



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Barbara Bryant

This month's WLAC member spotlight focuses on longtime WLAC member Barbara Bryant, who admits to being a member since WLAC's inception! Barbara teaches law at UC Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall) and works as a full-time neutral mediator at her own firm in downtown Oakland.

Born in Los Angeles, Barbara grew up in Berkeley, CA, attended UC Berkeley, where she obtained her BA in psychology. She then completed graduate studies in Social Work at Cal State Sacramento, followed by a J.D. at Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

Several factors drew her to law—having grown up in a family committed to social justice work, Barbara wanted to make a difference. A true activist, Barbara became involved in the women's and gay rights movements in the 1970s, which further motivated her interest in law. During this time, Barbara became more attuned to the role of lawyers in social justice work. In this sense, her transition to law was natural, as she was interested in using law to help people and create progressive social policy. While in law school, Barbara was editor of Law Review and a member of several gay, lesbian, and feminist student organizations.

After law school, Barbara worked as a federal law clerk in the Northern District of California for Judge Marilyn Hall Patel. She then worked in legal services for some time before shifting to a private plaintiff's side firm handling employment class actions. Litigation was very rewarding, some of Barbara's work led to increased hiring practices in a variety of large corporations for women and racial minorities.

A few years later, Barbara opened own practice and continued litigating. In the mid-1990s, she became very interested in mediation and by 2000 she had ended her litigation practice and transitioned to being a full-time neutral mediator. For Barbara, the role of helping parties reach their own agreements was attractive. Reflecting on this transition—Barbara finds that she less and less enjoyed the antagonism that the litigation process encouraged. Instead, she appreciated more and more the ability to work in a space where

each side could be heard, where cooperation was valued.

In addition to her mediation work, since 1989, Barbara has taught a sexual harassment law course at Boalt Hall School of Law. When asked what she finds enjoyable about teaching, Barbara says, "Everything!" She values the interaction she has with students and her class provides a space where students can share ideas and dialogue in a way that is not available in other classes.



When not practicing or teaching, Barbara also finds time to serve on the Advisory Council for the Phelton Henderson Center for Social Justice at Boalt, the Executive Board of the Alameda County Bar Association, and work with California Women Lawyers.

In her personal pursuits, Barbara has also reached great heights, quite literally! An avid outdoor adventurer, she once climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro—which stands an imposing 19,400 feet! Barbara describes her experience at the top as "awe inspiring" and spiritual.

In July 2008, Barbara enjoyed another momentous event when she married her wife Elizabeth, a senior fundraising officer at UC Berkeley and photographer, after sixteen years together. She and Elizabeth enjoy traveling and a range of outdoors activities—including hiking, skiing, and cycling.

Barbara is full of life and adventure even when she is not climbing mountains or traveling the world... On occasion, you might see Barbara zooming around town on a Harley Davidson motorcycle! In fact, she and Elizabeth both ride in the San Francisco Gay Pride Parade, with the famous "Dykes on Bikes" contingent. ("I drive, she waves!")

Moving forward, Barbara hopes to do more writing on issues of feminism and law. She emphasizes that she loves doing things that "enliven her heart..." If you have the opportunity to meet Barbara at a WLAC event or out in the community, be sure to say hello! She is gregarious, friendly, and has many delightful stories to tell.

*Juana Miranda, Law Clerk,
Family Violence Law Center*

Alameda County & WLAC Members in the News ...

As recently reported in the S.F. Business Times: "Blue Shield Foundation to award \$10M in Q1 grants" by Chris Rauber



The Alameda County Family Justice Center has been selected as the Regional Training Center for Northern California as part of the California Family Justice Center Initiative.

Blue Shield of California Foundation has provided essential funding for the Initiative, which has the goal of developing six "learning laboratories" across the state where multi-agency, co-located service delivery models will be supported and expanded. Three regional training sites have also been created to assist expanding and developing multi-agency service delivery models around the state including the six new sites to be selected through a competitive application process.

The three regional training centers are: Alameda County Family Justice Center; Anaheim Family Justice Center; and the San Diego Family Justice Center. The Initiative includes a learning collaborative model with teams from each selected site, grant funding for each selected site in the second year of the initiative, and technical assistance and strategic planning support for two years for the participating sites.



The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Blue Shield of California Foundation, and the Family Violence Prevention Fund will be represented on the Initiative's Advisory Committee along with representatives from each of the regional training sites.



Alameda County Family Justice Center was selected for its leadership and excellence in responding to victims of domestic violence and other forms of interpersonal violence, as well as the successful, effective and efficient delivery of comprehensive services to victims in a collaborative way. The ACFJC is proud to have been selected for this great task, and for being recognized in this manner.

