



HAWAII WOMEN LAWYERS NEWSLETTER

JULY 1994

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A FIRM OF ONE'S OWN

By Laura Thielen

In 1926, when asked to speak about women and fiction, Virginia Woolf offered her opinion on what she phrased as one minor point regarding the subject: "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." Among other things, Ms. Woolf maintained that it was too difficult for a woman, with so many demands on her time, to write good fiction at the mercy of her family. In essence, a woman needed to flee to affordable solitude in order to write.

54 years later, Ursula K. Le Guin challenged both Ms. Woolf's and the establishment's assumption that women who wrote in family rooms surrounded by families cannot be considered among the elite authors of classic literature. After all, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Jane Austin are only two examples of such women.

Ms. Le Guin claims "what a woman needs to be a writer: not balls, not child-free space, not a room of her own or support of her partner, although those are very helpful. What she need is pencil and paper, as that makes her free."

Both Ms. Woolf and Ms. Le Guin essentially agree that the key to a woman becoming a writer, or anything else, is autonomy. The only disagreement between the two is over what shape autonomy takes. Is autonomy found only in solitude, or can a woman seize autonomy in the midst of the demands and distractions of other people?

This is an interesting question for women lawyers who are seeking autonomy in their practice of law. Where must a woman lawyer go to find autonomy, and what is autonomy for a lawyer anyway?

A brief perusal of the HSBA Bar book proves that many women lawyers in Hawaii have decided that autonomy comes in the shape of a firm of one's own. Indeed,

we are not unusual compared to women in other businesses, as in the United States women are the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs. Autonomy for working women is the ability to have control over the work they do, be it the time, the scope, or the benefits of the work itself. Based on these changing demographics, it appears most women find that exclusive control is found only when one controls one's own firm.

I have had the varied experience of working in a 150-plus attorney firm, running my mother's practice single-handedly while she is in session, working in an 8-lawyer firm, and being married to an attorney who works for a government.

From a lawyer's perspective, I would have to say both Ms. Woolf and Ms. Le Guin are only partially correct. A lawyer with a pencil and paper in any size firm or government office is only free insofar as her desires don't violate the majority of partners' wishes or government policy. However, in a firm of one's own the demands of operating a small business may override a lawyer's individual preferences.

Autonomy does not come easy, nor, for a lawyer, is autonomy ever complete. While in a firm of your own you never need to explain why you take the afternoon off, why you refused a certain client, or why you spend working time on a committee or board meeting, you always have to pay your rent, employee's salary, and operating expenses. A solo practitioner spends much more time on the business aspect of the practice than the average firm lawyer. While the firm or government lawyer does have the benefit of a steady paycheck, there is not the luxury of making a unilateral decision when one has partners and office policies. And with any lawyer, the practice is always subject to the demands of clients, co-counsel, opposing counsel, and courts.

It is because of the constant outside demands that Virginia Woolf also noted that a woman needs money as well, apparently so she could tell the distractors to take a hike while she got on with her other work. Unfortunately, because lawyers work with people, we never

have that luxury. Also, we must assume that no matter how much satisfaction we may get out of doing a job well, most of us work in order to earn the money. Unfortunately the Victorian tradition of a comfortable lifetime allowance has not been perpetuated.

I have come to believe that there is no single place that a woman lawyer, or any lawyer, can go to find autonomy. Indeed, our practice is such that autonomy may not be the most important goal for many lawyers. Control over all decisions of the practice may take a back seat to the pleasures of working on complex transactions as a team or the security of a constant income.

What a woman needs to be a lawyer is this: a law degree and a certificate of passing the bar. How a woman decides to apply this knowledge depends on what is her goal, which may vary over time. But what I like the best about the women in our profession is that we have proved both Virginia Woolf and Ursula K. Le Guin are right: we can and do work wherever we damn well please, in rooms alone, in family rooms, in offices with partners, associates, and politicians. Best of all, unlike many other businesses and professions, we are included on the lists of the best in our profession. ♦

WOMEN'S FORUMS

Hawaiian Sovereignty July 29, 1994

Hawaii Women Lawyers, in conjunction with the Native Hawaiian Legal Association, will host a panel of speakers to discuss the Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement. The forum will expand your understanding of the sovereignty movement by examining its historical background, as well as the political,

social, and economic issues inherent in the movement. The various models, such as the nation within a nation concept, will be discussed by their proponents. A short film will be shown.

With the Legislature's creation of the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission, the sovereignty movement is gaining rapid momentum; history is in the making. Please come, learn, question, and enjoy.

Gubernatorial Candidates August 26, 1994

HWL is proud to host a debate between the Gubernatorial candidates at our August Women's Forum. Saiki, Cayetano, and Fasi have all agreed to speak. Each candidate will speak briefly on the topic of their choice. They then will take questions from the audience.

MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY FOR THIS FORUM. We are anticipating a large non-member turnout. Due to organizational costs, the fee for this Forum will be \$20.00 for members and non-members.

HWL is committed to keeping our Forums affordable, and have had only two exceptions to the rule of charging members only the cost of the lunch.

Marion Higa September 30, 1994

Marion Higa, the State Auditor, is an exciting and well-informed guest. The Auditor's Office has become famous for its numerous detailed and well-written investigative reports on behalf of the State Legislature. These are the reports that generally make headline news, as the audit uncovers the loss, misplacement, misuse, and sometimes sheer abuse of state funds and the failure of many agencies and departments to fulfill their legislative directions.

