

# HAWAII WOMEN LAWYERS

## NEWSLETTER

November/December 1996

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## Women Candidates Face a Packed House at Speakers Forum

### *Congresswoman Patsy Mink Applauds HWL's Programs*

Mahalo nui to all of the candidates who participated in our October 28th HWL Speakers Forum. U.S. Representative Patsy Mink led off a panel of twelve women candidates, who addressed a standing-room-only crowd just one week before the general election. They spoke of their concerns for education, health, safety, environmental and women's issues. Some candidates, such as State Representative Barbara Marumoto and first-time legislative candidate Judy Magin, were critical of the state government's role in economic issues. Additionally, both Marumoto and former State House Representative Jackie Young stressed the importance of the legislature's role in improving the overall business climate of Hawaii.

A few of the speakers talked on a very personal level. Republican Yvonne Perry openly discussed her anger and disillusionment with the state's criminal justice system after the violent murder of her son several years ago. Not all candidates reached the same harsh conclusions as Perry, but deputy prosecutor Pam Ferguson-Brey and State Representative Cynthia Thielen both agreed that a crack down on crime and the expansion of prisons and drug programs are long overdue.

State Senator Donna Ikeda reminded the group of her voting record in her twenty-two years of legislative office, and her leadership role in shaping the state's auto insurance laws.

Issues surrounding children were foremost on the minds of these women as well. Republican candidate Corinne Ching spoke of her experiences as a teacher at Maemae Elementary School. Her insights on the importance of education and strong community involvement were echoed by Oahu Board of Education candidates Noemi Pendleton and Marcia Linville.

The one thing upon which all the candidates unanimously agreed, however, was the importance of women to their voting base. "We are counting on you," Representative Marumoto reminded the group.

Hawaii Women Lawyers is proud to have provided this forum. The monthly luncheons are an opportunity for women lawyers and other interested parties to meet, question, communicate and learn from other women in our community.

This was our last HWL Speakers Forum for 1996. We will resume after the first of the year. If you have ideas for an interesting speaker, or suggestions for a topic that we have not yet covered, please feel free to call Kay Lorraine at the HWL office in Honolulu (545-8055).

We hope that you have enjoyed the past year's programs. Mahalo to Pamela Berman Byrne, our Speakers Forum Chairwoman, for all her hard work.

### Hawaii Women Lawyers Honored at State Bar Convention

The Hawaii State Bar Association singled out HWL for the completion of the third edition of *Our Rights, Our Lives*. The award was presented at the HSBA Annual Convention's Luncheon on November 1st in the Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton Waikiki.

The publication of this handbook concerning the legal rights of women and children in Hawaii is the fulfillment of one of Hawaii Women Lawyers' fundamental goals of advancing the status of all women in our community.

For huge numbers of people, most especially women, even rudimentary legal information is hard to acquire in terms they can understand. *Our Rights, Our Lives* is only part of the answer to making the law accessible to all people, but it is an important part.

HWL extends a sincere thank you to HSBA for acknowledging our work in attempting to create a better understanding of the law.



We need volunteers to help us distribute copies of the new edition of *Our Rights, Our Lives*. These copies are given to libraries, family shelters, support groups, hospital emergency rooms, churches, crisis intervention and counseling centers, etc. The books are donated free of charge, but we need assistance in getting them out to the public. If you have a car and are willing to help, please call Kay Lorraine at the HWL office at 545-8055.

## Bill 96 "Date-Rape Drug" Ban to Address Growing Threat to Women and Teen-Age Girls

### Call To Submit Testimony

To prohibit the possession, sale and distribution of certain products containing Gamma Hydroxybutyrate, also known as "GHB," "Liquid X," and "Easy Lay," Councilmember Andy Mirikitani has introduced Bill 96. This bill has passed first reading by the City Council and has been referred to the Committee on Parks, Health and Safety, which began public hearings on November 20th. This odorless hypnotic tranquilizing drug, which is typically slipped into women's beverages, causes depression of the respiratory system, particularly when mixed with alcohol, and can cause loss of oxygen to the brain, knocking the victim out and triggering amnesia and possibly death.

