Civility & Integrity

President’s Message
By Danna Cotman

At a time in our society when women still have not achieved equality and the #MeToo movement has raised awareness of the inequities that still exist in the workplace, it gives me pause – what really causes the inequities? Sometimes chalked up to a poor attempt at humor or just plain ignorance, I wonder if there is a deeper root cause such as a lack of basic principles of integrity and kindness?

In that vein, it is with pride and enthusiasm that I share with you that there is a movement afoot in San Diego to strive toward a culture of inclusivity, civility, pay equity and harassment-free workplaces, and Lawyers Club is helping lead it. Here are a few things that are happening within the legal profession and the community at large:

Last year San Diego City Council President Pro Tem Barbara Bry reached out to Lawyers Club to engage on a steering committee for her Workplace Equity Initiative (WE). Bry said, “As the #MeToo movement unfolded, I thought about my own sexual harassment experiences and I wanted to do something here in San Diego. With the help of some

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Holiday Luncheon

Celebrate Lawyers Club’s Fund for Justice Grant Recipients and Student Scholarship Winners at the Holiday Luncheon

By Jennifer Chang and Rebecca Kanter

Join Lawyers Club members and friends for the Fund for Justice Holiday Luncheon on December 13, from noon to 1:15 p.m. at The Westin San Diego in Emerald Plaza. This annual event is the largest luncheon of the year and provides an opportunity to recognize the important work of the Fund for Justice grant recipients, highlight law student scholarship recipients from each of the local law schools, and reconnect with friends and colleagues during the holiday season.

Last year’s event, themed “Can’t Stop the Funding” (see video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=276&v=wVLuJYeRcDk) raised a record breaking $37,379.21, with $30,700.89 of that total coming from the nearly 400 Lawyers Club members and supporters who attended the luncheon. At this year’s Holiday Luncheon, Lawyers Club will continue its tradition of seeking donations to its charitable arm, the Fund for Justice. Each year, donations given at the annual Holiday Luncheon fund grants to San Diego nonprofits who carry out Lawyers Club’s mission by tangibly advancing the status of women through education, legal services, rehabilitative services, mentorship, leadership training, human trafficking, and domestic violence awareness and prevention, as well as many more programs that allow women to succeed and live full and healthy lives.

Each year, the Fund for Justice Committee (“Committee”) is tasked with vetting all applicants for funds (22 total applicants this year), including

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President’s Message

Danna Cotman is founder of the female-owned intellectual property boutique law firm ARC IP LAW, PC and president of Lawyers Club.

amazing women (and men), we created the Workplace Equity Initiative which focuses on sexual harassment, pay equity and developing a code of conduct for employers in the region. The acronym is “WE” because we are all in this together—women and men, employers and employees, business and nonprofit, government, etc.”

Since the inception of Bry’s vision, a team of community leaders, including individuals from Lawyers Club, has stepped up to develop a civil code of conduct that employers in San Diego can adopt to show their commitment to pay equity and to a harassment-free workplace. As part of this effort, Lawyers Club has developed a toolkit for employers and employees regarding their rights related to sexual harassment prevention. A second tool kit for pay equity is being developed. These resources are available to our members and the community at large on our website. As San Diego leaders, including a variety of employers, unions, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, members of the legal profession and many other organizations, drive the WE initiative into the general community, we will effectuate a culture of civility, integrity and equity, and San Diego will become the model for other counties and cities to follow to adopt a similar program.

Independently, around the same time that Bry had her vision for the WE Initiative, the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) developed a training program in partnership with the San Diego Union Tribune (U-T), for a series of programs to empower people and transform cultures through a Certified Civil Workplace initiative. When we heard about this, we jumped in! Lawyers Club became a sponsor of the NCRC/U-T Certified Civil Workplace Initiative and continues to collaborate with NCRC in many of their fantastic efforts toward inclusive communication. I encourage you to attend any or all of their classes and have your workplace certified. Lawyers Club is already certified and the Lawyers Club staff that attended workshops found them to be intellectually stimulating and inspirational. I had the honor of attending one of the brainstorming sessions early on in the developmental stage and was not only impressed, but challenged, and inspired with the level of individuals engaged and the tremendous insights that came together and are now incorporated into their programs. Whether it’s the Art of Inclusive Communication to examine diversity and inclusion in a collaborative and helpful way, the Bystander Challenge for harassment prevention through effective communication, The Exchange conflict management strategy for the workplace, or The Artful Conversation to learn how to effectively handle challenging one-on-one conversations, NCRC has created a “toolkit” of communication skills and strategies to resolve conflict. “Our mission is to deliver that toolkit to people wherever they need it: at home and at work, in classrooms and communities, and even in the halls of government,” said Steve Dinkin, NCRC President. You are sure to come away inspired and with communication tools that you can use every day.

