



by
Wendy S.
Loquasto

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FAWL: Who We Are and What We Do

I am honored and excited to be FAWL President. It is a humbling experience to contemplate following in the footsteps of so many distinguished past presidents, particularly those of **Mattie Belle Davis, Winnie Sharp, Gill Freeman, Edith Osman, Jennifer Coberly**, my law partner, **Susan Fox**, and, most recently, **June McKinney Bartelle**. As FAWL Historian for so many years, I am especially mindful of the growth and accomplishments of this fabulous organization, and I want to impart to you my pride in FAWL's history and our plans for this coming year as FAWL's history continues to unfold.

FAWL is much more than a statewide voluntary bar organization: FAWL is 23 Local Chapters, and as such, FAWL is the "quilt" that unites those diverse Chapters into one whole piece. Although begun solely as a statewide organization in 1951, the influx of women into the legal profession as a result of the Women's Movement led to the birth of local chapters in 1980. Finally, women could look around their cities and towns and see enough other women lawyers so they no longer had to travel across the state to enjoy the company and support of sisters in the law. Over the past 26 years, some Chapters have become so large and so successful that they could exist independently of FAWL, but they have chosen to stay banded together because, like the women who founded FAWL 55 years ago, they recognize that

women are more powerful when they are joined in one united voice. Judge **Patricia Seitz's** installation address at our 55th Anniversary Breakfast provided us with inspiration to respond to this charge: As the benefactors of our founding member's efforts, we must ensure that FAWL stays strong.

In 2010, the first of the Baby Boomer Generation will turn 64 and those who have been in power will begin to retire and hand the reins over to the next generation of leaders. We, as women lawyers, need to be that next generation of leaders. We need to be supporting and training our members at the Chapter level, thereby ensuring that they will gain the skills and recognition that will propel them to the state level of leadership, and then to the national and international levels of leadership. My charge to each FAWL member is to continue the legacy we have received from strong FAWL leaders throughout our 55 years: Work locally to make your Chapters strong; recruit new members and groom them for leadership; and work to keep FAWL strong by participating in its meetings and programs and sharing our ideas for success. As I travel the state this year in my role as FAWL president, it is my goal to visit with all the FAWL Chapters, meet many more FAWL members, and challenge all of you to take up the charge.

Our FAWL Board has been actively planning the 2006-2007 year to include Chapter activity and involvement at both the local level and the state level.

President-elect **Sherri Johnson** is planning the Midyear Meeting for

January 19 in Miami. We once again hope to coordinate with the Miami-Dade Chapter in presenting this year's installment of "Leadership FAWL: Road to the Bench."

Legislative Chair **Kasongo Butler** (TWL) and FAWL Lobbyist **Yolanda Cash Jackson** will help coordinate FAWL Lobby Days, which will likely be held in March in Tallahassee. We hope to coordinate with TWL for Lobby Days, and if we are lucky, we'll all be at Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony applauding the success of Hall of Fame Committee Chair **Zelda Hawk** on the nomination she prepared for the late **Clara Floyd Gehan** on behalf of FAWL and the Clara Gehan Chapter.

Civic Forums Chair **Peggy Wood** (Palm Beach) will be coordinating FAWL's new Civic Forums program. Secretary **Becky Steele** and **Gayle Carlson** will be co-chairing the pilot forum for HAWL. An application to receive a portion of the grant funds is available at www.fawl.org.

Public Relations Officer **Carla Jones** (Miami-Dade) has agreed to chair an Ad Hoc Committee on Chapter Assistance. At the FAWL Retreat we discussed the challenges Chapters are facing in communicating with their members and the need to be able to e-mail large numbers of recipients. **Abby Cynamon** (Miami-Dade), **Musette Stewart** (CFAWL), **Sherri Johnson** (Sarasota), and Executive Director **Pat Stephens** will work to find solutions.

Membership Officer **Musette Stewart** (CFAWL) will be working with a Membership Committee

► **PRESIDENT.** Continued on Page 6

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► **PRESIDENT**, From Page 3

including **Mary K. Wimsett** (Clara Gehan), **Patti Morgan** (Marion), and **Tasha Dickinson** (Palm Beach), to personally communicate with Chapters and share their ideas, to provide suggestions to ensure chapter growth, and to update the information on the FAWL website for building chapters.

Awards Committee Chair **Barbara Twine Thomas** (HAWL) will coordinate a new FAWL award that will be presented at the Midyear Meeting: FAWL's Outstanding Chapter Program/Project

Award. The award application is available at www.fawl.org — hurry, because the deadline for submissions is November 30.

Treasurer-elect **Dawn Bates-Buchanan** (Manatee) will be working to secure sponsorships for FAWL events with the Development Committee, which includes **Marisol Gomez** and **Carla Jones** (both of Miami-Dade), as well as Treasurer **Carolyn Coukas** (Collier). Please ask your law firms to sponsor a FAWL event! ■



*Nomination forms for FAWL's
Outstanding Chapter
Program / Project
are available
at www.fawl.org
and due
November 30, 2006.*