

CONTINUE THE FAWL/NAWL CONNECTION

By Wendy S. Loquasto, FAWL Historian & Public Relations Officer

This joint meeting renews FAWL's decades-long association with NAWL, its "mother" association. NAWL was founded in 1899, when eighteen women lawyers gathered in New York City to form "The Women Lawyers' Club." It is a voluntary legal professional organization devoted to the interests of women lawyers, and it was established long before most local and national bar associations admitted women. The club steadily grew and by 1923 its nationwide membership was reflected in its new name, the National Association of Women Lawyers. Over the years, NAWL has served as an educational forum and an active voice for the concerns of women in the legal profession and women worldwide.



Although small in number and geographically diverse, women lawyers were connected with their "Sisters in the Law" by the *Women Lawyers Journal*, first published in 1911, which included articles during the early decades on such recurring topics as the legal status of women, laws of marriage and divorce, property rights of married women, and proposed legislation affecting women.

NAWL was also active on the legislative front. It actively supported women's suffrage and fought to obtain the right for women to serve on juries. NAWL sought to end child labor and to enact a minimum wage. Legislative issues pertaining to working women were of special relevance to NAWL members, and they opposed "protective" laws that limited women's working hours and effectively barred entire industries to women workers. In 1935, NAWL was the first national organization to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment. NAWL's steadfast commitment over several decades ultimately saw success with the passage of the Equal Pay Bill and Uniform ["No Fault"] Divorce Bill.

Today, NAWL continues to advance the interests of women in and under the law and works towards the social, political, and professional empowerment of women. Its members strive to end discrimination and violence against women and to prevent the erosion of hard-fought gains made by women. To learn more about NAWL's rich history and activities over the past 100+ years, browse its website at <http://www.abanet.org/nawl/home.html>.



FAWL's connection to NAWL dates back to Florida's first woman lawyer, Louise Rebecca Pinnell (admitted 1898), who represented Florida's women lawyers when she served as state vice president of NAWL during 1938-39. Many of FAWL's founding members and early presidents were also active in NAWL. For instance, FAWL's first president, Anna Brenner

Meyers (1951-52), served as Treasurer of NAWL in 1945, and it was her experience with NAWL that gave rise to the birth to FAWL in 1951. Emma Roesing, who was also active in founding FAWL, was an early member of NAWL as a state delegate from Florida in 1939-42 and as southeastern regional director for several terms. FAWL's third president, Esther A. Poppell (1953-54), was serving as Florida's representative in NAWL's Council of Delegates in 1951 when she helped to found FAWL. Past President Rebecca Bowles Marks Hawkins (1954-55) became active in NAWL's Council of Delegates during the mid-1950s and went on to become NAWL President in 1960-61. Past President Mattie Belle Davis (1957-58) enjoyed a long

association with NAWL, first serving as an assembly delegate in 1954-55, later becoming NAWL President in 1965-66, and then continuing her service as NAWL's delegate to the ABA House of Delegates for eight years between 1967 and 1981. FAWL's association with NAWL has continued throughout its 50+ year history and most, if not all, of FAWL's presidents have served in some capacity on the NAWL board, frequently as Florida's delegate. Two additional FAWL members have led NAWL: Past President Adele T. Weaver (1967-68) served as NAWL President in 1970-71 and, more recently, FAWL member Gail Sasnett-Stauffer (Clara Gehan/Gainesville Chapter) was NAWL President in 2000-01. NAWL's highest honor, the Arabella Babb Mansfield Award, was first bestowed in 1997 on a FAWL member: Martha W. Barnett (Tallahassee Chapter).

The meeting being held this January is one in a long line of joint meetings between FAWL and NAWL. Emma Roesing co-chaired the NAWL annual meeting held in Miami in 1959. She also co-chaired NAWL's annual meeting in Miami Beach in August 1965, when FAWL sponsored a boat ride for all attendees and many FAWL members participated in the business and social meetings. The NAWL annual dinner featured Lorna Lockwood, Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, who spoke on "An Independent Judiciary," and Judge Davis was installed as NAWL President during that dinner. In 1982, NAWL, FAWL, and FAWL's Miami-Dade County Chapter sponsored a seminar on "Networking." In May 1989, the Southeast Regional Conference of NAWL was held in St. Petersburg Beach, and FAWL, along with the Pinellas and Hillsborough County Chapters, co-sponsored the conference, which had a theme of "Women, Children and the Law." NAWL President Jeanne Schubert Barnum installed the 1991-92 FAWL Board of Directors, when the baton was passed from Ava Doppelt to Leslie Reicin Stein and FAWL celebrated its 40th anniversary. Most recently, in February 1995, FAWL partnered with NAWL and the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations in hosting the Third Annual Conference on Women and the Law during the ABA's midyear meeting in Miami. The program opened with "Women in Power," which addressed how to increase the number of women elected and appointed to offices at all levels, and included segments on children as the silent victims of domestic violence and rainmaking.



This year's program entitled "Taking Charge of Your Career: Best Practices for Women Lawyers," promises to be a great CLE and luncheon filled with information to help your career - an opportunity to reconnect with NAWL, the Association of Corporate Counsel and prominent women lawyers from around the nation!