And, if that wasn’t enough, in addition to all of the synergy whirling around from the WE Initiative and NCRC / U-T Certified Civil Workplace Initiative, the San Diego County Bar Association was in the process of revising The Code of Conduct, originally drafted in 1989 and 1998, in collaboration with the local bench and SDCBA, to highlight the importance of maintaining civility, integrity, and professionalism. Recently, the SDCBA solicited input from more than 20 law-related organizations throughout the county to refine the outline of how lawyers are expected to reflect their profession. Lawyers Club weighed in. SDCBA president and Lawyers Club member Kristin Rizzo said, “Civility, integrity, and professionalism are the guiding principles imperative to the ethical practice of law. Through the Attorney Civility and Practice Guidelines, it is the hope of the SDCBA that these principles can be understood and embraced by all San Diego County lawyers, inside and outside the courtroom, to ensure that the highest standards of civility and ethics are practiced within our profession.” We concur!

Through each of these efforts, Lawyers Club is engaged and committed to advancing civility and integrity in both our profession and in the community at large, and to providing tools to ensure there are adequate resources to educate and raise awareness. Each of these efforts point to a unification of our community and to a culture of respect, integrity and civility, and if we are going to achieve / demand equality, I see them as critical components and encourage you to participate, engage and lead by example. Be kind, be giving and always put civility and integrity above all else. Happy holidays!
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About Us

Lawyers Club Members Making News
By Genevieve A. Suzuki

Honored

CaseyGerry managing partner David S. Casey, Jr., recently received the Witkin Award for Excellence in the Practice of Law. Casey was also named one of California’s “100 Leading Lawyers” and “Top Plaintiffs Lawyers” for 2018 by the Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journal. Benefiting the San Diego Law Library Foundation, the annual Bernard E. Witkin, Esq. Awards Ceremony is held to honor members of the San Diego legal community for civic leadership and excellence in the practice of the law, adjudication of the law, legal education, and the advancement of access to justice.

The San Diego County Superior Court awarded Judy Bae with the Outstanding Service to the Probate Court and Probate Bar in October at the Probate Attorneys of San Diego’s annual prom. Bae practices exclusively in probate/trust litigation matters with Miller Monson. She is a board member of both the William B. Enright Inn of Court and the San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA). She will serve as treasurer in 2019 for SDCBA. Bae, along with fellow Lawyers Club member, Jose Castillo, are the co-chairs of the San Diego steering committee for Just the Beginning: A Pipeline Organization which will host its first Summer Legal Institute in the summer of 2019.

Thomas Jefferson School of Law awarded Srinivas Hanumadass the Outstanding Service to the Community Award on October 11 at its 11th Annual Judicial Mixer and Awards Reception. Hanumadass, an attorney at Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield LLP, is vice president and serves on the board of directors for the San Diego County Bar Association. He previously served as chair of the Lawyers Club Scholarship Committee.

Elected

The Hon. Tamila E. Ipema took the oath to become the 39th president of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) on October 6. The Hon. Judith McConnell, one of the founding members of NAWJ and the first San Diego NAWJ president, in addition to being a Lawyers Club founding mother, swore in Ipema, who became a judge for the San Diego Superior Court in 2009 after having been appointed by former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Yahairah Aristy is the 2019 president elect of the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Foundation. Aristy is a deputy public defender in the Public Defender’s office for the County of San Diego handling felony cases. She also serves on the Lawyers Club board and is the co-affiliate governor board member for the California Women Lawyers (CWL) board. She co-chairs the Lawyers Club Diverse Women’s Committee.

Appointed

The Hon. Dwayne K. Moring will serve a three-year term as one of the two District 12 representatives to the California Judges Association. He will also be the 2019 Assistant Supervising Judge for the South County Superior Court. Additionally, Moring was recently appointed to the Pepperdine School of Law Board of Advisors.