Because victims become totally helpless, "Easy Lay" is being used by teenagers and others as a "date rape" drug. Currently, products containing this potentially lethal drug can be purchased legally by both adults and minors in Honolulu. GHB is also easily manufactured at home using instructions found in libraries and on the Internet. Typically, this colorless and nearly odorless drug is slipped into a victim's drink, with symptoms taking effect rapidly, within 15 to 20 minutes. Due to its effects, the victim often loses any memory of the events occurring during the episode, often even the identity of an assailant.

This dangerous drug poses a serious threat to women and teen-age girls. Until the State Legislature acts, the council has the responsibility to see that this date rape drug is kept off our streets. This bill addresses the need to protect women, teenagers and young girls from those who would use GHB to victimize them.

If you have any questions, please call Councilmember Mirikitani or his aide, Cindy McMillan, at 527-5587.

If you wish to submit written and/or provide oral testimony during the public hearings, call the Committee Clerk Bernice Wong at 523-4490.

## Proposition 209 Passes in California

California Women Lawyers' worst fears were realized when Proposition 209 passed by a substantial majority in November's general election. Although written under the guise of "equal rights," Prop 209 was basically designed to eliminate affirmative action programs. However, CWL is concerned that the new law will negatively impact hard-won maternity and pregnancy policies, eliminate girls' mentoring programs in math and science, and provide constitutional protection for gender discrimination in state government contracts.

Since the November 5th election, several lawsuits have been filed in California as a result of proposition 209. CWL is in the process of organizing a task force to try to deal with the ramifications. Their fear is that now that proposition 209 has become law in the public sector, it is only a matter of time before it becomes the practice in the private sector.

## "Government's Role in the Economy" December 11-13 on Kauai

### Mid-Year Conference on Government Spending

The Hawaii State Association of Counties invites you to attend its 1996 Mid-Year Conference on government spending, and government resources. The location is the Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club on Kalapaki Bay. Some of the questions that will be explored at this event are:

- As governments struggle to control costs, how will programs such as privatization, energy performance contracting and public/private partnerships figure into the equation?
- What about liability/risk management?
- What is the forecast for traditional government revenue resources and what are some innovative revenue enhancement measures being explored?
- What does the future hold for the telecommunications industry in Hawaii?
- What is the role of government as a purchaser?
- What kind of assistance is government providing to boost the economy?
- What is the future of affordable housing?

The registration deadline for this conference is November 27th. The cost is \$125, which covers seminar fees, lunch on Thursday, continental breakfast each morning, plus two evening receptions. There will also be an optional golf tournament at the Kauai Lagoons Golf Course, with a \$60 charge for cart, green fees and prizes.

For further information about the conference, call (808) 241-6371 (Kauai).

## LSAC Seeking Research Proposals on Legal Education

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the establishment of a grant program to fund empirical research on legal education in the United States and Canada. The Board welcomes research proposals from a variety of methodologies and a broad range of topics. The proposed time frame for the research subject matter can range from a student's earliest consideration of law school to his or her first job experience in the legal market. Proposals will be judged on the importance of the questions addressed and the quality of the research designs.

Applications are invited from any qualified researcher. You need not necessarily be based in the law. The next reviewing cycle for these grants will be on February 1st. If you have any questions, or would like to receive a copy of the program announcement, please contact:

Kathleen B. McGeady, Coordinator of Grants and Contracts,

Law School Admission Council

P.O. Box 40, 661 Penn Street

Newtown, PA 18940-0040

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## Substance Abuse and the American Woman

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University released the first comprehensive assessment of the impact on women of all substance abuse.

Today, 21.5 million women smoke; 4.5 million are alcoholics or alcohol abusers; 3.5 million misuse prescription drugs (stimulants, tranquilizers, sedatives and analgesics) and 3.1 million regularly use illegal drugs.

