

# LAW MATTERS

October 2020

Volume XXXII No. 6



*LAW Remembers*  
*Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Sara Anne Quinn



Last month, the nation lost Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg was looked up to by so many people. However, I think that as attorneys, and for most of us, as women attorneys, we felt a special admiration for her and bond to her. Each step of Justice Ginsburg's career is remarkable. As a law student, attorney, and then judge, she was a trailblazer, a leader, and a fighter. She spent her entire life working for equality. Not all trailblazers make their way to the top and take the time to intentionally lift others up with them or make sure they left the path a little clearer for the next one through. But Justice Ginsburg did just that.

In the time since she has passed, I have heard about some amazing memories a few of our members have of meeting her - even just seeing her - and how impactful that was on them. I have heard what a beacon of encouragement she was to many of you. I personally cannot put into words the impact she had on my life. I do not say that lightly or as a turn of phrase, simply to mean that I am speechless. I cannot express the impact she had on my life because I honestly do not think I am fully aware of the breadth of the impact she had. Because of Justice Ginsburg and other women before me, I went to law school thinking the world was limitless for women, never questioning that I was capable and qualified to be there, but also never second-guessing, never questioning that I was capable and qualified to be there, but also never questioning that I was *welcome* there. Of course, I now have seen or experienced more of the obstacles women continue to face in the legal profession and know that my younger self was a little naïve. But I do recognize that doors were propped open for me and my peers that she had to claw her way through.

This week, LAW, along with the NBA, co-hosted a program honoring her life. I hope you were able to join us. Many other women I look up to with such awe and admiration will be shared their thoughts, memories, and reflections on the life of Justice Ginsburg. The program was called "RBG: A Meaningful Life" after Justice Ginsburg's quote:

"I tell law students . . . If you are going to be a lawyer and just practice your profession, you have a skill—very much like a plumber. But if you want to be a true professional, you will do something outside yourself . . . something that makes life a little better for people less fortunate than you."

Justice Ginsburg epitomized this definition of a meaningful life, and I see that in so many of our members, as well. Thank you, Justice Ginsburg, and thank you to each of you working to leave the world a little better than you found it, too.

### In This Issue

LAW Members Share Their Thoughts About & Personal Experiences With RBG	3
Founder's Spotlight: Karen Scott Neal	6
Past President's Spotlight: Judge Aleta Trauger	7
The Halftime of Your Career Recap	8
Upcoming Program	9
Committee Updates – Diversity & Health & Wellness	10
Achieving Sisterhood in the Workplace	11
Voter Suppression Recap	14
Hobby Corner	16
Sustaining Members	19

## 2020-2021 LAW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Board

Sara Anne Quinn, *President*  
Kimberly Faye, *President-Elect*  
Courtney Orr, *Secretary*  
Leighann Ness, *Treasurer*  
LaTonnsya Burney, *2nd Year Director*  
Shellie Handelsman, *2nd Year Director*  
Brooke Coplon, *1st Year Director*  
Tabitha Robinson, *1st Year Director*  
Amanda Bradley, *Archivist*  
Samantha Simpson, *Archivist*  
Hannah Kay Freeman, *Newsletter Editor*  
Callie Jennings, *Newsletter Editor*  
Caroline Sapp, *Newsletter Editor*  
Emily Warth, *Newsletter Editor*  
Christen Blackburn, *Immediate Past President*