Anyone who works with state agencies and departments should take advantage of listening to Ms. Higa and asking her questions. She is very familiar with statutory laws, and may even dispense information that could be relevant to a case or issue you are working on.

Judicial Selection Commission October 28, 1994

We sold out our Forum with the four women judges. Those of you who came know that many of the questions centered around what makes a person qualified to be a judge and the selection process. The judges could not answer that, but the Commission members may be able to. You do not have to have judicial aspirations to find this forum interesting, thought-provoking, and stimulating.

We will be hosting several members of the Commission, which will provide our guests with a good cross-section of the entire Commission's practice and policies.

Reservations

For reservations for any of the forums, please contact Mary Houghton at 396-8506. ♦

I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME...PURR?

The Professional Women's
Network presents

Lions Don't Need to Roar
by D.A. Benton
Monday, July 25, 1994

"Professional presence" is one of the most important tools a business leader can possess--and now D.A. Benton, the woman who has made self-presentation an art and a science, offers the techniques anyone can use to develop a powerful new

image and achieve greater success in the corporate arena.

D.A. Benton pioneered the concept of "professional presence," a combination of individual style and comportment that tells everyone -- superiors and subordinates, colleagues and acquaintances--that they are dealing with a leader. In this workshop, she'll reveal her techniques. Attendees will learn how to:

- Make a memorable first impression
- Interact successfully with associates, clients, customers, and competitors
- Break through the official business roles to strike a personal chord
- Use stories that reveal their humanity and invite warm responses
- Use humor
- Develop bonds by asking questions and favors
- Capitalize on lucky breaks
- Function at the top.

The workshop will be held at the Hale Koa Hotel.

Fee: Luncheon Program only: \$14 for PWN members; \$19 for nonmembers.

Workshop and Luncheon: \$50 for PWN members; \$60 for nonmembers.

Reservations: call 533-4800 by July 22, 1994. ♦

CHOP SUI GENERIS

Kathryn E. Young, former editor of the HWL newsletter, announced the opening of her law practice on June 16, 1994. Her office is located

at Kawaihao Plaza, Suite 178, 567 South King Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813; phone 521-8531; fax 545-3503.

Congratulations and kudos to Susan Oki Mollway, who successfully presented her client's case to the United States Supreme Court on April 28. In *Hawaii Airlines v. Norris*, Susan argued that her client, alleging unlawful discharge due to his whistle-blowing, should have his case heard in court, rather than by arbitration. In a recent opinion, the high court agreed with Susan.

Rhonda and Jeff Griswold are the proud parents of a baby boy, Lucas Edward, their second child. Lucas was born on May 24, 1994, and weighed in at 8 lbs, 5 1/2 ozs. ♦

CONTEST GIVES GIRLS SKILLS FOR BUSINESS

Last month, teen-age girls from all over the country got an inside look at businesses as parents and their employers participated in the second annual "Take Your Daughter to Work" day.

And while "Take Your Daughter to Work" has been an eye-opener for both the girls and the businesses, a day is only a start, not an end in itself.

Now a nonprofit group called An Income of Her Own, based in San Jose, Calif., is taking the need for creating economic options among teen girls a step further by sponsoring a national business-plan competition for young women between the ages of 13 and 19.

It is the second competition for the group, which also sponsors seminars on teen entrepreneurship and a business summer camp for girls.

The purpose of the competition is to build economic literacy among young women and to spark ideas for businesses of their own.

Although boys and girls drop out of school at equal rates, girls have a 90 percent greater chance of living in poverty. About 40 percent of all young women will become pregnant at least once before the age of 20, a statistic that embraces all socio-economic strata. And 33 percent of single women with children live in poverty.

What's more, although 75 percent of women work outside the home, 80 percent of them are clustered in just 20 percent of the jobs classified by the Labor Department. Women's work is still "ghettoized" in low-paying jobs with 40 percent of women paid less than poverty-level wages.

The business-plan competition is a learning experience in itself. Applicants don't need to have had previous business classes or experience. But by filling out the application, they will learn everything they would need to consider in putting together a formal business plan.

The contest is supposed to be fun, but it also asks who your customers would be, how you would reach them, how you would make your product, what it would cost, where you would find loans and how you would pay them back. It asks for time lines and projections -- in short, everything you need to know before you commit to starting your own business.

For an application, call (800) 350-2978. In addition to a small cash award, winners go to Washington, D.C. for an awards ceremony and meeting with the staff of Inc. Magazine and the Women's Student Association of Harvard Business School.

Oct. 3 is the deadline for applying. GO FOR IT, GIRLS! ♦

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HWL MEMBERSHIP

HWL invites you to become a member, or to renew your membership dues, if you have not already done so. Please send the following form to P.O. Box 2072, Honolulu, Hawaii 96805. Dues are as follows:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular members \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-state members \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student members \$10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New admittees (within 1 year of Hawaii admission) \$20 | | |
| HWL President's Circle: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 |

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (day) _____ (night) _____

Please indicate if you are interested in information about serving on the HWL Board or Committees or note any topics or projects in which you would be interested in assisting.

If you have any announcements you wish to submit for the monthly newsletter, please call Rhonda Nishimura at 537-6119 or Susan Jaworowski at 587-0663 (mornings)/625-1386 (afternoons), or send a copy to HWL by the end of the month.