



Leadership

Equality

# 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Community



## Minnesota Women Lawyers, Inc.

Kendra Brodin, 2017-2018 President  
Shannon Harmon, 2018-2019 President  
Debra Pexa, Executive Director

Founded in 1972, Minnesota Women Lawyers (MWL) is a statewide association of nearly 1,300 attorneys, judges, law students, legal employers and supporters, all dedicated to

# Our Mission:

To advance the success of women lawyers and strive for a just society.

## 2018-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

# MWL's Values

GUIDING OUR DIRECTION & PRIORITIES



## From MWL's Leadership



Kendra Brodin & Shannon Harmon

Fall 2018

On behalf of Minnesota Women Lawyers (MWL), we are pleased to present MWL's FY17-18 Annual Report. As MWL's 17-18 President and 18-19 President, we are excited to share a snapshot of a thriving organization thanks to the strong foundation MWL has built over many years, the dedication of our members, and the tremendous support of the legal community. Although this Annual Report can neither capture the full extent of MWL's accomplishments this past year nor all that we anticipate during the year ahead, we believe it tells the story of a robust and welcoming organization making meaningful and measurable progress as it engages in advancing the success of women attorneys.

The theme for FY17-18 was one of a "Big Tent" as MWL took steps to ensure it was as inclusive and relevant as possible. Our efforts all year worked to embody this concept, including the launch of four new Affinity Groups: Alternative Careers, In-House, Public Sector, and RISE: New Lawyers. Together, all ten of MWL's Affinity Groups work to address the unique interests and needs of our diverse members. Not only do we invite our members to get involved with one of these existing groups, but we also welcome proposals for additional Affinity Groups. Reach out with your innovative ideas, and we'll start something new together!

This past year, MWL also had the opportunity to collaborate across the legal community on a number of issues and initiatives, particularly with other affinity bar associations. These included working with other leaders on the Diversity Report Card, taking a stance against the separation of families at the border, requesting that Minnesota collect and make more attorney demographic information available, and presenting comment and oral testimony on the evolving waiver rules for part-time practice (Rule 7). MWL held a successful program in partnership with the MN Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, and we enjoyed a networking event with Women in Financial Services. Furthermore, MWL was so grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with employers across the legal community. These collaborations undoubtedly make our collective efforts even more impactful as we work to achieve our common goals.

Last spring, MWL was pleased to announce the addition of a third person to its staff. In addition to Executive Director Debra Pexa and Membership & Communications Coordinator Hannah Zuercher, MWL welcomed Katie Gunaratne as MWL's Program and Projects Coordinator. We are excited to see the greater impact MWL will have with three, full-time staff supporting our active and engaged member volunteers.

Another key initiative during FY17-18 was an update to MWL's Strategic Plan which established new goals and strategies through FY19-20. As reflected throughout this Annual Report, MWL's values remain at the center of our work: Leadership, Equality, and Community. As we continue our efforts during FY18-19, MWL will implement the Strategic Plan goals, particularly in the spirit of Kendra's "Big Tent" and Shannon's efforts to further collaborate and deepen relationships across MWL's leadership, members, and allies.

You will see throughout this Annual Report that the ongoing commitment of its members and the legal community are essential to helping MWL further its mission. As we continue our work during FY18-19, we invite you to join us in our efforts. Become active on a Committee or with an Affinity Group. Participate in a Chapter meeting. Support MWL through a Premier Membership, as a 2019 Partner, or as an event sponsor. Engage with MWL on social media and or attend one of our many seminars and programs.

We know there is more work to do as MWL continues to advance the success of women attorneys, but there is also so much to celebrate. In the year ahead, we invite you to join us in doing both.

Kendra Brodin  
2017-2018 MWL President  
612/977-8238  
kbrodin@briggs.com

Shannon Harmon  
2018-2019 MWL President  
612/968-1610  
shannon@shannonharmon.us

# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS, STRENGTH IN MISSION...

As one of the most vibrant women's bar associations in the country, MWL owes its 47-year success to its members, leaders and supporters. Through a determined commitment to its values, MWL continues to offer a myriad of opportunities to network across the Minnesota legal profession, build community and collegiality, gain valuable leadership and professional skills, and make a direct impact on our mission.