WLAC "Honor Roll"

Governor Schwarzenegger Announces Appointments



From Sacramento:

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today announced the following appointments.



Nancy O'Malley, 54, of Alameda, has been appointed to the Domestic Violence Advisory Council. She has worked for the Alameda County District Attorney's Office since 1984 and has served as the chief assistant district attorney since 1999. In 1984, O'Malley was an attorney for Linda

Debene, A Professional Law Corporation and, from 1981 to 1983, she was a law clerk. O'Malley is president-elect of California Women Lawyers and serves on the Criminal Law Advisory Committee and on the California District Attorneys' Association Board. This position does not require Senate confirmation and there is no salary. O'Malley is a Democrat.

! IMPORTANT NEWS

Summer Time Means FREE MCLEs!!

Women Lawyers of Alameda County invites you to attend our MCLE Summer Brown Bag Series.

The first MCLE of this informative series will begin in August of 2008 and is offered free to all WLAC members!



Please look for upcoming announcements and if you have any questions please call Toni Mims, WLAC Board Member, at 510-465-3210.

WLAC Board of Directors Opportunities- New Applicants Encouraged!

Interested in serving on the 2010 WLAC Board of Directors? Contact Margaret Gannon at magannon1@earthlink.net no later than August 15, 2009.



NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Mala Sahai

I met new WLAC member Mala Sahai at the April WLAC Membership meeting held at the home of Judge Yvonne Gonzalez-Rogers. It was her first membership meeting, and by the end of the evening, Mala had joined a subcommittee and promised to assist any board member with any of their upcoming projects. After meeting her, I thought to myself – this one is special!

But it wasn't until I interviewed Mala for the New Member Spotlight that I learned just how incredibly intelligent and talented Mala really is.

Mala was born and raised in Berkeley, California and attended Oxford Elementary and two years at Berkeley High. Transferring to Marin Academy in San Rafael, California, for her last two years of high school, Mala graduated from Marin Academy in 1995. After graduating from high school, Mala spent two years at Tufts University. Ironically, Mala's first year in Boston coincided with the worst winter in Boston in the last 100 years. She hung on for one more year before deciding to finish her undergraduate degree at the University of California at Davis where the weather is much better, and cow tipping is unparalleled. The decision clearly agreed with her as the local girl came back to the Bay Area to double major in both chemistry and philosophy. In addition to her grueling academic schedule, Mala also worked part-time as the head team coach of a competitive gymnastics team training gymnasts in complex skills which require physical strength, flexibility, agility, coordination, balance and grace.

Once Mala graduated, she decided to spend a year coaching gymnastics and traveling with her young team. At the end of that year, she accepted a Merit Scholarship from Indiana University, where she also coached and judged gymnastics for two years. During her second year of law school, when most law students were struggling just to survive their evidence classes, Mala took and passed the patent bar – a one day exam - and she spent her second summer working as a patent agent with O'Melveny & Meyers in San Francisco.

During her third year of law school, Mala was elected President of the Intellectual Property Association, and she was also appointed by the administration to be a student representative on the Faculty Appointments Committee and worked to recruit minority faculty members. After graduating from law school, Mala began working in the O'Melveny

& Myers patent prosecution group. Unfortunately, the firm's patent prosecution work load lessened significantly, and so Mala took advantage of the unexpected time off to volunteer for the Red Cross Oakland Call Center during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Mala assisted hundreds of victims of Hurricane Katrina who needed to locate housing, food and services while she worked at the National Call Center. Mala's goal with each call was to provide each caller with the information they would need during their time of crisis to assist themselves and their families.

After leaving the Red Cross, Mala joined the small intellectual property firm of Janah & Associates, for a year where she prosecuted patent applications involving semiconductor wafer fabrication and pharmaceuticals. For the last two years, Mala has been an associate attorney at the law firm of Beeson Skinner Beverly LLP in Oakland. Mala's practice focuses on patent and trademark prosecution, copyright registration and licensing. The majority of her case load is patent prosecution, preparing and prosecuting applications. When not in the office, she spends time with her husband, real estate attorney, Brad Scheick, travelling, skiing, reading, enjoying the outdoors and exploring the Bay Area's many culinary finds.

Mala has an unbridled enthusiasm and love for the law, and her enthusiasm for both the law and life is contagious. She is well on her way to an incredible career in the law, and we are honored to welcome her as a new WLAC member!