### Committee Co-Chairs

#### Breakfast Committee

Kaley Bell/April Knox/Erin Palmer Polly

#### Community Relations

Candace Fox/Ann Murphy

#### Diversity

Mariam Stockton/Malaka Watson

#### Health & Wellness

Valerie Diden Moore/Rachel Taylor

#### Judicial Appointments & Elections

Katie Marshall/Bernadette Welch

#### Legislation & Litigation

Judea Davis/Jessica Lim/Caroline Spore

#### Membership

Jenny Charles, Abby Sparks

Judge Marietta Shipley

#### Mentoring/Member Development

Alaina Beach/Nancy Krider Corley

Devon Landman/Kimberly Veirs

#### Networking

Katie Bennett/Stephanie Chavez

Shundra Crumpton/Blake Howell

#### Programs

Rachel Berg/Mandy Floyd

Corey Harkey/Elizabeth Moreton

#### 2021 Marion Griffin Women's Symposium

Liz Sitgreaves/Kyonztè Toombs

#### 40th Anniversary Celebration

Christen Blackburn

#### Executive Director

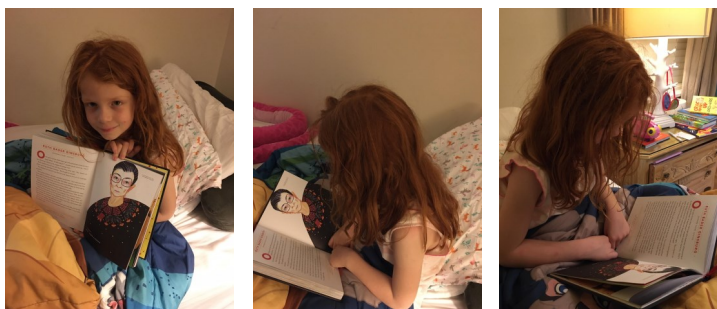
Melanie Gober Grand

LAW Matters is a monthly publication of the Lawyers' Association for women—Marion Griffin Chapter, P. O. Box 210436, Nashville, Tennessee, 37221-0436. Voicemail: 615.708.1827 Fax: 888.834.7370; [www.law-nashville.org](http://www.law-nashville.org).

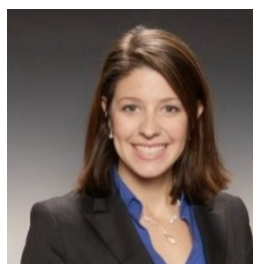
## LAW Members Share Their Thoughts About and Personal Experiences with RBG



RBG lived the kind of life that will continue to inspire women. Here are some pictures of my seven year-old daughter reading about RBG.— *Jenny Howard, General Counsel, TN Department of Environment and Conservation*



I met Justice Ginsberg before she was the notorious in 2000 when she presided over the wedding of H. David Raines, our good friend, to Nina Totenberg. She was my height but very slender and spoke softly. I remember her commenting when we were talking that she had not met many attorneys from Tennessee. She was so approachable. My daughters are obsessed with her and view her as such a hero. So thank I can tell my granddaughters that I met her.—*Helen Rogers, Founder, Rogers, Shea & Spanos*



Ruth Bader Ginsburg was only the second woman EVER to serve on the US Supreme Court. The progress that her life embodied and that her life's work helped to achieve is so very recent, and her death threw that reality into bold relief for me.

One of the highlights of my law school career was serving on the law review at Ohio State when she was our symposium's keynote speaker. Among other stories that night, she told us about wearing super baggy clothes to hide the fact that she was pregnant from her male colleagues. She was petite and unassuming and whip smart, and it was an absolute joy to be in her presence. Every single female attorney I know idolizes her, and to say she was a trailblazer just doesn't even seem to do it justice. She was one of the people who literally made it possible for me to have the job I have today as a female law professor and mother of two.

—*Kristi Wilcox Arth, Assistant Professor of Law, Belmont University College of Law*



Dynamite comes in small packages.

—*Brenda Dowdle, Attorney, Shulman, LeRoy & Bennett*



Ruth Bader Ginsburg was in a class of her own!

Posted by the son of my college roommate: “Come on people. RBG isn’t dead. She’s a f..... Jedi. Her energy has returned to the Force and is being absorbed by every little girl, present and future. No one can stop that wave. Blast one of her favorite operas and feel the energy passing. Do an RBG workout in the morning. Get back to work. Dissent. (Link here to Don Giovanni opera.)”

RBG would have approved this message (except for the profanity).

—*Chancellor Carol McCoy, Retired*



I had a chance meeting with Justice Ginsburg on my visit to the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in 2007. Overwhelmed by the choices I was soon about to make regarding my professional future, I walked out of the building dreading the long drive back to my college dorm room. As I exited the building, I noticed a few large security guards flanking a very small woman who I immediately recognized. She was already smiling at me when I mustered a nervous “Hi,” and kept walking. For someone who had spent nearly two years studying for the LSAT, applying for law schools, and finishing my senior thesis, it was like the childhood version of me seeing one of my favorite professional athletes.