The following graphics represent a snapshot of MWL activities and initiatives during FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018.



## MWL Member Opportunities

**RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES**

MWL hosted 20 RECEPTIONS and networking events, allowing members the chance to connect.

**FREE & LOW COST SEMINARS**

MWL provided 24 CLE CREDITS on topics of interest to our members. 35% WERE FREE! The remainder were available at a reduced rate to MWL members.

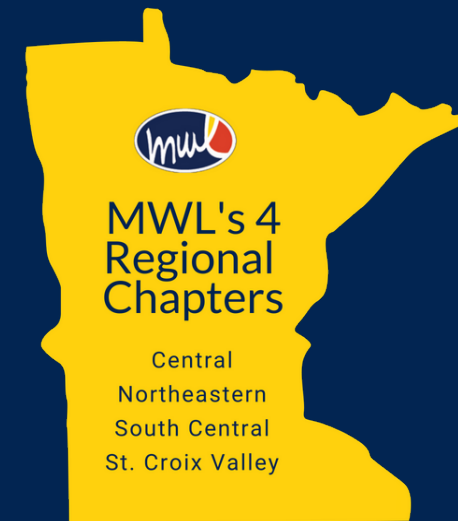
**LAW STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAM**

MWL matched and provided support to 56 PAIRS of law students and attorneys in mentoring relationships.

**MWL NETWORKING CIRCLES**

48 MEMBERS participated in MWL Networking Circles, providing the opportunity to foster meaningful connections on an ongoing basis.

## MWL Member Engagement



**Did You Know?**

**THE MWL FOUNDATION**

supports the charitable activities and mission of MWL, thanks to the generous support of MWL members & the legal community.



MWL AFFINITY GROUPS offer members the opportunity to participate in a group established to highlight a common interest (legal or non-legal), advance a professional goal or focus area, or with the intent of networking and building community. MWL looks forward to adding new Affinity Groups that collectively work to advance MWL's mission.

# MWL Values in Action: Equality

## MWL Makes Strides Towards Equality

MWL leveraged the collective voice of its members in support of its mission, and continued work related to the systemic advancement and success of women attorneys across the profession, including:

- MWL Media Resource Project
- Non-Profit & Corporate Board Leadership Initiative
- Judicial Pipeline Initiative
- MWL's Gender Data Project & Advocating for Further Statewide Data Collection
- The MWL Compendium Research Database
- And More ([www.mwlawyers.org](http://www.mwlawyers.org))

## "#UsToo: Women Lawyers and Sexual Harassment" CLE is Among MWL's FY17-18 Elimination of Bias Seminars



## Equal Opportunity & Leadership



In collaboration with the YWCA Minneapolis, MWL was pleased to host "Positioning Yourself to Serve on a For-Profit Board." Panelists included (Photo L to R): Esperanza Guerrero-Anderson of Guerrero-Anderson Inc.; Mary Brainerd, formerly of Health Partners; Luz Maria Frias of YWCA Minneapolis; and Elizabeth Patton of Fox Rothschild.

## MWL Recognized with 2017 Diversity & Inclusion Award

Last Fall, Minnesota Women Lawyers was honored to be among those recognized as a Minnesota Lawyer Diversity and Inclusion Award recipient. This new award recognizes individuals and organizations in the legal profession that go above and beyond in their efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive legal community.



# MWL Values in Action: Leadership

## 2018 MWL Conference for Women in the Law

Held in April 2018, the MWL Conference provided attendees an opportunity to collaborate across MWL's statewide community, attend a full day of high-value programming on topics of interest to our diverse audience, and take advantage of meaningful networking and business growth opportunities.

(Photo Left): MWL was pleased to welcome keynote speaker Michele Coleman Mayes, Vice President and General Counsel, New York Public Library. Her presentation was entitled "Not Suffering, Not Silent, But Optimistically Gritty."



## MWL Members Get Involved!

Each year, MWL volunteers lead a variety of programs and initiatives. Through their active participation, members meet, work alongside, and network with attorneys who practice across the legal community. Volunteers also have the opportunity to gain professional skills and make a direct impact on MWL's mission.

(Photo Below): MWL's 2017 Committee Fair & Summer Social was a great way to learn about MWL's volunteer opportunities.