CaseyGerry partner Frederick Schenk has been reappointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to the 22nd District Agricultural Association, San Diego County Fair Board of Directors, where he has served since 2011.

New Venture

Cynthia Morgan-Reed and Allison Soares opened Vanst Law in September. Vanst Law aims to use technology to efficiently provide services and create a culture of collaboration and support. The firm has attorneys who practice in business and corporate, land use, lobbying, real estate, and tax.

HAVE YOU...

...changed jobs? ...won any recent awards? ...spoken at a professional conference?

Don’t be shy about sharing the good news! Submit news of your or your colleagues’ career accomplishments (awards, promotions, job changes, board appointments, published articles, presentations, etc.) to Genevieve Suzuki at gsuzukilaw@gmail.com. The deadline for each issue of Lawyers Club News is the first of the month.

*Please include your headshot if you would like your picture to be featured.
Thank You

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To donate to the Fund for Justice visit [www.lawyersclubsandiego.com](http://www.lawyersclubsandiego.com). Select the Fund for Justice tab and “Donate to FFJ”. Your generosity will help us fund grants to even more nonprofits this year!

WELCOME New Members

Ms. Kezia Adler
Ms. Resa Berry
Mr. Aaron Berzak
Ms. Lauren Brown
Ms. Rolaine Castro
Ms. Courtney Chamberlin
Ms. Paige Chandler
Ms. Daria Cortes

Ms. Tamara Cross
Ms. Katie Cyboron
Ms. Sara Lypps
Ms. Alyson Malak
Ms. Terri Marconi
Ms. Nicole Martinez
Ms. Danna Nicholas
Ms. Jen Zeng
reviewing each application, investigating each organization’s financials, conducting site visits, and interviewing the applicant’s representatives. The goal of the vetting process is to determine whether the applicant’s mission, use of funds, and proposed impact of any grant, is aligned with Lawyers Club’s mission and the Fund for Justice Statement of Purpose. After several meetings and discussions, the Committee made recommendations to the Lawyers Club Board of Directors, who then approved $40,000 in grants to 14 local nonprofits. This year’s grantees include 2 new grantees: Free to Thrive, which addresses the specific legal issues faced by human trafficking survivors and provides free legal services to directly represent and assist these individuals; and Legal Aid Society of San Diego, which, among other things, provides direct legal services to women to combat domestic violence. Additional grantees include: Big Brothers Big Sisters: Beyond School Walls, which is a workplace mentoring program for vulnerable teenage girls who are at a high risk for human trafficking or gang activity; Casa Cornelia, which provides free legal services to indigent, immigrant, and/or undocumented victims of domestic violence and human trafficking; Center for Community Solutions, an organization dedicated to providing services to domestic violence victims and creating an “Access to Justice” program to obtain restraining orders; Christie’s Place, which provides resources and services exclusively for women and their children who are HIV positive; Community Resource Center, whose Legal Advocate Program provides free legal services and court support to domestic violence victims, and whose Domestic Violence Education & Prevention Program presents educational programs at local high schools, colleges, and community centers in North County; Generate Hope, which is one of the only long-term residential facilities for human trafficking survivors; Musicians for Education, which works with pregnant teens enrolled in the juvenile system through art-intensive training and instruction; New Entra Casa, which is the only facility that provides residential transitional housing for women who are ex-offenders; Reading Legacies, which connects female inmates with their children through videotaped readings; Survivors of Torture International, which provides support services to women suffering sexual abuse or violence who are seeking asylum in the United States because of political, government, or state-sanctioned torture in their home countries; Think Dignity, which runs a mobile boutique to provide underwear, female hygiene products, and medical supplies to homeless women in San Diego; and Voices for Children, which trains Court-Appointed Special Advocates to work with mothers and children in advocating for services for children who either are in or may be part of the foster system.

This year’s luncheon will also continue Lawyers Club’s tradition of presenting scholarships to outstanding law students from each of the three local law schools: the Honorable Lynn Schenk Scholarship (University School of Law), the Janeen Kerper Scholarship (California Western School of Law), and the Lawyers Club of San Diego and Law Project Scholarship (Thomas Jefferson School of Law). We are excited and honored to recognize these law students for their inspiring accomplishments and accolades thus far in their careers.

