



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation

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May, 2005

WLAM Foundation Hosts March Reception Honoring Students and Donors

Over 100 attendees of the WLAM Foundation's 2005 Awards Reception gathered on March 3, 2005 at the Ford Conference and Event Center in Dearborn, enjoying an evening of celebration. Attendees celebrated the accomplishments of the 15 Outstanding Women Law Students who were announced and profiled on their accomplishments. Each student-awardee received between \$2,000 and \$4,000 in awards given in recognition of leadership and commitment on advancing the role of women in society. The awards included five for "Ford Scholars," \$4000 awards underwritten by the Ford Motor Company Fund. This marks the fourth year in which Ford has supported these generous awards. Joining the named award category was a \$2500 Howard & Howard Award for an outstanding women law student attending the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Profiles of the students appear in this issue of Focus.

The annual Awards Reception also provided an opportunity to recognize and thank the generous members of the "Dean's List," major donors to the Foundation's scholarship fund. In addition to the Ford Fund and Howard & Howard gifts, substantial contributions were made by General Motors North America, Dow Chemical Company, and the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan. The complete Dean's List appears in this issue, as well. That list includes the generous sponsors of the Awards Reception, Ford Motor Company, Meritas Law Firms Worldwide, Robert Half Legal, and the Kelly Law Registry.

The reception featured remarks by Carole Chiamp, distinguished Detroit lawyer and one of the Foundation's "Angels." Ms. Chiamp entertained and inspired the crowd with "Following Your Dream," a talk about her experiences as a lawyer and cook. In March of 2000, Carole started classes at the Culinary Institute of America, rigorous training that led to her current unsalaried work at Detroit's Opus One. One of Michigan's finest restaurants, Opus is happy to have Carole there on Tuesday and Thursday nights. On other days, amounting to about 30 hours a week, Carole is of counsel to the firm of Hickey, Cianciolo and Fishman, in Detroit.

Ford Mentium Awardee Sought by Foundation

The Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation is looking for a special woman – the 2006 Ford Mentium Awardee. The Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation administers funding of an annual Ford Mentium 100 Award, selecting an awardee who is a lawyer for a non-profit organization, with a minimum of six years of professional experience, demonstrated leadership capability, above-average performance, and proven commitment to her own growth. Ford's commitment to the education of women is demonstrated not only by this award, but also its generous support of the Foundation's annual awards to outstanding women law students. A total of \$19,000 was contributed by the Ford Fund and Ford Motor Company to WLAMF scholarships last year.

Last year's awardee (serving during 2005) was Kathleen Conklin, an attorney for the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Ms. Conklin was the third recipient of the Ford/WLAMF Mentium award. The year-long program includes six half-day business forums, numerous meetings between mentors and mentees, and creation of a peer network with over 100 professional women. Its value for women lawyers of high potential is clear.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone you know for the 2006 Ford/WLAMF Mentium Award, please mail or email a one-page letter of interest and resume to: Dawn Van Hoek, Chair, WLAMF, 3300 Penobscot, 645 Griswold, Detroit, MI 48230 or dawn@sado.org. Nominations are due no later than June 15, 2005. If you have questions about the Mentium 100 program or the application process, please contact Kay Fitzpatrick at 248-320-2696.

Profiles of the 2005 Scholarship Awardees of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation

Patricia Barnes, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, Michigan State University College of Law. Ms. Barnes's love for the law began to flourish when she realized, while volunteering at a domestic violence shelter, that legal services were not readily available to the women who used shelter services. It was at that point she realized she could best help women by becoming a lawyer. In law school she is President of the Family Law Society, an Editor for the Journal of Gender Law and a Women's Law Caucus member. Ms. Barnes has undergone extensive training in domestic violence issues and uses those skills in each of her three volunteer positions: (1) as child advocate in a neglect case, (2) working for the 30th Circuit Court in the Personal Protection Office, and (3) as a Court Watch volunteer through End Violent Encounters and Safe Place.

Alethia Battles, Howard & Howard Awardee, University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Ms. Battles worked full-time to put herself through undergraduate and master's studies, culminating in a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Michigan. She continues to work as a Clinical Social Worker while attending law school and raising her two children. She has distinguished herself in law school by being a junior member of the Law Review, a quarterfinalist in the Moot Court competition, being awarded the Book Award in Applied Legal Theory and Analysis and externing for Michigan Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly.