## MWL's 23rd Annual Rosalie Wahl Leadership Lecture & Next Day Workshop

Last November, Lauren Stiller Rikleen, a nationally recognized expert on developing a diverse and multi-generational workforce, presented the Wahl Lecture keynote address. The next day, Lauren continued the conversation by leading an interactive workshop, entitled "Pushing the Envelope to Achieve Gender Equality: Leveling the Playing Field."

## MWL Partner Leadership Council: A Legal Community Collaboration

In its second year, MWL is pleased to collaborate with its legal employer partners through the MWL Partner Leadership Council. Gathering several times each year, representatives collaborate in an exchange of ideas and best practices related to advancing the success of women attorneys. Participants also gain essential leadership skills and expand their professional network among legal community leaders. The Partner Leadership Council continues to offer mutually-beneficial connections among its legal employer Partners, and ultimately to advance MWL's mission and strategic goals.



## What's Next?

Later this year, MWL will release an update to its "2015 Gender Data Report." The 2015 Report provided a first-of-its-kind count of the number of women in the Minnesota legal profession. By compiling and updating such data, MWL leads the effort to better understand the demographics of our legal community, measure ongoing progress, and ultimately work towards equity for all women attorneys.

## What's Next?

In the year ahead, Minnesota Women Lawyers is pleased to again host its Rosalie Wahl Leadership Lecture and the 2019 MWL Conference for Women in the Law. Complete details about these signature events, as well as all of our programs, CLE seminars, networking events, and initiatives, are available on the MWL website at [mwlawyers.org](http://mwlawyers.org).

# MWL Values in Action: Community

## MWL Provides Community-Building & Networking Opportunities



Throughout the year, MWL fostered a strong sense of community among its membership. MWL members had meaningful opportunities to interact with leaders and trendsetters from across the legal community at receptions, events and meetings, as well as engage with interests in and outside the practice of law.

MWL members also led and participated in vital community service projects that focused on MWL's key focus areas: pay equity, access to justice, ending violence against women, and girl empowerment.

## Minnesota Women Lawyers Celebrates Our Collective Success

MWL builds community by celebrating the success of women across the legal community. In doing so, MWL provides a forum for members to share their accomplishments, amplify their voices across Minnesota, and inspire the leaders of tomorrow. MWL's recognition efforts included its Annual Awards, With Equal Right's "Members on the Move," "Celebrating Success" on LinkedIn, and the MWL Foundation's Law Student Scholarships. MWL Board members also wrote 100s of cards, personally congratulating women attorneys on their successes.



(Photo Left): Amy Taber, Prime Therapeutics presents the 2018 Service to MWL Award to Veena Iyer, Nilan Johnson Lewis. (Photo Right): Justice Margaret Chutich, MN Supreme Court presents an MWL Foundation Law Student Scholarship to Arianna Chapman, Mitchell Hamline.



## Supporting Our Communities: MWL's Girl Scout Law Day

Thanks to the leadership of the MWL Community Action & Advocacy Committee and many volunteers, this popular event once again provided Girl Scouts in grades 3 - 5 with an empowering perspective on careers in the law through exceptional speakers, activities, and a mock trial involving relevant pop culture icons. During the mock trial, girls role played with the assistance of a local judge, prosecutor, and public defender.



## MWL Chapters Provide Connection Across Minnesota



During her year as President, Kendra Brodin met with members of MWL's 4 chapters to hear about the opportunities and challenges that women attorneys in those areas face. (Photo Above): Kendra meets in Duluth with the Northeastern Chapter.