The results of this two-year study are disturbing. In the worst way, American women are closing the gap with men: women are increasingly likely to abuse substances at the same rate as men, and women are starting to smoke, drink and use drugs at earlier ages than ever before. For teenage girls, the gender gap is gone. Today's daughters are 15 times likelier than their mothers to begin using illegal drugs by age 15. And if long-range trends in smoking continue, the United States will have the dubious distinction of being the first nation in the world where the number of women who smoke equals the number of men.

### *Metabolic and physiological differences make women more vulnerable*

These statistics are especially troubling since women get intoxicated faster, become addicted more quickly, and develop substance abuse-related diseases sooner. The risk of liver cirrhosis becomes significant for women at less than two drinks a day; for men this risk becomes significant after six drinks per day. Female alcoholics are twice as likely to die as male alcoholics. Additionally, teenage girls who drink and smoke marijuana are likelier to have sex, and have it with a partner not using a condom. At least one of every five pregnant women uses drugs, drinks and/or smokes, putting herself and her newborn in great and avoidable danger. Smoking is the leading cause of low birth weight, a frequent precursor to infant death. And alcohol is the single greatest preventable cause of mental retardation.

### *Tobacco and drugs as a weight-loss program*

Equally disturbing is the way our culture encourages girls and young women to smoke and use drugs by exploiting their preoccupation with being thin. The tobacco industry cynically does this in its advertising. The fashion industry extols social x-ray thinness and "junkie chic" on runways and in fashion layouts. In magazines, on television and in

films, young women with paper thin bodies who smoke and abuse alcohol are glamorized; the consequences of this abuse is rarely shown. Reports show that the primary reason that women hesitate to quit smoking or using drugs, or quit only to relapse, is because they fear the weight gain that often accompanies quitting.

Here are some unbelievably scary tobacco statistics: One of every two female smokers will die of a tobacco-related disease. Since 1986, more women have died from lung cancer than breast cancer. Smoking is the leading cause of low birth weight in newborns. Because the health consequences of substance abuse develop years after use begins, the fact that girls are equally likely to use substances as boys today signals big trouble for tomorrow's women.

### *Women's problems easier to hide; difficult to diagnose*

There are dramatic differences between men and women who abuse tobacco, alcohol and drugs. With men, the manifestations are external, such as drunk driving, frequent fighting, and committing crimes. For women, however, the symptoms tend to be inner-directed: low self-esteem, depression and anxiety. As a result, doctors and health professionals, friends and family (more familiar with the public, outer-directed symptoms of male substance abuse) often overlook substance abuse in women. Because they are inner-directed and are often rooted in childhood sexual abuse (70% of women in treatment were sexually abused as children; only 12% of men were), a woman's symptoms often go undiagnosed.

The changing role of women in today's society has given them unprecedented opportunities, but it has also planted mines on their road to success. Women who work in male dominated environments are more likely to drink heavily than those who don't. The women most likely to be heavy drinkers are those working outside the home who are without work.

What motivates a woman to abuse tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs--or not to abuse them--and what motivates a woman to seek--or not to seek--treatment is likely to be different from what motivates a man. Those differences are real.

But there is a grim consequence common to men and women; women who smoke, abuse alcohol and use illegal drugs like men will die like men who smoke, abuse alcohol and use illegal drugs--from cancers and heart disease, from violence and AIDS--only sooner.

## Advocacy Effort To Increase Federal Funding For Breast Cancer Research

The National Breast Cancer Coalition has initiated an advocacy effort to urge the President and Congress to appropriate \$2.6 billion for breast cancer research between now and the year 2000. This effort is being supported by the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWAL), through its Health Care Committee. By the end of December, they hope to obtain at least 2.6 million signatures requesting this appropriation.

HWL has a copy of this petition. You are invited to participate by calling Kay Lorraine at the HWL office (545-8055). We will fax the petition, which you may sign and fax back.

## 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 and your check to: HWL, P.O. Box 2072, Honolulu, Hawaii 96805. Dues are as follows:

- Regular members \$40                       Out-of-State members \$20                       Student members \$10
- New admittees (within 1 year of Hawaii admission) \$20
- HWL President's Circle:                       \$100                       \$500                       \$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:

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HAWAII WOMEN LAWYERS  
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