Elizabeth Grace Cote, Ford Scholarship Awardee, University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Ms. Cote believes that every person can and should make a difference and demonstrates this commitment in her work with asylum seekers at Freedom House and as volunteer coordinator, and weekly volunteer, for a local warming shelter. Ms. Cote has sat as first chair for 11 asylum trials and her clients have been granted asylum in 8 of those cases. She is in her third year of law school and has participated in numerous activities and received various awards for her service and commitment to justice.

Mahbuba Fidda, Ford Motor Company Fund Awardee, Michigan State University College of Law. Ms. Fidda is a LLM candidate, having earned her law degree after one year of study in her native Afghanistan and 5 years of study in the Soviet Union. Having lost her husband when the Fundamentalists captured the University where they worked, she escaped with her two children, living in Moscow and Yugoslavia before immigrating to the US. Fluent in five languages Ms. Fidda uses her considerable skills working with refugee services and serving on the Ingham County Community Health Board, among many other activities.

Jenna Goldenberg, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, University of Michigan Law School. Ms. Goldberg demonstrates her dedication to furthering the rights of women and children through her work and volunteer efforts on and off of campus. As the Bergstrom Child Welfare Law Fellow, Ms. Goldberg spent the summer of 2004 directly representing child clients throughout their experiences within the foster care system. At the Law School, Ms. Goldberg is a Dean-appointed member of the Campbell Moot Court Executive Board, a Member of the Journal of Gender and the Law and a Chair of the Political Action Committee for the Women Law Students Association and Executive Board Member of that organization. Outside of school she volunteers for the Wolverine Street Law program and Safe House.

Robbin Pott Gonzalez, Ford Motor Company Fund Awardee, University of Michigan Law School. Ms. Gonzalez's commitment to children and their welfare is evident in her choices of classes, clinical experiences and volunteer efforts. If pursuing a joint degree in both law and public policy is not enough of a challenge, Ms. Gonzalez is also an articles editor for the Journal of Gender and Law, the 2003 Henry Bergstrom Child Welfare Fellow and a 2004 Public Service Fellow. She is a Board Member of Growing Hope, worked at Peace Center as an intern and, two years after the internship ended, continues her efforts there on a volunteer basis.

Jennifer Goulah, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. After a successful career in Human Resources, Ms. Goulah returned to school to pursue her law degree after the close of business where she had been Director of Employee Relations. Working during the day and attending evening classes, she is currently number one in her class. Ms. Goulah is on Law Review, was awarded the Book Award in Contracts and received two scholarships in the 2004-2005 school year. She works in a law firm that specializes in elder law.

Linda Kellum, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Ms. Kellum, a Dean's list scholar in April and August 2004, spends considerable time not only on her studies but also in the community. She volunteers with the Kalamazoo County Bar Association in a program that provides pro bono legal advice and assistance to low income individuals. She has worked in the public sector as a paralegal for Western Michigan Legal Services and Legal Services of South-Central Michigan. She also worked as a Civil Rights Investigator for the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in Kalamazoo.

Cristy N. Oakes, Ford Motor Company Fund Awardee, Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Ms. Oakes used her interest in rodeo events, specifically team roping, a rodeo event that is predominately male, to mount a challenge to stereotypes about women and their abilities. Being a positive role model for other women is something that is particularly gratifying to her. Prior to law school she taught middle school in Ohio. In addition to attending law school, Ms. Oakes serves as associate editor of her school's Journal of Practical and Clinical law and writes articles about women's issues for the Black Law Students Association News Magazine.

Susan Phillips, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Ms. Phillips, who holds a Masters of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering, has worked in various engineering capacities for over 19 years and is attending law school while continuing her employment at the GM Chassis Center. She and her husband George are raising eight children and devote considerable time to charitable work for organizations that advance the rights of women and children.

Megan Reynolds, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, Michigan State University College of Law. Ms. Reynolds, who at age 19 became the youngest certified midwife in the United States, credits her work at a maternal-child health clinic as her training ground for a life long commitment to social justice work. Working at the clinic, which offered quality, affordable prenatal and birth care by midwives to poor immigrant women, her eyes were opened to the challenges faced by poor immigrant women and children. This work propelled her to research and project positions with organizations dedicated to bettering the lives of poor women and children including the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Ms. Reynolds is a member of the Law Review, maintains a merit scholarship and was a summer associate with Farmworker Legal Services of Michigan.