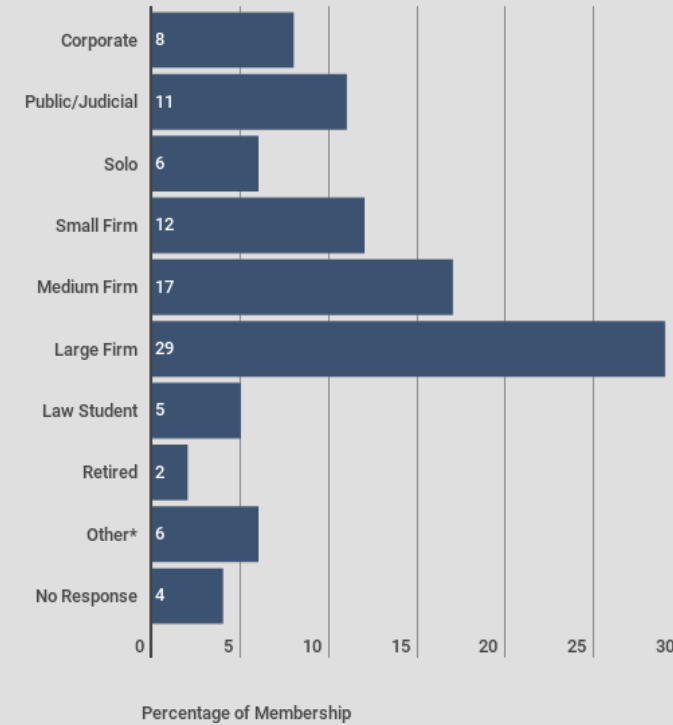
## What's Next?

MWL is pleased to once again host its Networking Circles, where 4-5 members are matched and invited to meet with one another on an ongoing basis. MWL's 10 Affinity Groups and their activities are also in full swing. Each of these initiatives provide tremendous opportunities for MWL members to connect, exchange ideas and resources, and build meaningful community. Details at [mwlawyers.org](http://mwlawyers.org).

# MWL's 1,262 Members...

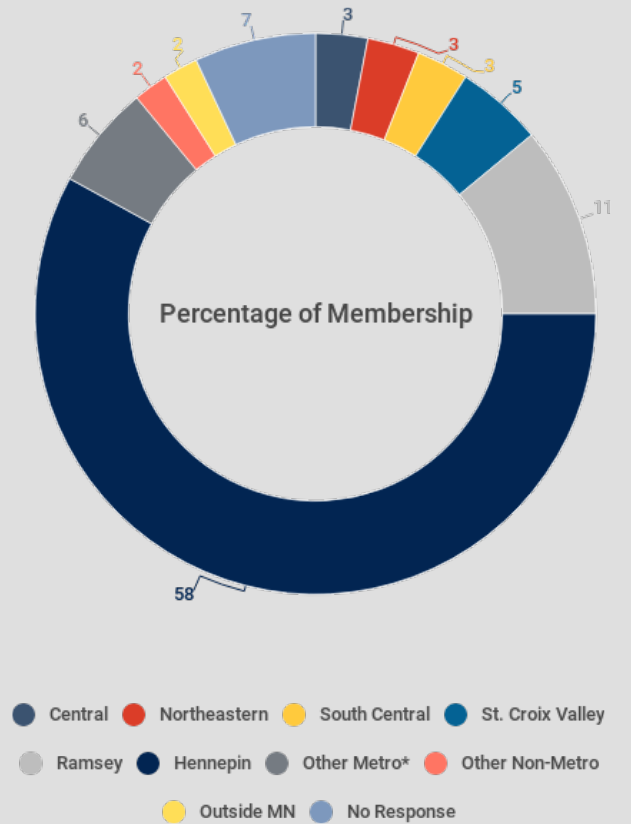
## Practice Area

\*Other includes Education, Non-Profit and Non-Traditional Careers.



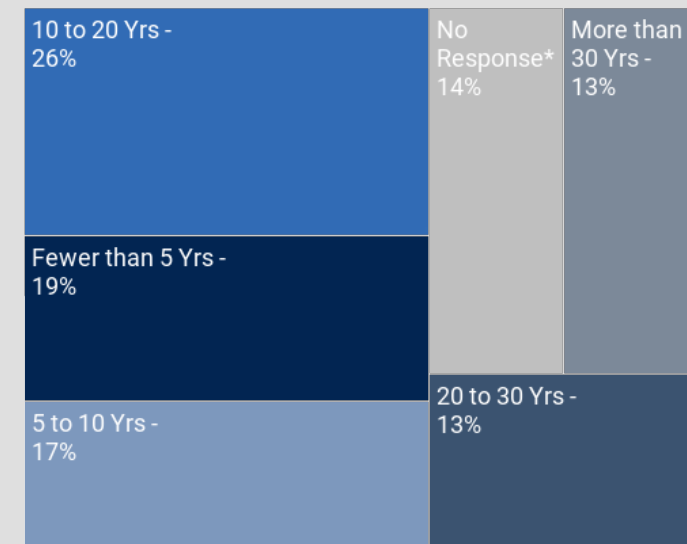
## Geographic Location

\*Other Metro includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota and Scott Counties. Data based on "primary" address provided to MWL, which may be either work or home address.



