



## OHIO WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Our purpose is to promote the leadership, advancement and interests of women attorneys through professional education, networking and the exchange of ideas between our members, local bar associations, business and the community.

# OWBA, a Woman Attorney's Friend



Valoria C. Hoover

On May 12, 2010, I was honored to become the 19th president of the OWBA. It is an honor and a true privilege to become the president of the Ohio Women's Bar Association. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you an excerpt of my remarks from that day.

It has been said: "To love what you do and feel that it matters, how anything could be more fun?" I love what I do. For me, being a lawyer has always mattered. I also believe the OWBA matters as a well-respected association that advances and promotes women attorneys.

The Ohio Women's Bar Association has had 18 presidents before me. Each of those 18 presidents had a collection

of women who volunteered their time, their talent and in many instances their treasure. I am humbled by all the commitment, passion and effort that not only those 18 past presidents gave, but that each of the officers, trustees, committee chairs and committee members that came before gave to our OWBA.

At our Leading in Style event in Cleveland, the first president of the OWBA, Pam Hultin and I had a chance to briefly talk. She told me that even when the OWBA was being formed in 1991 many people, including some of the founders, questioned whether it was necessary to have a women's bar association. I too have heard this question many times. While many answers to this question exist, the following are a few key reasons why the OWBA is needed today.

First, while for at least 15 years, women have made up about 50 percent of law school graduates, and currently make-up about 50 percent of first, second and seventh year associates, women only make up 16 percent of equity partners. Second, only 29.8 percent of businesses in Ohio are owned by women. Third, although the number of women judges has nearly doubled in the past 17 years, women still represent only about 25 percent of all Ohio judges. Additionally, as we know from the 2009 National Association of Women Lawyers survey, almost 80 percent of national law firms have at most only one woman in their top 10 rainmakers.

The Ohio State Bar Association just released its gender fairness survey, which shows a vast difference in perception exists between women and men lawyers in Ohio. For example, 66.4 percent of Ohio women attorneys do not believe they will be treated the same as men when it comes to pay and compensation. And, 70 percent of Ohio women attorneys do not believe they have the same opportunity for promotion and advancement as men.

*-continued on page 5*

## Inside this issue

Introducing Valoria C. Hoover.....	2
Members in the News .....	4
List of Sustaining Members .....	5
New Members .....	5
OWBA Co-Sponsors Women's Forum .....	6
Calendar of Events .....	6
Perceptions of Women in the Legal Profession .....	8
Mentors: Kick-Off Luncheon.....	9
There's No Place Like Home .....	10
The Case for Incentive Trusts .....	13
Square One: Tips of the Trade .....	14
Second annual Women's Impact Lecture series .....	15
Annual Meeting .....	16
Leading with Style .....	18
Women's Leadership Luncheon....	19