



HAWAI'I WOMEN LAWYERS NEWSLETTER

April 1999

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HWL Participates in Equal Pay Day

Women work an extra 3 months and 8 days to earn annual pay equal to men

Nominations for HWL Board

April 30th is final deadline for nominations for new HWL Board of Directors

Cheryl K. Okuma-Sepe Profile

First Deputy Corporation Council for City and County of Honolulu

Calendar of Events

Friday, April 16th 3:30 to 5:00p.m.
"Dodging the E&O Bullet" Free workshop. Reservations are necessary. (See page 2 for details)

May 1st 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Supreme Courtroom "Trial By Jury"
Mock trial open to the public with actual judges, attorneys and celebrity witnesses. Jurors will be pulled from the audience to participate. Event co-sponsored by the HSBA and ABA Litigation Section to educate the public about the legal system and criminal process.

May 5th noon to 1:00 p.m "Discovery Process in State and Federal Court."
HSBA Lawyer Kokua Brown Bag Luncheon at 1132 Bishop St., Conference room 301. Speaking will be the Honorable Marie Milks, Judge, First Circuit Court and Honorable Berry Kurren, Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court. Call 537-1868 for reservations.

May 1st thru May 8th Law Week
Various activities taking place around the state. Call Kay at the HWL office (545-8055) to get a faxed schedule.

HWL Launches Campaign to Stop Judicial Selection Inequality

The millenium approaches. Yet, even as we would anticipate progress in our struggle toward true gender equality in our profession, we are faced with continual setbacks. The latest setback is in the trend of recent appointments to the State bench, and to the Judicial Selection Commission. **Women lawyers are simply not being appointed to the Commission, or to State court judgeships.** Since judges are appointed for ten-year and six-year terms with administrative reappointments for similar terms, the recent trend against women appointees will have ramifications not only for us, but for future generations in Hawai'i.

No Women Appointed by Governor to State Court Bench Since 1995

In 1986, only 16% of Hawai'i judges were women. During the late 80's and early 90's, women made significant strides in the judiciary, so that by the early 90's the percentage more than doubled, to over 30%. This was due largely to the fact that HWL and other women's groups spent years lobbying intensively for the appointment of qualified women to judgeships. This concerted effort resulted in a dramatic increase of the number of women appointed to the bench by governor John Waihee and Chief Justices Lum and Moon.

Even that was not enough. When over half of Hawai'i's population is female, and half of the Bar admittees each year are female, the "strides" of the last 10 years have been mere baby steps.

Yet, even those baby steps are not being taken by the present administration. Under Governor Cayetano, we have been put back to 10% of all appointments. Of the 10 judicial appointments Governor Cayetano has made during his years in office, only one has gone to a women (Sabrina McKenna). With respect to the State District Court bench, Chief Justice Moon has appointed 20 District Court judges; only 7 (approximately the one-third) have been women.

In fact, all the Governor's appointments since 1995 have been men, including the recent appointments of John Lim to the Intermediate Appellate Court, and Gary Chang & Joseph Cardoza to the Circuit Court. Neither can it be said that the appointments were made in the absence of qualified women. Among others, Judge Frances Q.F. Wong and Prosecutor Alexa Fujise made the "short list" of ICA nominees from the Judicial Selection Commission. But, as have all other female applicants for appellate and circuit court judgeships in the past 5 years (with the sole exception of Sabrina McKenna), they were passed over in favor of men.

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PRO(fil'e)

Cheryl Okuma-Sepe

HWL Program Committee Co-Chair Cheryl Okuma-Sepe is the new First Deputy Corporation Council for the City and County of Honolulu. Born in Honolulu as Cheryl Katsuyo Okuma, her father's military career in the Air Force caused the family to move often and Cheryl had lived in Japan, Colorado, Virginia and Maryland before returning to Hawai'i for high school. After attending University of Hawai'i at Manoa, she went on to California Western School of Law where she graduated cum laude. We caught her early one morning a couple of weeks ago and asked her about her life these days.

HLW: How long have you been with the City and County of Honolulu?

