

Women's National Law Center

[Acknowledgments:]

It is a great privilege for me to be with all of you this morning, and also to be in the company of and who share my deep commitment to improving the health and health care of women in this country.

Like so many of the issues important to women, we have learned -- from our battles for health care, child care, reproductive rights, equal pay -- that we must be equal partners with men in the leadership positions and in the agenda-setting meetings in order to influence what goes on in the public and private sector.

And we have learned that the struggle for the substance of an issue can't even begin without first a struggle to gain a seat in the discussion.

But women have made significant progress here. Unprecedented numbers of women are in executive boardrooms and cabinet level posts today. And I'm especially pleased by the progress women have made in the legal profession. The total number of women lawyers and judges has grown from 5% in 1970 to 24% in 1990. And while only 8.5% of law school students in 1970 were women, by 1990, 44% of the law school students were women.

That means women are going to be able to bring their unique perspectives and experiences to the legal system for the benefit of women as well as for the benefit of society -- from how the laws are interpreted to which cases are heard, from who gets representation to who becomes partner, women, like yourselves, are changing the face and function of the legal system in meaningful ways.

But challenges still remain in the legal profession as they do elsewhere. Women report greater and increasing dissatisfaction with the practice of law. Women of color continue to hit barriers even at the entry level, while all women strike the glass ceiling at the top of the profession.

WNC's [One of the most interesting pieces of research I've seen recently was a survey released earlier this month by the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor. In an unprecedented outreach effort, this Administration asked more than 250,000 women to fill out surveys about their lives.

What we heard is that women who are in the workforce want what all of us want. They want equal pay for the work they do and the opportunity to balance their career and family responsibilities.

When the results of this survey, called Women Count, were announced in Washington a few weeks ago, three women spoke about their personal experiences. One woman had joined the workforce late in life and talked about how important work was for her because it provided health insurance for her family. Another woman spoke about how difficult it was to go home at the end of the day and take care of her children's needs, particularly to help with homework, to listen, to be there for them. And the third woman had been in a non-traditional job, raised three daughters as a single mother, and all she really wanted was the chance to compete for promotion and job opportunities she thought she deserved.

Wages
As I listened to each of these women I knew that, at one time or another, I had been in every situation they found themselves in -- and I think most of us can say that. I knew the feelings they described. The conflict. The guilt. The excitement. The confusion. The hopes and dreams.

But I think all of us in this room, and all of the women who stay at home doing an incredible job raising their children full-time, know that there is only one person who really knows what path is appropriate for a woman -- and that is the woman herself. Each of us must make choices that fit the particular circumstances of our individual lives. And those choices must be respected, rather than labeled or categorized or judged by some irrelevant of out-of-date standard.

So we must support one another. Serve as mentors for younger women. And be activists in our struggle for career opportunities and personal happiness. I know that you are here because you have a sense of the challenges and struggles we face -- not only as women, but as a society. And *Wages*

SOURCE: American Bar Association
Commission on Women in the Profession
(312) 988-5668

1993-1994 Class
ABA accredited law schools (95% of all law schools)
44% of all law students were female

1990 Census Bureau
190,145 total number women lawyers and judges
24% of all lawyers and judges

In the Justice Department, the attorney general, the deputy attorney general and seven of the 11 assistant attorney generals are women.

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Message

Kathy -
as we discussed.

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Original following in mail: Yes ☐ No ☒

IN AUGUST 1987, THE AMERICAN BAR Association created the Commission on Women in the Profession and established these primary objectives:

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION



COMMISSION ON
WOMEN
IN THE PROFESSION

I Assess the current status of women in the legal profession and identify their career paths and goals.

II Identify barriers that prevent women lawyers from full participation in the work, responsibilities and rewards of the profession.

III Develop educational programs to address discrimination against women lawyers and the unique problems they encounter in pursuing their professional careers.

IV Make recommendations to the ABA for action to solve problems the Commission identifies.

The ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, twelve members appointed by the ABA President, develops programs, policies and products to advance and assist women lawyers and to educate the profession about work and family issues that affect all lawyers.

WOMEN IN LAW

A look at the numbers ...

In assessing the status of women in the profession, the Commission continues to collect statistical information that accurately reflects the increasing participation of women in all areas of the legal profession.

The total number of women lawyers and judges has grown dramatically since 1970, according to the U.S. Census:

YEAR	TOTAL LAWYERS/JUDGES	TOTAL WOMEN	% WOMEN
1970	274,253	14,225	5%
1980	455,642	74,037	14%
1990	589,326	190,145	24%

Women currently represent approximately 25% of all ABA members, slightly more than their number in the profession.

The number of women in law school also has increased significantly according to the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar:

YEAR	TOTAL WOMEN LAW STUDENTS	% WOMEN
1970	6,682	8.5%
1975	26,020	23.4%
1980	40,831	34.1%
1990	54,097	42.5%
1992	56,644	42.6%

The Commission has undertaken an analysis of statistical data on women lawyers. A report, entitled *Women in the Law: A Look at the Numbers*, should be available in late 1994.

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Appendix 1 Employment of Women and Minorities
 Compiled by the National Association for Law Placement

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