## Years Admitted to the Bar

\*No Response includes Law Student Members not yet admitted to the bar



## 100% Dedicated To



# Making an Impact Together (Thank You!)

MWL exists to celebrate the many successes of women attorneys, and to address the challenges they still face. Thanks to the collaboration that MWL shares with YOU, our individual members, leaders, and legal community supporters, we are best able to advance the success of women attorneys. Together.

We are so grateful for this continuing partnership.

.....

To join MWL or to find out more about becoming an MWL event sponsor or 2019 Partner, please visit [www.mwlawyers.org](http://www.mwlawyers.org) or contact MWL Executive Director Debra Pexa at 612/338-3205 or [dpexa@mwlawyers.org](mailto:dpexa@mwlawyers.org).



## FY17-18 PREMIER MEMBERS

### DIAMOND

Felicia Boyd  
Susan Gallagher  
Teresa Farris McClain  
Arleen Nand  
Susan C. Rhode  
Hon. Mary Vasaly

### SAPPHIRE

Patricia A. Beithon  
Lisa Brabbit  
Justice Margaret Chutich  
Kathleen M. Lamb  
Judith Langevin  
Bridget Nason  
Jennifer Robbins  
Pamela Rochlin  
Hon. Miriam Rykken  
Amy Taber

### EMERALD

Connie Armstrong  
Landon J. Ascheman  
Hon. Louise Dovre Bjorkman  
Tamara Block  
Kendra Brodin  
Dixie Carroll  
Christine Jan Chalstrom  
Rebecca S Christensen  
Laura Danielson  
Daniel'la Deering  
Kate DeVries Smith

### EMERALD, CONTINUED

Stacy Doepner-Hove  
Hon. Bridgid Dowdal  
Dyan J. Ebert  
Cynthia Eidnes  
Hon. Nicole A. Engisch  
Kathleen Flynn Peterson  
Elizabeth Fors  
Luz Maria Frias  
Susan Gaertner  
Marlene S. Garvis  
Kate Golden  
Emerald A. Gratz  
Hon. Sara Grewing  
Shannon M. Harmon  
Kristin Haugen  
Susan M. Holden  
Anne M. Honsa  
Hon. Natalie E. Hudson  
Nicole Jackson  
Anne T. Johnson  
Sheila J. Kelly  
Katie Lichty  
Karen Linder  
Hon. Kathryn D. Messerich  
Kim Buechel Mesun  
Hon. Helen M. Meyer  
Hon. Susan Rester Miles  
Joani C. Moberg  
Jacqueline A. Mrachek  
Hon. Susan Richard Nelson  
Hon. Theresa Neo

### EMERALD, CONTINUED

Jennifer Nodes  
Dayle Nolan  
Judith L. Oakes  
Lyndsey Olson  
Hon. Ann O'Reilly  
Theresa Pautz  
Hon. Arlene Marie Asencio Perkkio  
Hon. M. Jacqueline Regis  
Camilla Reiersgord  
Julie Ritz-Schlaifer  
Sarah Rohne  
Hon. Miriam Rykken  
Amy K.L. Schmidt  
Breia Schleuss  
Steven A. Schumeister  
Rachel Scobie  
Judith Mlinar Seeberger  
Tina Syring  
Mary Szondy  
Karen L. Tarrant  
Kari Jensen Thomas  
Christine L. Tuft  
Gina M. Uhrbom  
Michele D. Vaillancourt  
Katherine L. Wahlberg  
Elizabeth A. Wefel  
Hon. Wilhelmina M. Wright

## 2017 WAHL LECTURE SPONSORS

Larson King, LLP  
Brown and Carlson P.A.  
Messerli & Kramer  
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual  
Pauly, DeVries Smith & Deffner, L.L.C.  
Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell PLLC

## 2018 MWL CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN IN THE LAW SPONSORS

Medtronic  
RBC Wealth Management-  
The Collins Hansen Group  
Schaefer Halleen, LLC