Katherine Strickfaden, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, Wayne State University Law School. Since her undergraduate days at the University of Michigan, Ms. Strickfaden has demonstrated, through tireless community service efforts, her dedication to women's and social justice issues. Her efforts continue in law school where she is the Chair of the Free Legal Aid Clinic, a Representative-at-Large to the Student Board of Governors and for the last two years President of the Gay and Lesbian Law Caucus. As Chair of the FLAC Board Ms. Strickfaden spearheads a group that is working on a domestic violence training program for FLAC students.

Marquita Sylvia, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, Wayne State University Law School. Ms. Sylvia came to law school after successful careers in both the profit and non profit worlds, having been the manager of operations for Subway Inc, a company she helped form to purchase and promote Subway franchises, an evaluator for the United States General Accounting Office and a division manager for the Boston Globe. She has continued to excel in law school and is an elected representative of the Student Board of Governors, Vice President of the Black Law Students Association and a member of the Trial Advocacy Program.

Amanda Szukala, Ford Motor Company Fund Awardee, Wayne State University Law School. Ms. Szukala, a second year law student and Assistant Editor for the Law Review, has contributed enormously to her law school by organizing the first annual law school gala, volunteering as an assistant in the Admissions Office and actively participating in the Women's Law Caucus. She interned in Wayne County's Child and Family Abuse Unit, finding great satisfaction in writing sentencing memos in support of severe sentences in domestic violence cases. Ms. Szukala is incoming Managing Editor for the Wayne Law Review and an intern to federal district Judge Nancy G. Edmunds.

Rebecca Torres, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation Awardee, University of Michigan Law School. As the Director of Human Resources and Curriculum Development at a consulting firm, Ms. Torres, while enduring the hostility and discriminatory beliefs of her boss, did not let his beliefs stop her from hiring and training many qualified minority individuals whom she believed had much to offer. This fight against discrimination led her to law school, where she is an Associate Editor for the Law Review, a Senior Judge for the Legal Practice Program and Vice Chair of the Latino Law Students Association. Ms. Torres split her 2004 summer work between the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and a large firm where she, pro bono, prepared documents for and represented a client in adoption proceedings.

Newsletter Contact
Dawn Van Hoek, dvanhoek@sado.org



Dean's List 2005

We thank the following generous members of our year-2005 Dean's List:

Gold Key (\$19,000)

Ford Motor Company Fund

Summa Cum Laude (\$2,500 or more)

Dow Chemical Company
General Motors - North America
Howard & Howard Community Reinvestment Fund
Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

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Ena Weathers
Lorraine Weber

Honorary Gifts to the Foundation

The WLAM Foundation is pleased to announce the following gifts made in honor or memory of a person or event:

In Honor of:

To celebrate the birthday of the Honorable Janet Neff, by Anne Cooper

In Memory of:

Claire Morrison, by US Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Cornelia Kennedy

Claire Morrison, by US District Judge Marianne O. Battani

Claire Morrison, by Carole Chiamp, who observed:

Claire was one of our most loyal members. She knew how much the Women Lawyers Association did for all of us. Her membership spanned many decades in which women earned law degrees but were just not hired. She worked tirelessly to make sure those of us who came later were allowed to practice. We owe her, and her generation of women lawyers, much.

WLAM Foundation Contributions

Do you know the power of a dollar contributed to the WLAM Foundation? Only pennies (generally, under 10% of money raised) go to administrative costs, and the rest goes directly into projects supporting women's education.

Contributions are made in several forms: fundraising events take place during the year, WLAM members exercise their "dues check-off" option, art prints are available any time, and firms and corporations take part in the annual Dean's List campaign. You can jump in right now through another popular option: use the contribution form in this newsletter to honor a special person or event. Whichever giving choice you make, we'll be sure to acknowledge your contribution here.

The Foundation Board thanks these generous donors who made recent tax-deductible contributions.

Maria Angileri
Hon. Samuel I. Durham
Ann Erickson-Gault
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Ellen Paynter

Contribution Form

Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation

Your contribution is a way to recognize and honor special people and events. If you wish publication of the reason for your contribution, please provide it here:

Contribution in honor of:

[please provide name or other details]

Donation amount: _____

Your name and address:

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Contributions to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

Please send this form and your check to:
WLAM Foundation
645 Griswold
3300 Penobscot Building
Detroit, MI 48226

If you wish to charge your contribution, please call 1-800-654-5959.



The 2005 Outstanding Women Law Student-Awardees



Carole Chiamp in the CEC Kitchen



WLAMF Trustees with Speaker Carole Chiamp



Ford Awardees with Trustee Dolores Nunez Studier and Ford General Counsel Dennis Ross



Reception at the Ford Conference and Event Center