



President's Page



Kathy Jo Cook
 2008-2009 WBA President

We've come a long way in 30 years, but there's still years of work ahead

In 1978, a small group of women activist lawyers banded together to form an organization that would seek justice and equality for women in general, but more particularly, for women in the legal profession. As I write to you now, thirty years later, as the President of an association of more than 1500 members, I am conscious of the progress that we have made toward that end. I am also acutely aware of the work that lies ahead of us if we are to achieve parity with our male counterparts.

It is not enough that some women have achieved success in our profession. Women have been graduating from law schools in equal numbers with men for many years, a fact which has deceived our young daughters to believe that the advertisers were right, that we have "come a long way, baby." Sadly, while the successes of a few are raised like flags and waved about in proof of our progress, the discrimination against the group as a whole is hidden behind closed doors in the corners of our offices and boardrooms where it resides slightly out of sight but alive and well.

What does that mean for my "to do" list for the upcoming year? It means three things. First, we will be continuing our dialogue with law firms about the obstacles that often prevent women from advancing, including the difficulties associated with work-life balance, the need to improve business development skills, and the lack of strong mentors. We will continue to challenge those firms to take real and meaningful steps to change the culture of the practice of law to facilitate the advancement of women. This year, we will be releasing and asking firms to join with us in implementing the Women's Bar Association's Best Practices for the Advancement of Women in Law Firms, model policies and procedures that law firms can use to recruit, retain and gain valuable leadership from their women lawyers. Second, we will be taking real steps to deepen our commitment to members in the northern, southern and western parts of the state. Having spent a great deal of my professional life outside of Boston, I recognize that women across the entire state are facing similar problems. Finally, for the first time in its history, we plan to expand our outreach to the business community. We will be asking successful businesswomen to meet with us to discuss ways that women in business and women in law can work together to help each other grow professionally.

Join with us in this our thirtieth year! Together we can make a difference.

Past President's Messages- Julia Huston, 2007-2008 President
[WBA's Initiatives to Advance Women in the Legal Profession](#) (January 2008)

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