

FAWL CHRONICLES

FAWL Members Don't Have to Look Far for a Top-shelf Mentor!



by
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Historian

FAWL President **Deborah Magid** has made it one of her goals to develop a wise women's network in FAWL, which she plans to accomplish through encouraging experienced women lawyers to be mentors for young women and through educating women to look at the experienced women as an opportunity for mutual career growth.

FAWL has plenty of experienced members who have risen to high office and continue to mentor others. Consider, for example, the recipients of FAWL's Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award. The first recipient was former Florida Bar President, **Edith G. Osman**, who received the award in June 1997. Edith, who is a shareholder in the Miami office of Carlton Fields, is a born leader, having become President of the Miami-Dade FAWL Chapter in 1987, only four years after she graduated from the University of Miami School of Law, and then becoming FAWL President in 1989 and Florida Bar President in 1999. To know Edith is to realize that she is quick to offer opportunities for career growth to other women. I

speaking from experience. I was taken into her sphere when we worked together on the First 150 Women Lawyers Project, and through her assistance and support, we were able to publish *Celebrating Florida's First 150 Women Lawyers*, which was released at a gala banquet celebration attended by over 900 lawyers from around the state. I would be remiss if I did not mention that Edith also has a knack for showing her appreciation for hard work. She rewarded me with the President's Award of Merit at The Florida Bar annual meeting in June 2000.

Judge **Winifred J. Sharp**, of the Fifth District Court of Appeal, became the second recipient of FAWL's Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award in June 1998. Judge Sharp knows the strides women lawyers have made over the last forty years, because she has lived them. She graduated from Stanford Law School in 1961, worked in private practice for many years, and then became one of Florida's first three female appellate judges when she was appointed to the Fifth DCA in 1979. Judge Sharp was President of FAWL in 1971-72, and you can still find her attending FAWL meetings over thirty years later! She is quick to share her history and experience, as evidenced by the fact that I just received a letter from her in which she shared some personal history, as well as an item about other early women judges. Through her stead-

FAWL Awards Mayor Lois Frankel the 2004 Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award

Mayor **Lois J. Frankel** joined the exclusive list of recipients of FAWL's Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award in June. The award was presented by FAWL President **Dinita James** at the June 10, 2004, meeting of the Palm Beach County FAWL Chapter. The presentation was videotaped, because Lois would be attending the U.S. Conference of Mayors being held in Boston when FAWL would have ordinarily been presenting the award at its annual luncheon on June 25. To the complete surprise and delight of everyone, Lois altered her plans just so she could be present at the luncheon in Boca.

The purpose of the Rosemary Barkett Award is to recognize FAWL members from all walks of life who have been particularly successful in overcoming stereotypes and making their marks as women attorneys. Lois epitomizes the award.

Lois was born in New York. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Boston University and earned a law degree from Georgetown University Law Center in 1973. She moved to West Palm Beach in 1974, where she began her law practice

as an assistant public defender. Four years later, Lois began practicing in the male-dominated field of personal injury law with Searcy, Denney,

Scarola, Barnhart and Shipley (1978-1994), and later with Ricci Leopold P.A. (1994-2003).

Upon moving to West Palm Beach, Lois immediately immersed herself in the fabric of the local community.

She was a founder of West Palm Beach's first domestic assault shelter now known as Harmony House, and she has served as an active member



fast presence, Judge Sharp continues to encourage FAWL to be a voice for women lawyers.

The third Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to **Ellen C. Freidin** in June 1999. Ellen is an unparalleled leader who has brought concrete improvements to all Florida women. From her position on Florida's Constitution Revision Commission in 1997-98, she became the prime sponsor of the successful effort to add women's rights to the Florida Constitution. FAWL worked hand-in-hand with Ellen, providing the legal research and speakers to ensure passage of the Basic Rights Amendment.