The Fund for Justice is a donor-directed fund at The San Diego Foundation (Fund #6137), and contributions made directly to the Fund for Justice are tax deductible (as permitted by law). Please remember to bring your credit cards, checks, or cash to the event.

If you cannot attend the event, you can still participate by donating to the Fund for Justice through the Lawyers Club website: https://www.lawyersclubsandiego.com/page/FFJHome

We look forward to seeing you on December 13th!
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30 Years Ago

The Good Fight Continues
By Lizzette Herrera Castellanos

In December 1987, a little more than 30 years ago, the president of Lawyers Club, Helen Rowe, received a letter from a Lawyers Club member expressing her anger at Lawyers Club getting involved in a political issue when they chose to oppose the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. The attorney that sent the letter stated that it was “highly inappropriate for an organization with diverse membership like ours to take positions on political issues.”

When asked to explain how Lawyers Club came to the decision, Helen Rowe replied with an open letter stating:

The Board unanimously (8-0) agreed that Lawyers Club will take a public position in opposition to the confirmation of Judge Robert Bork to the United States Supreme Court. It was agreed that the Board would implement its decision to oppose the Bork nomination by:

1. Informing our members at the luncheon;
2. Writing letters to the editors of the L.A. Times, S.D. Union and S.D. Tribune, and S.D. Daily Transcript;
3. Writing Senators (Joseph) Biden, (Alan) Cranston and (Pete) Wilson;
4. Publishing a copy of our letter in the Lawyers Club newsletter;
5. Sending cc’s of our letter to other women’s bar associations; and
6. Notifying the coalition of local groups opposing the nomination.

As you may be aware, California Women’s Lawyers and the National Conference of Women Bar Associations also took positions in opposition to Judge Bork’s confirmation.

This was just the beginning of the statements that Lawyers Club would issue in the coming years. It was also just the beginning of the advocacy efforts that Lawyers Club would take to ensure the advancement of women in the legal profession.

In 1991, Lawyers Club issued a statement opposing the confirmation of Clarence Thomas, stating in part:

Lawyers Club strongly opposes appointment of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. The evidence is overwhelming that he does not support the right to abortion and opposes affirmative action programs that benefit women and minorities. He has made his views known in his speeches, by his record as Chairman of the EEOC, and by membership in the professional and social organizations in which he participates.

More than 30 years ago, Lawyers Club’s involvement in political issues was questioned and challenged even when opposing a Supreme Court nominee. In subsequent years, involvement was deemed crucial. This year, Lawyers Club called for the Senate Judiciary Committee to delay the vote on Judge Kavanaugh. In a letter to Senators Chuck Grassley, Diane Feinstein, and Kamala Harris, president Danna Cotman wrote:

Lawyers Club of San Diego urges the Committee and the Senate to delay any vote on Judge Kavanaugh’s confirmation until both the FBI and the Committee can fully investigate Dr. Christine Blasey Ford’s allegations. First, we support the position that the FBI must complete a thorough and independent investigation regarding the allegations prior to any witnesses giving testimony before the Committee. We ask that you insist upon an FBI investigation into these allegations before proceeding with any confirmation votes or additional testimony. Second, and after the FBI completes its investigation, we urge the Committee to conduct a full and fair investigation into the allegations before holding any confirmation vote. Further, it is important that the Senate Judiciary Committee take steps to ensure that alleged victims are not re-victimized in the process of conducting the investigation and hearing. Allowing law enforcement to fulfill its investigative duties with integrity and respect and requiring a full and complete vetting is a necessary step and critical procedure prior to the consideration of a lifetime appointment to our country’s highest and most prestigious court.

Thirty years ago when Lawyers Club was questioned about its political advocacy, it was questioned whether a professional bar association should get involved in the fray. In this day and age, this involvement is crucial for a bar association representing women in the legal profession. Lawyers Club continues to support advocacy and political issues that cut to the heart of women advancing in the legal profession. The good fight continues.

As we prepare to enter a new year, Lawyers Club invites you to join in the advocacy efforts. This includes the Fund for Justice Christmas Luncheon on December 13th. You are also invited to walk with Lawyers Club at the Women’s March on January 19th. But more importantly, you are urged to get involved with Lawyers Club as an active member. Much work still needs to be done and the fight continues.