Okuma-Sepe: "I've been working for the Department of Corporation Counsel since 1989, advising and defending various City Departments."

HLW: Whatever happened to the Wastewater Management Department? It seems to have disappeared.

Okuma-Sepe: "It got reorganized. In 1994, I was appointed by Mayor Harris as Deputy Director of the Department of Wastewater Management. I was reappointed in 1997.

"But it's now named the Department of Environmental Services, and includes refuse, recycling and H-Power (the waste to energy facility) in addition to wastewater operations."

HLW: Was it a difficult position?

Okuma-Sepe: "I think complicated better describes it. Environmental services is a highly regulated industry. By the time the reorganization was in place, we were overseeing the management and infrastructure of facilities with staffing of over 1200 employees. It's very intense."



HLW: Enquiring minds want to know about your idyllic two years in Germany.

Okuma-Sepe: "It didn't start out as idyllic. It was pretty scary. There had been a lot of terrorist activity in Frankfurt, so when we landed all I could see was security people carrying their Uzis. Then they took us to our temporary headquarters, which was nearly three hours away, driving through snow. Lots of snow. It had been a really long time since I'd seen snow. I had recently married Don, who was still on active duty with the U.S. Army, and I thought to myself, 'I left Hawai'i for this?'"

HLW: But you did some interesting stuff while you were there.

Okuma-Sepe: "I worked in a civilian position as a management systems analyst for the U.S. Army and as adjunct professor for Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, teaching graduate and undergraduate aviation law courses. And we got to travel in Europe a lot, which I loved."

HLW: What do you do for fun these days?

Okuma-Sepe: "I still like to travel whenever I can. I do 'easy' runs. I have recently taken up golf. And of course there's always HWL work."

Last Call for HWL Board Nominations

April 30th is Closing Date

This is the last call for nominations for the 1999-2000 term. Any attorney whose HWL membership is in good standing is eligible to run.

Duties of the Board include attendance at a monthly board meeting. Board members also head up HWL committees and participate in various HWL-related projects and activities.

If you are interested in running for an HWL office or Board position, or in nominating another attorney for that purpose, please submit your nomination by fax to 545-8636 or mail it to HWL Organization Headquarters, 76 North King Street, Suite 206, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817.

After review and consultation with all persons nominated to determine willingness to serve, the Board will draw up a ballot to be mailed to all HWL members with the May Newsletter.

"Dodging the E&O Bullet" Workshop

On Friday, April 16th, from 3:30 to 5:00p.m., the HSBA will present "Dodging the E&O Bullet," another in their series of free Practice Management Workshops.

Speakers include HWL member Brad Coates, Esq. of Coates & Frey; William Meheula, Esq. of Winer & Meheula; and Rus Waters, ANLIR, Chairman of Health Agencies of the West.

The presentation will cover obtaining cost effective malpractice insurance, preventative risk management and avoidance, and the nuts and bolts of claims and case management. Space is limited, so call 537-1868 to reserve your seat.

Chop Sui Generis

On April 5th, **Hilary Benson Gangnes** moved her law practice to the firm of Crabtree & Hoshibata, Suite 2300 in the Pauahi Tower at 1001 Bishop Street in downtown Honolulu. Her phone number is 524-5644. Fax is 599-1881. You can e-mail Hilary at hgangnes@consumerlaw.com.

You can now find **Susan M. Ichinose** in her new office located on the ground floor of the Dillingham Transportation Building at 701 Bishop Street. Her phone number is 585-0333. Her fax number is 545-4015.

Congratulations to the many HWL members who were named in the April issue of Honolulu Magazine as "The Best Lawyers in Hawai'i 1999."

HWL members include **Patricia Y. Lee, Lea Oksoon Hong, Gail M. Tamashiro, Paul D. Alston, Sherry P. Broder, Rosemary Fazio, Kenneth S. Robbins, Ronald I. Heller, Susan M. Ichinose, and D.F. Damon, Jr.**

Frank Damon was also honored recently with the C. Frederick Schutte Award for his outstanding service to the Bar.