Prior to her work on the Commission, Ellen chaired The Florida Bar Special Committee for Gender Equality in the Profession from its inception in 1991 through 1995, and through her efforts the Rules of Professional Conduct were amended to prohibit discriminatory conduct, ethics credit was made available for programs that address avoiding biased behavior, and diversity became a consideration in Bar committee and leadership programs. Ellen, a 1978 graduate of the University of Miami School of Law who works in the Miami office of Akerman Senterfitt, is a long-time member of FAWL, and you can always depend on seeing her at the FAWL lunches. You can also depend on Ellen to speak up and encourage FAWL to combat gender bias in the profession. In fact, FAWL's JNC Selection Committee, which monitors JNC interviews, is a project recommended by Ellen on the eve of Justice Pariente's appointment to the Florida Supreme Court. I know that because I was there at the FAWL Board Meeting when she and Judge Sharp alerted FAWL to the improper ques-

tioning that had been occurring at JNC interviews.

Speaking of Justice **Barbara J. Pariente**, she was the 2000 recipient of the FAWL Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award. Ask anyone in the Palm Beach County Chapter about Justice Pariente and you will discover that she was a founding member of that chapter and that she keeps coming back year after year to support and encourage its members. Like Judge Sharp, Justice Pariente has experienced the strides women lawyers have made. She graduated from George Washington University Law School in 1973 as one of 20 women in a class of 400 and she chose to enter a field dominated by male lawyers civil trial practice. In 1975, she became the first woman associate and in 1977 she became the first woman partner at the prestigious Cone, Wagner and Nugent law firm in West Palm Beach. She formed her own law firm in 1983, but then was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeal in 1993 and to the Florida Supreme Court in 1997. As Chief Justice, she is a woman who has reached the pinnacle of our profession in Florida, yet she remains accessible and is generous with her time and advice to up-and-coming women lawyers. I know because Justice Pariente always inquires about how my new law practice is going and congratulates me on the move. She believes that the camaraderie and mentorship that FAWL provides is necessary to discuss the unique issues that face women lawyers. Her brave act, during her recovery from chemotherapy, of appearing on the bench without her wig speaks volumes for the support she willingly extends to other women, not only in the legal profession, but in all profes-

► **CHRONICLES**, Continued on Page 6

of the Palm Beach County American Cancer Society and the Actors Workshop and Repertory Company. She has continued her community involvement over the years, which includes mentoring 15-year-old Camelia through the Take Stock in Children Program for the last six years.

In 1986, Lois was elected to the Florida House of Representatives. She represented District 85 in the House for 14 years (1986-92 and 1994-2002), rising to the position of Minority Leader, the first Democratic woman so designated in Florida's history. As a legislator, Lois earned a reputation for being an energetic champion of Florida's children, seniors, and working families. She led efforts to reduce family violence and tackle the tobacco industry's targeting of minors, and, after heading an Alzheimer's task force, Lois worked with community leaders and spear-headed

legislation creating a memory disorder clinic at St. Mary's Hospital.

Lois left the House as the result of term limits in 2002 and she made an unsuccessful run for governor in a crowded field of Democrats seeking to replace Governor Jeb Bush. Florida's loss was West Palm Beach's gain in 2003, when Lois was elected mayor of the largest and busiest city in Palm Beach County.

Those in FAWL have also benefited from Lois's involvement and advocacy. As a young lawyer in Palm Beach County in the mid-1970s, there were few female mentors for Lois. She and others, including Rosemary Barkett and Barbara Pariente, began meeting informally and then officially organized the Palm Beach County Association of Women Lawyers in 1982, of which she later served as president in 1985-86.

Lois has done all this and had a

family as well. Her son Benjamin, of whom she is very proud, is currently serving as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marines.

Chief Justice **Barbara J. Pariente**, recipient of the 2000 Rosemary Barkett Award, had this to say about Lois receiving the award:

"I have known Lois since our college days over 36 years ago. Our paths crossed often during our years of practice in West Palm Beach and as mothers to sons who are less than six months apart. Lois has always been passionate in her beliefs and in her dedication to public service. She was an outstanding advocate as a trial lawyer and throughout her career has used her intelligence, passion and determination to make a difference

► **FRANKEL**, Continued on Page 7

sions and walks of life.