Lizzette Herrera Castellanos is professor of legal and paralegal studies at Southwestern College. She is the General Counsel for the San Diego La Raza Lawyers Scholarship Fund. Her most important job is mom to Lazaro, Leo and Luciano.
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Membership Development Committee Welcomes New Members at Wine Wednesday

By Maggie E. Schroedter and Kristen Price

Lawyers Club’s Membership Development Committee ("MDC") hosted its first Wine Wednesday event on September 26, at Carruth Cellars Urban Winery in Little Italy. The event was generously sponsored by Procopio Cory Hargreaves & Savitch LLP. Over 40 attendees engaged in lively conversation while enjoying wine and hosted appetizers, including fresh stone oven pizza, in Carruth Cellars’ Wine Garden at sunset.

The overall feedback from attendees, members and non-members alike, was that Wine Wednesday provided a great opportunity to learn more about Lawyers Club and mix and mingle with new friends. Lawyers Club member Duane Johnson said, “The Wine Wednesday event was a success because we caught up with old friends, and made new ones, while discussing ideas on how to support the mission to advance the status of women in the law and society.”

Jacob Bedingfield stated, “This was a great opportunity to meet colleagues and get to know them in an open setting. The venue provided wonderful food and beverage options and the group setting gave us all the opportunity to meet and unwind.” The committee looks forward to hosting another Wine Wednesday early next year.

If you are interested in joining the Membership Development Committee or helping plan evening mixer and morning coffee events, please contacted co-chairs Maggie Schroedter (schroedterm@higgslaw.com) and Kristen Price (Kristen.Price@procopio.com).

Maggie Schroedter is an attorney at Higgs, Fletcher & Mack, LLP, a Lawyers Club board member, and co-chair of the Membership Development Committee.

Kristen Price is an attorney at Procopio, and co-chair of the Membership Development Committee.

Attorneys at Membership Development Committee Wine Wednesday Event.
Fall Judicial Reception

Members Gather on a Warm Autumn Evening for Judicial Reception

By Shelley Carder

More than thirty members of the state and federal judiciary were among the 118 attendees at the 2018 Lawyers Club Fall Judicial Reception on Thursday, October 25. Included among the judiciary were one of the Superior Court’s newest judges, Loren Freestone, and recently nominated U.S. Magistrate Judge, Michael Berg.

The Hon. Judith McConnell, a founding member of Lawyers Club and the Presiding Justice of the Fourth District Court of Appeal, noted the broad base of the judicial branch who were present. “The annual event is an important way judges can keep engaged with Lawyers Club,” she noted.

Bench/Bar Committee co-chairs Kristen Marquis Fritz and Isabel Eustaquio orchestrated a festive gathering on the balcony of 401 W. A Street. From the initial check-in desk, guests followed a path of red and yellow leaves to the spacious and comfortable outdoor venue, where they were able to enjoy the clear, warm evening under the autumn setting sun. Judge Joan Weber observed, “No wonder we call San Diego America’s Finest City!” Judge Weber reported that she always tries to attend this event saying, “You can count on a great turnout and it’s fun to see judges and lawyers I haven’t seen in a while. I always enjoy meeting new lawyers as well.”

As members mingled and chatted, they consumed enticing hors d’oeuvres, including watermelon drizzled with balsamic and feta, endive filled with chicken salad, Thai vegetable spring rolls, and shrimp cocktail, along with wine and other refreshments. Higgs Fletcher and Mack, LLP, was the generous title sponsor and hosted this year’s event. Marsha Ashby, an employee of the firm, graciously assisted the committee members in making the event a success.

After recognizing the judicial officers in attendance at the reception, Lawyers Club president Danna Cotman reminded attendees that the theme of her presidency is to “Demand Equality” with initiative, intelligence, and integrity.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Karen Crawford later commented, “I am honored to support Lawyers Club. This organization helps others be the best they can be, not only attorneys, but also members of the general community.”

Board member and Higgs Fletcher and Mack, LLP associate, Maggie Schroedter provided eloquent remarks describing the opportunities Lawyers Club provided her as a new attorney. She acknowledged the support for her professional development that she received from more experienced members within Lawyers Club and within her firm. That support inspired her to become more involved with the organization, where she now serves as a Director and co-chairs the Membership Development Committee.