A belated congratulations to HWL members **Corianne Lau, Carol Muranaka & Melissa Teves Pavlicek**, on their 1999 election to the Board of the Hawaii State Bar Association. They join HWL members **Linnel T. Nishioka, Iwalani White & Cynthia Winegar**, who are continuing HSBA Directors. Additionally, HWL member **Cindy K. Ching** has taken the Presidency of the HSBA Young Lawyers Division. Ho'omaika'iii!

Hawai'i Women Lawyers Part of "Equal Pay Day"

1964 Federal Equal Pay Act Slow to Materialize

On April 8th, HWL President Rosemary McShane stood at the State Capitol, shoulder to shoulder with representatives of women's organizations from across the state to recognize "Equal Pay Day."

April 8th symbolizes the point in 1999 when women's wages catch up to men's wages earned in 1998. Nationally women's pay lags behind men's pay by 26 cents to the dollar, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. **Because women generally only make 74% of what men earn, they must work three months and eight days longer to make the same amount men make in a regular calendar year!** Thirty five years after the Equal Pay Act was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy, the wage gap has closed by only 15 cents, which is a rate of less than half-a-penny a year. The following groups were represented:

Office of the Lt. Governor
Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women
Hawai'i Women's Caucus
AFL-CIO
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
League of Women Voters
Business and Professional Women
AARP/Coalition for Affordable Long Term Care
Women's Financial Resource Center
University of Hawai'i Women's Center
Hawai'i Women Lawyers
Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women
Hawai'i Women's Coalition

The group also attended the House and Senate Floor Presentations acknowledging the work of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women, as well as recognizing the Hawai'i Women's Coalition for their efforts this year to pass legislation impacting women and girls in Hawai'i.

Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund Staff Attorney Position Available

The San Francisco Regional Office of Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund (formerly the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund) is seeking an experienced (4 to 6 years of civil litigation) and committed attorney to provide environmental litigation and counseling services to public interest groups and individuals throughout the western United States.

The salary for this position is in the mid-\$40,000 range, with excellent benefits. For more information about the requirements for this job, just call

Kay at the HWL office at 545-8055 and she will fax you complete details. Please do *not* phone the Earthjustice San Francisco office. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Send a cover letter, resume, law school transcript, legal writing sample, and professional references to:

Sandy Andrews, Office Manager
Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund
San Francisco Regional Office
180 Montgomery Street, #1725
San Francisco, CA 94104-4209

Judicial Inequity Must Stop Says Hawai'i Women Lawyers

(continued from front page)

No Women Lawyers on Judicial Selection Commission

There has never been a woman lawyer on the Judicial Selection Commission. There has not been a strong advocate for women lawyers on the Commission since Bank of Hawai'i's Dolly Ching sat on the commission in the late '80 and early 90's (for which she earned a Distinguished Service Award from HWL in 1998). There should be no doubt that where the Commission goes, so goes the status of women on the bench.

We need a woman lawyer on the Commission. Yet as of today, it appears that of the 9 members of the Commission, only one is a woman. She is not a lawyer. On April 1, 1999, the terms of three members (one each appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the President of the Senate) expired. The seat of the member appointed by the governor has been filled by a male attorney. Rumor in the community has it that the President and the Speaker have also selected men for their appointments. This puts women judicial applicants at a severe disadvantage, since lay Commissioners are not usually familiar with candidates and rely on information from members who are lawyers.

Hawai'i Women Lawyers Will Lead Campaign

HWL's Board of Directors has again decided to take the lead in correcting the inequity in this system. HWL called or wrote the Governor, the Chief Justice, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House with respect to the Judicial Selection Commission vacancies and the recent Court appointments. Unfortunately, none of them have acknowledged our concerns. HWL's campaign will not stop there, however; it has only just begun.

HWL seeks to enlist the support of its members as well as from the community at large. Please let us know your thoughts. This is a long-term campaign, and we want your input and participation. Mahalo.

HAWAII WOMEN LAWYERS
P.O. Box 2072
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96805

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