of Directors. She enjoys Irish Dancing and spending time with her husband, RM, and their seven-month old baby, Lucy.



Lisa K. Rauch, Director.

Lisa is a Past President of Queen's Bench (2002) and co-chair of the Awards Committee. She practices complex business litigation with Thomas Whitelaw & Tyler. She received her undergraduate degree from U.C. Berkeley and her J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law. She enjoys cooking, hiking, swimming and reading historical novels. Lisa lives in San Francisco with her husband and two daughters.



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2009 QB Board

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Patricia Rosenberg, Director.

Patricia is a partner at HaasNajarian, LLP. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and the University of San Francisco School of Law. She is a member of the U.S. District Court for the Northern and Eastern Districts of California and the State Bar of California. She is a Past President of Queen's Bench Bar Association. Ms. Rosenberg's practice includes a broad range of commercial litigation with an emphasis on construction and real estate litigation. Ms. Rosenberg also holds directorships in various non-profit organizations.



Hon. Anne Beytin Torkington, Director

Anne has been an administrative law judge at the United States Department of Labor for the past eight years, hearing cases (as well as mediating them), in the areas of workers' compensation (under the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act), and federal whistleblower (environmental, airline and commercial truck safety and Sarbanes-Oxley), as well as areas covered by approximately 60 other statutes. Before joining the Department of Labor she was an ALJ for the Social Security Administration and an administrative judge for the Equal Opportunity Commission. She got her J.D. from UCLA School of Law, and her B.A. from U. C. Berkeley. She also obtained an M.S.W. from U. C. Berkeley. She has two grown children, a daughter who lives with her husband in Japan, and a son who teaches yoga in Thailand. She enjoys hiking, reading, cooking, music, and movies in her spare time. She joined Queen's Bench shortly after moving to the Bay Area in December 1997.



Kelly Robbins, Immediate Past President

Kelly moved to San Francisco from a suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1979, when she was 17. She took her last year of high school at J. Eugene McAteer High School and went to San Francisco State University to major in Political Science. After working her way through college, she began law school at the University of San Francisco in 1988. Kelly credits her externship for Judge Paul Alvarado during her third year of law school as providing invaluable insight into the view from the other side of the bench. Following graduation in 1991 Kelly worked in a variety of civil litigation roles in order to gain experience inside a courtroom. In 1996 Kelly was asked to help out in a family law case. Initially reluctant, Kelly found that family law was the right practice area for her strengths and skills. In the role of detective to determine the facts, following the many facets of law involved in family matters (real estate, tax, contracts, sometimes some fraud), Kelly relishes in helping people with the most important elements of their life. She enjoys the fast pace of family law, the ability to take a matter to the judge for resolution when needed, and getting her clients out of the legal system with the least amount of trauma.



Kelly completed the requirements to become a California State Bar Certified Family Law Specialist in 2005 and simultaneously opened her own law practice known as Robbins Family Law. Kelly has since graded the certification exams for other family law practitioners seeking State Bar Certification. Kelly began active participation with Queen's Bench in 1998 as a co-chair of the Business Development Committee. Three years later Kelly joined the board of directors and later served as secretary, treasurer, second vice president and most recently as first vice president. Kelly maintains her membership in the Lawyers' Club of San Francisco Inn of Court, as she has since 2002. Kelly and her husband have happily been together for 22 years. Outside of the business world, Kelly enjoys time with her husband and their 8-year-old daughter. She also enjoys hiking, gardening, horseback riding and reading legal mysteries.

President's Message

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In most professions today, the use of gender as a descriptor has been discarded to the junkyard of outdated and socially unacceptable terms.

Teachers, physicians, lawyers, nurses, firefighters, police officers—even the military and business groups—have all stopped using gender descriptors and are simply recognizing people for their talents and achievements.

The political arena remains the last frontier.

And I think I know why: There are simply not enough women in elected office to carry the message; the message of equality, while recognizing that in some cases gender DOES make a difference ... difference in thought, perspective, priorities and motivation.

American women have had the vote for 89 short years, and we have expressed ourselves through that vote, for better or for worse. (Hillary Clinton's candidacy was an enormous step forward.) But acquiring the vote was only half the battle. How that precious vote is used is the other half.