Long-time member James Pokorny commented, “The judicial reception is a great way for younger attorneys to meet more seasoned members of the legal community in a collegial setting.” He continued, “Anything Lawyers Club says it is going to do, it gets organized, does it, and does well.” The organization’s ability to accomplish its objectives certainly proved true at this event.

Shelley Carder, Law Office of Shelley A. Carder, is a member of the Women’s Advocacy Committee.
Diverse Women’s Committee Luncheon

Demanding Equality for All Human Rights as Lawyers

By Khellya Osei

Judicial officers, lawyers, law students and non-lawyer professionals were inspired by Mona Pasquil, Appointments Secretary for the Office of California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., on October 16, at the Diverse Women’s Committee Luncheon sponsored by The Dean Law Group APLC and held at the Westin San Diego in Emerald Plaza. Pasquil, the first Filipino-American in California’s history to serve as the appointments secretary, spoke about knowing one’s value, the importance of mentorship, and answering the “call to serve.”

Pasquil shared that despite serving as the first woman and first Asian American California Acting Lieutenant Governor in 2009 and serving as chief of staff to California Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi in 2008, it took being encouraged by a mentor for her to apply to serve as California’s appointments secretary. In fact, Pasquil credited “every opportunity” she had to mentors who set examples and saw something great in her. Pasquil expressed deep satisfaction at answering the call to serve as appointments secretary noting that, for the first time in her life, she found a job where she can uplift people and advance their lives in a unique way. Pasquil uses her role to find “the missing voice” in society by appointing diverse individuals to board positions.

Pasquil encouraged everyone to remember their worth and always acknowledge the truth in the praise and compliments received. Pasquil stressed that “little boys and girls do not know what they can be until they see it.” Therefore, the words, “I am not qualified” should never be uttered by a woman seeking any position.

Pasquil applauded the legal community for embracing the call to serve as commission and board appointees. “We found magic with attorneys, mostly women attorneys, who have been able to help people find their voice and move forward.” She encouraged attendees to “get involved in the conversation because if we do not add our voices and our values to the conversation, then all the decisions will be made without us.” Pasquil also advised, “when you think ’I’m tired,’ ’I cannot possibly take on another position,’ or ‘this is too much’ remember that it is an honor to be where you are because “when people see you there, they see [what] they could be.”

In closing, Pasquil asked women who “are in the position to take a chance on somebody” to do so because “that person will work harder than you can imagine just for being the unexpected choice.” Pasquil stated that “if our faces and our values are not represented on these boards, then someone’s voice is going unheard; someone who is counting on us is thinking ‘what about us?’ [and] will have no one there to speak up, and that someone’s voice is lost.” Pasquil signed off by advocating that more opportunities should be given to “sisters” who need help and may not have the courage to ask for it.

Khellya Osei works at The Law Office of L. Marcel Stewart and is a member of the Diverse Women’s Committee.
The Annual Twilight Holiday Gathering is Here

Janet Bledsoe Lacy will host her annual “Twilight Holiday Gathering” at her home in Oceanside on December 7. Lacy, a longtime member and supporter of Lawyers Club, began hosting the holiday gathering especially for Lawyers Club, but over the years it has turned into a staple event for the entire North County community. The Lacy family invites all of the North County Court staff to recognize their contributions to the judicial system.

Lawyers Club member Assly Sayyar said, “The home is always beautifully decorated. The food and drink are generous and I especially love the dessert table. It is a fun casual evening where everyone from the North County legal community gets together to celebrate the holiday season.”

In addition to being a great party packed full of holiday desserts and cocktails, Lacy has requested that attendees bring an unwrapped gift or toy for the children’s holiday party at the Women’s Resource Center, a North County non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, shelter, and counseling to victims of domestic violence in the area.

The party will start at 5 p.m. on December 7 at the Lacy home, located at 2165 Grandview Street, Oceanside, CA 92054. The Lawyers Club North County Committee invites you to attend to celebrate the holiday season and experience this long standing North County tradition.
Legislative Updates

Veto on Accessible Medication Abortion Bill for College Students

By Alexandria Hopson

Governor Brown vetoed SB 320 in October 2018 after what appeared to be a slam-dunk of passing the bill with a majority vote. The bill was written in an effort to make medication abortions more available to women on University of California and California State University campuses. The bill pushed to have grant money and private money allocated to women on campuses should they need to seek early pregnancy termination. Current health insurance offered by UC schools covers abortions, including medication abortions, however, it is not a service that is offered through UC student health care services on campuses. Health insurance at CSU schools is not required, and no health insurance plans are offered by these universities. Students at CSU schools need additional resources. SB 320 emphasized this is a necessary service for young women that is not easily accessible, though it should be. Governor Brown vetoed this bill, and declined to make this an option for college women.