I chose to attend Indiana University for law school, focusing on Equal Protection and civil rights under mentors Professors Maria Pabon Lopez and Florence Roisman—my personal RBGs. As I progressed through law school and my legal career I learned more about Justice Ginsburg’s sacrifices and battles, and it kept me on track when the tasks felt arduous and rote. She will forever be an inspiration to those who want to affect change, and who stand up to protect the rights of all people.

—*Blake Howell, Talent Manager at Legility*



Justice Ginsburg might have been riding a Shetland pony in this showing, but she out jumped most of the highest steeds!

—*Angie Washington, Attorney, Washington Law & Government Relations*



I remember being keenly aware of who RBG was at the time she was appointed to the Supreme Court. I was in middle school, and I remember telling my English teacher that what I wanted to be when I grew up was the second female Supreme Court justice until Ruth Baker Ginsburg beat me to it. (I was snarky even then!) I related to RBG later in life when I decided to pursue law school as a single mom. I worked full-time for a law firm during the day and had classes two to three nights a week. If RBG could do it, so could I. I was in law school when some of her greatest dissents came out—the Hobby Lobby and voting rights act opinions stick out to me in particular. She became my hero, and I have never wept so much about the death of a person who I’ve never met or known personally. I grieve the loss of this amazing woman who championed women’s rights and devoted her life to public service in the courts.

—Amanda Bradley, *Of Counsel, Hartzog & Silva, PLLC*

Perhaps it is a good thing . . . showing some progress anyway . . . That some young women lawyers have no idea what blatant sex discrimination is. They did not live in the time when there were only male judges; when older male lawyers who did not know you called you “honey” and sweetheart”; when you were excluded from meetings or did not have a chair at the table; and were likely paid less than your male counterpart. Justice Ginsburg is to be respected and revered for what she stood for, what she means to women lawyers, and for her apparent goodwill to those who did not agree with her position.

—Nancy King Crawford, *Law Office of Nancy King Crawford*



Portrait of RBG by CeCe Quinn, age 5

*As the Lawyers' Association for Women—Marion Griffin Chapter celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, we are looking back on and honoring our past. As part of the celebration, we plan are highlighting a LAW founder and past president each month, finding out what drew them to LAW, what they remember most about their time as president, and their reflections on LAW's role in the community now and in the future.*



## Founder's Spotlight

### Karen Scott Neal

**What were you doing in your career at the time the Marion Griffin chapter of LAW was founded?** After graduating from law school in 1979, I began practicing with a small firm in DC. However, my heart was in Nashville, so when I had the opportunity to interview for a clerkship with newly nominated federal district Judge John Nixon, I leapt at the chance. Amazingly, he hired me and when he went on the bench in the spring of 1980, Claudia Bonnyman and I started as Judge Nixon's first clerks. Juliet Griffin was down the hall clerking for Judge Wiseman and between Claudia and Juliet, I was introduced to many of the women practicing law in Nashville. I was incredibly lucky to have stumbled into a network of such amazing women.

**How did you come to become one of the founders?** Claudia was involved in some preliminary discussions about the formation of a women's bar association and she invited me to a gathering that turned out to be the organizational meeting. Discussions centered on the need for and purposes that a bar association for women would serve. Some concerns were expressed about possible negative perceptions by the traditional bar. Nashville was a very different city in January 1981. Women were not allowed as members of the downtown civic clubs, such as Rotary, the Exchange Club, the Chamber of Commerce, dining clubs like the Nashville City Club and the Cumberland Club, or the YMCA. Very few women were in private practice because the opportunities weren't there, most worked in the public sector and with Legal Services. Cissy Daughtrey was serving on the Tennessee Court of Appeals as the first woman on a court of record in Tennessee, but I don't recall any other women on the bench at that time. So, the consensus developed that a definite need existed and the organization was born.

**What's a favorite memory from your time with LAW?** There's no one favorite memory, but that first meeting is still with me. I can see the room, the circle of chairs, and recall the discussions. It was inspiring and empowering.

**What has your membership in LAW provided for you over the years?** Support, collegiality, and hope. Learning from others about managing the challenges of a demanding career while raising a family and maintaining friendships - and that there would be awesome days and soul crushing days, but that the struggle was worth it.

**What do you think LAW has provided to the Nashville legal community since it was founded?** LAW is a collective and powerful voice for a different and vitally important perspective on a number of issues affecting members of the bar and the community. The landscape of the legal and business community has dramatically altered through the persistence and drive of the members of LAW.