## 2018 MWL CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN IN THE LAW EXHIBITORS

Castle Rock  
Financial Planning, Inc.  
Depo International  
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual  
Insurance Company  
Paradigm Reporting & Captioning  
Robert Half Legal

## 2018 PARTNERS

### PLATINUM

DLA Piper LLP  
Dorsey & Whitney LLP  
Faegre Baker Daniels LLP  
Gustafson Gluek  
MADEL PA  
Robins Kaplan

### GOLD

Ballard Spahr  
Fredrikson & Byron P.A.  
Stinson Leonard Street

### SILVER

Barnes & Thornburg LLP  
Briggs and Morgan, P.A.  
Fish & Richardson P.C.  
Gray Plant Mooty  
Jones Day  
Larkin Hoffman  
Merchant & Gould P.C.  
Moss & Barnett  
Nilan Johnson Lewis PA  
Stoel Rives LLP  
Thomson Reuters  
UnitedHealth Group  
Zelle LLP

### BRONZE

Arthur, Chapman, Kettering, Smetak & Pikala, P.A.  
Bassford Remele, P.A.  
Benchmark Reporting Agency  
Bowman and Brooke LLP  
Chestnut Cambronne  
Depo International  
Felhaber Larson  
Fox Rothschild LLP  
Greene Espel PLLP  
Halunen Law  
Jackson Lewis P.C.  
LeVander, Gillen & Miller, P.A.  
Maslon LLP  
Meagher & Geer, P.L.L.P.  
Muetting, Raasch & Gebhardt  
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.  
Paradigm Reporting & Captioning  
Patterson Thuyente IP  
Prime Therapeutics  
Quinlivan & Hughes, P.A.  
Robert Half Legal  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP  
U.S. Bank National Association  
Winthrop & Weinstine, P.A.  
Xcel Energy

## THANKS TO FY17-18 LEADERS SERVING ON THE ADVISORY BOARD, AFFINITY GROUPS, BOARD, CHAPTERS, COMMITTEES, PARTNER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, TASK FORCES, THE MWL FOUNDATION BOARD & AS BAR LIAISONS