Early pregnancy termination via medication is not the same thing as an in-clinic procedure, or what normally comes to mind when you think abortion. Generally, a medication abortion is available up to 10 weeks of pregnancy and an in-clinic procedure is available up to week 14 (depending on where you live). Most women only learn they are pregnant when they are an average of six weeks pregnant, while others learn after it is too late for an abortion at all. Medication abortion is an option for women who find out they are pregnant early on. They have a limited amount of time to discuss and weigh the options available to them. This can be a painful decision, and should not be determined by factors like having to find a close facility, needing someone to drive them to and from the facility, or finding additional means to cover costs because of a lack of insurance.

Governor Brown’s reasoning for the veto is: “Access to reproductive health services, including abortion, is a long-protected right in California. According to a study sponsored by supporters of this legislation, the average distance to abortion providers in campus communities varies from five to seven miles, not an unreasonable distance. Because the services required by this bill are widely available off-campus, this bill is not necessary.” However, what Governor Brown fails to see with this analysis is the slow destruction of these “available off-campus” resources. Vice President Pence is leading the movement on defunding Planned Parenthood and ultimately shutting down the centers. This would mean that annually, 4.2 million STD tests and treatments would need to be covered by other facilities, not to mention the additional 2 million people who receive birth control from Planned Parenthood. Additionally, more than half of the centers are in rural and underserved communities. If the country continues to vote down issues like this, then millions of people will lose access to care, not just these students. Similar scenarios have already happened in both Texas and Wisconsin, and have produced devastating results to women’s health. Governor Brown’s veto raises the question of why he would encourage a flood of additional patients to clinics on the brink of extinction, when the state and private donors are trying to make this option more accessible.

For now, early pregnancy termination is a constitutionally protected right. With a President in office who has encouraged inappropriately grabbing women, and praised Kavanaugh’s confirmation, this right seems like it may be hanging by a thread. California State Senator Connie Leyva says she intends to reintroduce the legislation next session. With Governor Brown heading out the door, we will see if a second time is the charm.

Alexandria Hopson is a legal assistant at Dunn DeSantis Walt & Kendrick, LLP and a member of the Women’s Advocacy Committee.
Member Profile

Cynthia Morgan-Reed
By Laura Evans

Cynthia Morgan-Reed is a founding partner of Vanst Law, a virtual law firm based on the premise of leveling the playing field for women and minorities. Vanst Law allows for careers to thrive in a digital age, while providing an environment that supports a successful and meaningful work-life balance.

Morgan-Reed built Vanst Law after her 15 years of traditional legal experience, specializing in the areas of land use and real estate law; an area she thoroughly enjoys since it takes “public sector work and marries it in private development.” Despite her success in those areas, she soon recognized that law firms did not always provide for an equal playing field, financially and otherwise. A solo practice soon took shape in order to provide her more control and benefits. As a solo practitioner, however, she missed the collegiality of firm life and the ability to refer work. And then, Vanst Law was born.

The virtual law firm concept started about 20 years ago. “Everyone works where they want and when they want,” providing flexibility in scheduling while still maintaining a thriving career. Attorneys come in only at the partner level and the areas of practice cross all disciplines. Financial savings are passed on to the clients by saving money on office space, personnel, and the typical costs associated with a firm. The lower overhead is also beneficial to the overall compensation for the partner. This compensation-based formula “bridges the gap in pay inequity in law firms;” particularly for women and minorities.

Morgan-Reed joined Lawyers Club immediately upon coming to San Diego after graduating law school at Notre Dame. “I always believed in women’s empowerment. The best way to advance yourself is to join forces with other women attorneys and have that support and referral network.” Morgan-Reed has done just that by joining multiple Lawyers Club committees and attending multiple events over the course of her career. As a result, she has “long-lasting relationships with women I worked with. We relied on each other, supported, encouraged, and shared experiences with each other in a way that is rewarding and life-affirming.”