Representative **Arthenia L. Joyner** received the FAWL Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award during FAWL's 50th anniversary celebration in June 2001. Arthenia personifies the experience of female African Americans in The Florida Bar. She was one of Florida's first five African-American women lawyers, having graduated from FAMU School of Law in 1968. She became the first black woman lawyer in Hillsborough County and has practiced successfully there for over 30 years. She was the first female president of the Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association (1977) and the second woman president of the National Bar Association (1984). If you need to know anything about the history of African-American lawyers in Florida, ask Arthenia. She was an activist before she was an advocate, having fought vociferously for women and African-Americans to be fairly allowed access and opportunity during the civil rights movement. This is a fight she continues today in her private and public life as Florida House Representative from District 59. I recall standing on the steps of the Capitol during the Equal Rights Amendment rally on April 28, 2003, when Arthenia gave an impassioned speech about the continuing need for the federal ERA.

Former American Bar Association President **Martha W. Barnett** received the Rosemary Barkett Award in June 2002, just as she was winding down her year as ABA President. Like the recipients who came before her, Martha is a trailblazer in Florida's legal profession. She graduated from the University of Florida College of Law in 1973 and was the first woman employed by the Holland & Knight law firm. Martha has used her voice to aid women in many ways, including her support of the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession, which published *The Unfinished Agenda: Women and the Legal Profession* while she was ABA President. She also focused the national spotlight on

the problem of increased violence by young girls during her ABA presidency. Although Martha's work with the ABA has caused her to travel far and wide, to Beijing, China, when she attended the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, those in Tallahassee find her to be an accessible mentor. She is part of Holland & Knight's Women's Initiative and believes women's groups, like FAWL, are necessary to mentor and provide outreach to other women. As for me, she's the only person I have interviewed for newsletter articles who has insisted on paying for my lunch not once, but twice! Therein lies a tip for getting good press.

The Florida Bar's current president, **Kelly Overstreet Johnson**, was presented with the FAWL Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award in June 2003, just minutes after she was sworn in as President-Elect. Kelly's entrance into the legal profession does not date back as far as the prior recipients, but she shares with them the same great leadership attributes, as evidenced by how quickly she has climbed the ladder of success. In only two years after graduating from FSU College of Law in 1982, she was elected President of Tallahassee Women Lawyers in 1984, and she went on to serve on the Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors (1986-90), as Treasurer of FAWL (1988-89), and she became the first woman president of the Tallahassee Bar Association in 1990. Kelly, who is a partner in the Tallahassee office of Broad & Cassel, also served two terms on the Board of Governors before becoming the third woman Bar President. Although Kelly's role as Bar President requires her to travel, you will always find her at Tallahassee Women Lawyers and Tallahassee Bar Association meetings. While on the Board of Governors, she was constantly soliciting women to

apply for committees and other Bar positions, and, as President, Kelly has made increasing diversity in the Bar leadership one of her primary goals. So, if you want to work your way into Bar leadership, give Kelly a call. I am confident she will help you, as she did me when she secured my appointment this year to the Florida Bar Journal and News Editorial Board.

The Honorable **Lois Frankel**, Mayor of West Palm Beach, was the 2004 recipient of the Rosemary Barkett Award. Lois graduated from Georgetown University Law Center and moved to West Palm Beach in 1974, where she practiced law and associated with the other women lawyers in the community, including Barbara Pariente and Rosemary Barkett. Lois served 14 years in the House of Representatives, eventually becoming



Mayor Lois Frankel and Supreme Court Justice Peggy Quince at the 2004 Awards Luncheon in Boca Raton

Minority Leader, the first Democratic woman so designated in Florida's history. While in the legislature, Lois earned a reputation as an energetic champion of Florida's children, seniors and working families. Like Justice Pariente, Lois is a founding member of the Palm Beach County FAWL Chapter and she continues to show up at chapter events these many years later. She has also been a stalwart supporter of FAWL, ever-willing to lend her hand to aid the organization. I recall that when Justice **Rosalie Abella's** delayed flight from Canada

caused her to be late for the keynote address at the FAWL luncheon in June 2001, Lois volunteered to fill the void by speaking of current legislative issues and encouraging FAWL members to get involved. To know Lois is to realize that her voice is never silent and that she will do whatever she can to help you.