Now, please understand, I am NOT encouraging voting for a candidate simply and solely because she's a woman.

I am encouraging more women to participate, to run for office, so the playing field continues to level and the abilities of women as decision-makers, influencers and effective leaders are highlighted well ahead of gender.

Women, the other half of the population, must increase participation so We, the People, can benefit from the expanded ideas, the new discussions and the additional minds doing the people's work.

In terms of candidates and office holders, here are some quick stats from 2007.

- In the 50 states, there are nine women governors, 11 lieutenant governors, four attorneys general, 12 secretaries of state and 11 state treasurers. That's 47 out of a possible 250 statewide executive offices; or roughly 19 percent.
- In the current 111th US Congress, women hold 92 of the 541 seats; of course, that includes House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but that's still just 17 percent.
- Historically, to date, just 266 women have ever served in Congress, 37 in the Senate and 229 in the House.
- Meanwhile, here in California, the highest elected statewide executive office ever reached by a woman was Secretary of State March Fong Eu (YOO), who served from 1975 to 1993. At the time, she also was the first Asian American woman in the country ever elected to a statewide executive office.
- Again, as of 2007, there have been 121 women who have ever served in the California Legislature — 100 in the state Assembly and 21 in the state Senate.

- In 1985, women occupied just 12.5 percent of the state Legislature's seats. In 2007, women held just 28.3 percent. From 12.5 to 28.3 percent is a tremendous jump, but still not nearly enough. The logic is: to attain elected office, one must run for office.

Do we as members of Queen's Bench, this sisterhood of the legal profession, have a special responsibility given that lawmakers tend to be lawyers? Perhaps we should mark Women's History Month 2009 with a quote attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt: "We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face ... we must do that which we think we cannot."

Queen's Bench New Members

Please welcome the following new members who joined between March 30 and April 30, 2009:

- Alexis Casillas
- Melissa Cohen
- Tanya Dunbar
- Jamie Gorostiza
- Natalie Holden
McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP
- Diana Hughes
Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP
- Monica Swanson Hunt
Farella Braun + Martel LLP
- Clarissa A. Kang
- Trucker Huss
- Amanda J. List
The Wald Law Group, PC
- Anna Liu
- Julianne Nucum
- Kerry R. O'Donnell
- Caroline M. Reeb
- Lisa Reither
- April Rose Sommer
- Maggie Stern
- Casey Coleman Truelove
- Deborah Wald
The Wald Law Group PC
- Heather J. Zacharia



The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 and the “Mexico City Gag Rule”

Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

The Obama Administration has been in office slightly more than one month, but it has already made its mark signing the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and rescinding the “Mexico City Gag Rule.”

The Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is named after Lilly Ledbetter, a woman who was precluded from recovering for pay discrimination occurring more than 180 days before she filed her initial complaint with the EEOC. Ms. Ledbetter worked as a manager for almost 20 years for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.

Because raises at the company were given on the basis of evaluations that were kept confidential, she did not learn of her unequal pay until shortly before she retired in 1998, when she received a note from an anonymous co-worker comparing her salary to that of three male managers. Although the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 against Ledbetter on statute of limitations grounds, Justice Ginsberg wrote the dissent and took the unusual step of reading it from the bench. Joined by Justices Steven, Souter and Breyer, she opposed the Court’s interpretation of the 180-day limit to pay discrimination, taking the majority to task for its “cramped interpretation of Title VII incompatible with the statute’s broad remedial purpose” and noting Congress’s ability to “correct this Court’s parsimonious reading of Title VII.”

In 2009, in response to the Court’s decision, Congress passed the “Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009,” which President Obama signed into law on January 29, 2009. The new law permits a suit for discrimination within 180 days of the last day that the employer committed an act of discrimination. The legislation will have broad-ranging impact because it affects back pay, as well as future pensions. Ms. Ledbetter, for example, stated that she has lived from paycheck to paycheck because her pension is based on her lower wages while working at Goodyear.