Lawyers Club also helped solidify her desire and interest in what is now Vanst Law. So many conversations produced a consistent theme of pay inequity and gender disparity for women and minorities. “This club does an amazing job advancing the status of women in law and society…to now be able to do that with my own career has been invaluable.”

Vanst Law also allows Morgan-Reed to focus on the other meaningful parts of her own life, including her two young children. When she is not playing games with her family, or reading, she is likely working as a member or on the board of one of many other organizations including Voices of San Diego, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown San Diego Partnership.

PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE

Q: What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A: Having the freedom to do what you want when you want it.

Q: What do you consider the most overrated virtue?
A: Selflessness in women because it is often mistaken for weakness and people think they can take advantage of them.

Q: What or who is the greatest love of your life?
A: My husband! But he would say crab. I can eat anyone under the table when it comes to crab.

Q: If you were to die and come back as a person or a thing, what would it be?
A: A dog. They have the best lives.

Q: What is your motto, the words you live by, or that mean a lot to you?
A: “One Cannot Consent to Creep When One Feels an Impulse to Soar” – Helen Keller. She was one tough woman who never let anything stand in her way.

Q: Who has been the greatest influence on you?
A: My mum who died in April. I miss her everyday. She taught me how to be a caring and loving human and that I am as good as anyone else, but not better than anyone else.
Co-chair Profiles

Jodi Cleesattle
By Laura Evans

Since 2012, Jodi Cleesattle has been Lawyers Club press liaison in the newsletter and media group under the Community Relations Section. This is just one of the many roles that she has had in Lawyers Club since joining in 2002. Cleesattle has served on the Board of Directors, chaired and co-chaired the Leadership Development Committee, and edited Lawyers Club News. She received the 2014 Lawyers Club Community Service Award for her extensive volunteer work.

Cleesattle is a deputy attorney general in the California Department of Justice’s Civil Division, Employment and Administrative Mandate section. She litigates employment and administrative law cases on behalf of state agencies in state and federal courts. Her practice includes defense of discrimination and harassment cases, Title IX investigations for state universities, and representation of state agencies in evidentiary hearings before the State Personnel Board.

In addition to her continued work with Lawyers Club, Cleesattle currently serves on the board of California Women Lawyers as District 9 Governor for Imperial and San Diego Counties. She is vice president of the Juvenile Court Book Club, a nonprofit and past Lawyers Club Fund for Justice grantee that works with incarcerated teens to develop reading skills. She previously co-chaired the Council of State Bar Sections, chaired the California State Bar’s Public Law Section, and served on the San Diego County Bar Association board of directors.

Cleesattle has two children, 19-year-old Nik and 16-year-old Josie; three rescue dogs, and two rescue cats — all of whom bring much joy and chaos into her life.

Katie Shank
By Laura Evans

Katie Shank currently is co-chair of the Lawyers Club Awards Committee and is a member of the Professional Advancement and Community Outreach Committees.

Shank is an associate with Buscemi Hallett, LLP and is admitted to practice before all California state courts and the United States District Court for the Southern District of California. Shank has experience in all phases of civil litigation including discovery, trials, mediations, settlement negotiation, and appeals. She is passionate about advocating for her clients and always seeks to do so in a cost-effective, yet innovative manner.

Shank graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a minor in Political Science. She obtained her Juris Doctor from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago and was soon admitted to the State Bar of California.

During law school, Shank participated in various volunteer activities, including Wills for Heroes, Neighborhood Legal Assistance Project, and was a research and writing assistant for Emeritus Professor John Decker.

In her free time, Shank enjoys running, weightlifting, hiking, cooking, reading, and spending time with her family and friends.

Laura Evans is a Deputy District Attorney, a member of Lawyers Club Community Outreach Committee, and the member profiles coordinator.
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Lawyers Club Calendar of Events

Information for your calendar. All dates subject to change. For latest information, contact Lawyers Club at (619) 595-0650 or visit our website at www.lawyersclubsandiego.com.

December 2018

Friday, 12/7/2018
Save the date!
Human Trafficking Collaborative - Legislative Roundtable

Thursday, 12/13/2018
Check-in 11:30 a.m. | Program 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.
Fund For Justice Annual Holiday Luncheon
Westin Emerald Plaza, San Diego

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