Monica Wiley

Tell Us Your News



Have an accomplishment, recent success, good news to share, or know of any for a fellow WLAC member? Let the WLAC Newsletter Committee know and we'll include that person in our "Honor Roll!" You can send updates and information to: Tara M. Flanagan, Newsletter Committee, at tara@fvlc.org or Monica Wiley, Newsletter Committee, at mwiley@ccplaw.com.

CALIFORNIA WOMEN LAWYERS 2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

CWL SUPPORTS:

- SB 50** (Corbett) Victims of sexual assault, state payment for forensic exam.
- SB 810** (Leno, et.al.) Single-payer health care coverage for all California residents.
- SR 7** (Leno, et. al.) Resolution in opposition to Proposition 8.
- AB 98** (De La Torre) Insurance coverage for maternity services.
- AB 108** (Hayashi) Individual health care coverage, rescission prohibited after 18 months.
- AB 1000** (MA and Skinner) Sick Leave accrues for all employees who work 7 or more days per year.
- AB 1001** (Skinner & Ma) Familial status protection, employment discrimination prohibited.
- SB 54** (Leno) & AB 119 (Jones) Health care coverage: Prohibits price differential based on gender.
- SB 134** (Lui and Yee) Incarcerated parents, permits contact with children.
- H.R. 22** (Woolsey) Resolution supporting ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- AB 2** (De La Torre) Individual health care coverage, requires completion of underwriting prior to issuing policy.
- AB 56** (Portanrino) Health care coverage for mammographies required.
- AB 67** (Nava) Pharmacy Patient Protection Act of 2008 — eliminates moral exemption.
- AB 244** (Beall) Health care coverage for mental health services required.
- AB 259** (Skinner) Health care coverage for certified nurse-midwives required
- AB 627** (Brownley) Child care: nutritional requirements at licensed day care facilities.
- H.J.RES.10** (Jackson-Lee) Denounces female genital mutilation, domestic violence, "honor" killings, acid burnings, dowry deaths, and other gender-based persecutions.
- H.Res. 40** (Conyers) to establish a commission to examine the impact of slavery & economic discrimination against African Americans
- H.R.739** (Roybal-Allard) Security and Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Act: allows victims to take up to 30 days leave.
- H.R.840** (Slaughter) Establishes programs to prevent and deter sexual assault and domestic violence involving members of the Armed Forces.
- HR 606** (Maloney) & S.230 (Boxer)
- SR 229** (Boxer) Afghan Women Empowerment Act of 2009
- H. Res. 12** (DeLauro)/S 182 (Clinton) Paycheck Fairness Act

CWL OPPOSES:

- HR 227** (Broun R- GA) Sanctity of Human Life Act: Human life and constitutional privileges begin at fertilization
- HR 614** (Pence) Abortion Provider Prohibition Act: Prohibits family planning grants to abortion providers.
- HR 634** (Ros-Lehtinen) Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act: Prohibits taking minors across state lines to circumvent parental notification laws.
- HR 636** (Michelle Bachman, Minn. + 29 co-sponsors) Positive Alternatives Act: Allows use of TANF funds for abortion alternative services.
- HR 643** (Fortenberry) Care for Life Act of 2009: Would create an Office of Pregnancy Support Services within the Dept of HHS.
- HR 708** (Smith, 62 co-sponsors) Amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to restrict aid to foreign organizations that perform/actively promote abortions.
- HR 881**(Hunter) Right to Life Act: Provides equal protection under 14th Amendment to the preborn.
- S 85** (Vitter) Title X Family Planning Act amendment to prohibit family planning grants to entities that perform abortions.
- S 96** (Vitter) Abortion Nondiscrimination Act of 2009: would allow health care providers receiving government funds to refuse to provide abortions or information related to abortions.
- S 98** (Vitter) Pregnant Women Health and Safety Act: Imposes additional hospital admitting privileges requirements upon abortion providers.
- S 346** (Wicker) Life at Conception Act: Provides that equal protection under the Constitution guaranteed from the moment of fertilization.
- AB 556** (Conway) Relating to personal services contracts: Substitutes equal employment opportunity standard for present affirmative action standards.
- SB 57** (Aanestad) California Major Risk Medical Insurance Program: Imposes additional restrictions upon eligibility.
- HR 195** (Stearns R-Fl) Informed Choice Act: Authorizes grants for ultrasound equipment and requires it to be used to show pregnant women images of fetus.
- HR 605 & S 270** (Rep. Davis & Sen. Casey) Pregnant Women Support Act: Democrats for Life bill to reduce abortions.
- HR 649** (Jordan, Ohio, 64 co-sponsors) Ultrasound Informed Consent Act: To ensure that women seeking abortion receive an ultrasound before giving consent.

continued on next page