|                        |                      |                          |                         |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Susan Aase             | Susan Gallagher      | Connie Lahn              | Pam Rochlin             |
| Hon. Pamela Alexander  | Marlene Garvis       | Teresa Lavoie            | Sarah Rohne             |
| Lynn Anderson          | Autumn Gear          | Kelly Lelo               | Maya Salah              |
| Mehrnoosh Andu         | Wanda Gierman        | Katie Lichty             | Amy Salmela             |
| Connie Armstrong       | Michelle Grant       | Cecilie Loidolt          | Hon. Kathleen Sanberg   |
| Laura Arneson          | Emerald Gratz        | Michelle Looby           | Elizabeth Schiltz       |
| Megan Arriola          | Hon. Tamar Gronvall  | Beth Luoma               | Breia Schleuss          |
| Rebecca Baack          | Trudy Halla          | Nicolet Lyon             | Amy Schmidt             |
| Jan Ballman            | Shayne Hamann        | Kate MacKinnon           | Sara Schweps            |
| Laura Bartlow          | Shannon Harmon       | KyLee Manthei            | Rachel Zimmerman Scobie |
| Dana Bartocci          | Jennifer Harper      | JoLynn Markison          | Emily Slagle            |
| Hon. Louise Bjorkman   | Kristin Haugen       | Hon. Karin McCarthy      | Jennifer Thulien Smith  |
| Dionne Blake           | Angela Heart         | Teresa Farris McClain    | Jessie Sogge            |
| Karen Bohaty           | Susan Holden         | Cassie Merrick           | Emily Spallino          |
| Kristina Borgen        | Lisa Holter          | Hon. Susan Rester Miles  | Gloria Stamps-Smith     |
| Amy Boyle              | Molly Hough          | Maria Mitchell           | Kristi Stanislawski     |
| Lisa Montpetit Brabbit | Andrea Hoversten     | Adine Momoh              | Libretta Stennes        |
| Hon. Tanya Bransford   | Vicki Hruby          | Sukanya Momsen           | Holly Stocker           |
| Sonya Braunschweig     | Hon. Natalie Hudson  | Caroline Moos            | Kimberly Stommes        |
| Maria Brekke           | Ellen Hunt           | Jacqueline Mrachek       | Tina Syring             |
| Jocelyn Bremer         | Jennifer Ives        | Arleen Nand              | Mary Szondy             |
| Courtney Brod          | Veena Iyer           | Bridget Nason            | Amy Taber               |
| Kendra Brodin          | Gina Janeiro         | Brooke Nelson            | Kari Jensen Thomas      |
| DeAnne Brooks          | Anne T. Johnson      | Alyssa Nelson            | Shana Tomenes           |
| Angela Browning        | Kate Johnson         | Hon. Cara Lee Neville    | Terry Trogdon           |
| Hon. Susan Burke       | Lori Johnson         | Judith Oakes             | Nicole Truso            |
| Liz Burnett            | Theresa Johnson      | Karen Opp                | Emily Unger             |
| Mackenzie Campbell     | Sara Jones           | Hon. Ann O'Reilly        | Letty Van Ert           |
| Maureen Carlson        | Ann Juergens         | Liz Patton               | Hon. Mary Vasaly        |
| Rebecca Chaffee        | Nikki Keirnes        | Lisa Lodin Peralta       | Julia Velasquez         |
| Susan Chambers         | Angela Keise         | Ella Phillips            | Katrina Viegas          |
| Carol Chomsky          | Kelsey Kelley        | Lauren Pockl             | Chelsea Walcker         |
| Emily Chow             | Katherine Kelly      | Erin Sindberg Porter     | Lynn Walters            |
| Hon. Margaret Chutich  | Brandi Kerber        | Priyanka Premo           | Leigh Abrams Waterman   |
| Katrina Coss           | Chandra Kilgriff     | Sarah Pruett             | Rebecca Weisenberger    |
| Jennifer Crancer       | Barbara Klas         | Ann Rainhart             | Jennifer Wichelman      |
| Kristina Cruz          | Liz Kramer           | Hon. M. Jacqueline Regis | Katherine Barrett Wiik  |
| Hon. Elizabeth Cutter  | Anh Le Kremer        | Brittany Resch           | Stephanie Willing       |
| Annamarie Daley        | Poonam Kumar         | Melissa Dosick Riethof   | Nancy Wiltgen           |
| Jana Aune Deach        | Holly LaBoone-Haller | Alona Rindal             | Hon. Wilhelmina Wright  |
| Autumn DeCosta         | Susan Lach           | Jennifer Robbins         | Kristin Zinsmaster      |



MWL PREMIER MEMBER PROFILE

I am pleased to join so many other women attorneys in strong support of MWL. MWL goals mirror my own goals for myself and my fellow sisters at law. As such, I try to evidence my commitment by being an active member and I join MWL at the highest level I can afford. I am so honored to be a part of this wonderful organization and to contribute at a level to advance the many programs that move and support our needs.

SUSAN GALLAGHER (far right)  
GALLAGHER LAW OFFICE, MWL DIAMOND MEMBER

# Contact

---



Kendra Brodin, 2017-2018 President  
612/977-8238; kbrodin@briggs.com

Shannon Harmon, 2018-2019 President  
612/968-1610; shannon@shannonharmon.us

Debra Pexa, Executive Director  
612/338-3205; dpexa@mwlattorneys.org

600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 390B  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
[www.mwlattorneys.org](http://www.mwlattorneys.org)

## FIND MWL ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

[Facebook.com/MinnesotaWomenLawyers](https://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWomenLawyers)

[Twitter.com/MNWomenLawyers](https://twitter.com/MNWomenLawyers)

[LinkedIn.com/company/minnesota-women-lawyers/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/minnesota-women-lawyers/)

## **FY17-18 MWL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Connie Armstrong  
Megan Arriola  
Kendra Brodin  
Brenda Denton  
Susan Gallagher  
Wanda Gierman  
Emerald Gratz  
Shannon Harmon  
Kristin Haugen  
Ellen Hunt  
Poonam Kumar  
Michelle Looby  
KyLee Manthei  
Caroline Moos  
Brooke Nelson  
Alona Rindal  
Jennifer Robbins  
Sarah Rohne  
Breia Schleuss  
Amy Schmidt  
Mary Szondy  
Amy Taber