As you can see, I have been fortunate to be mentored by all of FAWL's Rosemary Barkett Award winners. I've even been mentored by Judge Rosemary Barkett, who has assisted in presenting almost every award. How have I been so lucky, you may ask. The answer is simple. I show up for FAWL events and I make it a practice to meet the experienced women lawyers who show up too. You can do the same, and I encourage you to do by marking your calendar to attend FAWL's midyear meeting in Miami in January. The exact date is not yet confirmed, but it will likely be on January 20 or 21, 2005. ■

WOMEN PROGRESS, BUT FEW QUEENS OF TORTS

Women have made great strides in the legal profession. Nearly half of last year's law school students were women, and nearly a third of their teachers were too, according to statistics compiled by the American Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession. But there is one area in which this rising tide is still at low ebb: Women have been slow to enter the plaintiffs' bar. Women make up nearly 30% of the lawyers in the United States, but only 13% of the membership of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA), a national bar group for plaintiffs' lawyers. In fact, a greater percentage of women (15%) have risen to the rarified rank of general counsel at Fortune 500 companies than have joined ATLA. In interviews, prominent plaintiffs' lawyers, men and women, offered several explanations. They ranged from the obvious — the competing pull of work and family — to the more subtle, such as the reluctance of many women to engage in self-promotion. And while some asserted there are no longer gender-based obstacles, most agreed that women still face challenges that men do not.



David Hechler, *The National Law Journal*, 08/09/2004
For complete story, search <http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/index.jsp>

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In conjunction with The Florida Bar's Midyear Meeting at the Miami Hyatt Regency

► **FRANKEL**, From Page 6

in the lives of others — especially those less fortunate. As student body vice president at Boston University in the 60's, as President of Palm Beach County FAWL in the 70's, as state legislator in the 80's and 90's, and now as Mayor of West Palm Beach, she has been a true public servant and a pioneering woman. I can think of no more deserving recipient of the Rosemary Barkett award than my friend Lois Frankel."

Judge **Rosemary Barkett** echoes these sentiments:

"I could not be more pleased to have Lois Frankel be the recipient of the RB award. She has spent her entire life dedicated to public service, from her early days as a public defender, when I first knew her in Palm Beach County. She was an exemplary legislator who worked extremely hard for the people of Florida. (And I must add, it was a real treat to have had her in Tallahassee while I was there as well. I have fond recollections of Lois at many great women in government gatherings!) Lois is a great example of an extremely smart, caring, conscientious person who has indefatigably fought for the rights of all Floridians. We are lucky to have her. I am delighted that

she continues to be recognized and thanked."

At the FAWL luncheon in Boca Raton, Lois explained that she chose to cancel her trip to the mayors conference, because she believed it was more important to honor her roots. In commenting on the importance of FAWL in her life, she said:

"Over the years, FAWL has provided the venue for women attorneys to develop their leadership skills. Both myself and Chief Justice Barbara Pariente lost races for our local bar associations in the early 1980's, during a time when no women ever served on the board of local bar associations."

Past recipients of the award include former Florida Bar President **Edith G. Osman**, Fifth District Court of Appeal Judge **Winifred J. Sharp**, former Constitution Revision Commissioner **Ellen C. Friedin**, Supreme Court Chief Justice **Barbara J. Pariente**, Representative **Arthenia L. Joyner**, former American Bar Association President **Martha W. Barnett**, and current Florida Bar President **Kelly Overstreet Johnson**.

Nomination forms for the 2005 Rosemary Barkett Award are due March 1, 2005, and are available at the FAWL website at www.fawl.org. ■