Mexico City Gag Rule

President Obama has also signed an executive order allowing for discussion of abortion between a doctor and her patient within the context of family planning. President Ronald Reagan instituted the Mexico City Gag Rule in 1984. The policy required international non-governmental organizations that receive United States government funding to agree that they would refrain from performing or promoting abortion services as a method of family planning in other countries. International Planned Parenthood Federation and a few other

organizations refused to withhold abortion services or information about abortion, and they were denied all U.S. government funding. In response, the European Union and other countries increased their funding.

Critics of the gag rule argued that it closed off distribution of condoms and other forms of contraception to their clients, thereby leading to an increase in the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, as well as the spread of AIDS. Critics also argued that the policy restricted frank discussions between doctors and their patients. President Bill Clinton rescinded the Mexico City Gag Rule in 1993 by executive order, only to have it reinstated by President George Bush in 2001.

On January 23, 2009, President Obama rescinded the Mexico City Gag Rule by executive order once again. “For too long, international family planning assistance has been used as a political wedge issue . . . I have no desire to continue this stale and fruitless debate.” President Obama signed the order one day after the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

Mary Catherine Wiederhold is Chair of the Queen’s Bench Legislative Issues & Reproductive Rights committee. She can be reached at mcw@mcwrealestatelaw.com



ANNOUNCEMENTS ...

March 30, 2009

2009 Induction Ceremony and Champagne Reception

On Monday, March 30, 2009 from 5:30-7:30 p.m., Queen's Bench will host the 2009 Induction Ceremony and Champagne Reception at the Civic Center Courthouse, 4th Floor Rotunda, located at 400 McAllister Street in San Francisco, California. This exciting event honors the incoming Queen's Bench officers and directors and welcomes the new California State Bar Admittees. All judges of the Bay Area Courts and new admittees to the California Bar are the complimentary guests of Queen's Bench. Admission for the general membership is \$25 per person. We are thrilled to announce that California



Supreme Court Associate Justice Kathryn M. Werdegar will preside over the induction ceremony. Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Please save the date and plan to join us! See [flyer](#) for more details.

QUEEN'S BENCH NEWSLETTER

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HON. ANNE BEYTIN TORKINGTON

Job Postings

Queen's Bench has been made aware of the following job postings and includes them in the newsletter as a service to our members:

U.S. Department Of Justice, Civil Rights Division: Trial Attorneys

The Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, is seeking experienced attorneys to serve in various sections, located in Washington, D.C. The full legal position announcement and application information can be found on the Internet at: www.usdoj.gov/oarm/attvacancies.html.

Bay Area Legal Aid: Housing, Public Benefits and Family Law Attorneys

Bay Area Legal Aid's Santa Clara Regional Office seeks a Staff Attorney in Housing, a Public Benefits Attorney and a Family Law Attorney. The full announcements and application details can be found on the organization's web site at www.baylegal.org/employment-opportunities.

United States District Court for the Northern District of California: Magistrate Judge Positions in Oakland and Eureka

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California is now inviting applications for Magistrate Judgeships in Oakland and Eureka. The application deadline is April 17, 2009. Information and application form is available on the Court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

NAACP: General Counsel

The NAACP seeks a General Counsel to work in Baltimore, Maryland, Washington, DC or New York, NY. The full announcement and application details can be found on the organization's web site at www.naacp.org/about/jobs/2008120108gc/index.htm.

Hanson Crawford Family Law Group: Family Law Associate

San Mateo county 6-lawyer boutique law firm seeks associate with 3-5 years of family law experience and excellent research and writing skills. Congenial firm provides full benefits and competitive salary. Contact Roz Gallo at Roz@Hansonflg.com.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

- 3** **Board of Directors Meeting**
6:00 p.m.
Dillingham & Murphy
- 4** **Juvenile Hall Project**
6:30–8:30 p.m.
- 18** **Juvenile Hall Project**
6:30–8:30 p.m.
- 30** **Annual Induction Ceremony and
Champagne Reception**
5:30 -7:30 p.m.
Civic Center Courthouse, San Francisco.
[See flyer.](#)
- 31** **Business Development Committee
Meeting**
6:15 p.m.
Nossaman LLP

April

- 7** **Board of Directors Meeting**
6:00 p.m.
Dillingham & Murphy
- 8** **Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
- 22** **Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.



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Queen's Bench Newsletter

March 2009