**How has the practice of law changed for women since LAW was founded?** In January 1981, the majority of women practicing law in Nashville were in that room discussing the formation of LAW. Many went on to become the "first" to attain a number of positions previously unavailable to women. Today, women attorneys in Nashville number in the hundreds. In 1981, women represented a minority of law school graduates. Since 1990, at least 50% of law school graduates have been women and today nearly 45% of first year associates are women. Great strides have been made in the appointment and election of women to the bench. Judge Cissy Daughtrey (on whose shoulders we all stand) and two other women from Tennessee sit on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and Judge Aleta Trauger has served as a federal district judge in the Middle District of Tennessee for many years. Women hold three of the five seats on the Tennessee Supreme Court. At least half of the judges in Davidson County courts are women. LAW members serve as general counsels to state and federal agencies, non-profits and businesses and staff those legal departments. Many women walk the halls of traditional law firms as associates and partners. In 1981, to become a partner in a law firm you had to create your own, like Margaret Behm and Marietta Shipley did in 1980. I was the first lawyer in my firm to give birth - no one quite knew what to do about that and now most workplaces have family leave policies. Due primarily to the persuasive voices and work of members of LAW, Nashville civic and business institutions opened their membership to women and it's impossible to imagine the "Y" without the presence of women.

**What do you hope LAW does in the next 40 years?** There's still much work to be done. Although approximately 45% of law firm associates are women, the percentage of women equity partners hovers around 17% to 20%. Women generally earn less than their male counterparts. The statistics for women of color are much worse. Retention of women in the profession is a significant issue. While overt bias is rare, implicit bias exists and impacts everyone. Women practicing law face additional challenges balancing caring for their families and a demanding career. It's imperative that the profession acknowledge and adjust. LAW has effected great change in the Nashville legal community over the past forty years and undoubtedly, it will continue to do so over the next forty.



## Past President's Spotlight Judge Aleta Trauger 1982-1983

**Why did you first get involved in LAW?** During the year that I was working in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago (down the hall from Scott Turow!), I received a call from Cissy Daughtrey that we were going to form a women's bar association in Nashville. Cissy's buddies from California in the National Association of Women Judges had told her that their women's bar association was responsible for getting so many women lawyers appointed to judgeships in California. If Cissy was not the only woman judge in Tennessee at that time, she was one of two or three and the only one sitting on the appellate bench.

**What memories do you have about the formation of LAW?** We Founders had intense discussions about whether the organization should be called the Lawyers' Association **FOR** Women or the Lawyers' Association **OF** Women. The view that we wanted men to be able to be members and did not want to be perceived as a separatist organization prevailed. We immediately embarked upon enrolling supportive men in the organization.

**What LAW committees did you serve on before or after becoming president?** Most of my committee work with LAW and TLAW focused on getting Tennessee's governors to appoint women to the bench when there were vacancies, which was a real challenge, given the fact that the old boys' network usually netted an appointment for a male before we even knew there was a vacancy!

**What has changed about LAW and/or the Nashville legal community since you first got involved in LAW?** When my husband and I (in our 40's) decided to adopt a child, I knew only a few women litigators with children, and one of them was already cutting back to part-time. Now it seems that almost every woman litigator who appears before me has children. You all have seemingly figured out how to have it all by changing firm policy and culture from within and by having supportive partners.

**What do you hope LAW's role is in the Nashville legal community going forward?** I hope for LAW that it remains a respected bar association, providing valuable service to the legal community, important networking, and leadership opportunities for women lawyers who often go on to head other bar associations, non-profits, and business entities.

**What woman inspires you and why?** Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Martha Craig Daughtry has always been my most important mentor and model, beginning as my professor at Vanderbilt Law School in the 1970's. She has served in this role for half the women lawyers in Nashville, and we are so fortunate that she left so many broken glass ceilings in her wake. And, of course, I must add Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whose tenacity in the face of fierce health challenges was remarkable and whose life's work secured for women rights denied for centuries.

# The Halftime of Your Career

By: Tabitha Robinson

On September 10, 2020, LAW hosted its second panel in a three-part series, “Connecting with Members across Generations.” This panel featured prominent and successful lawyers in the prime of their professions. The panelists discussed issues relevant to lawyers at the midpoint of their careers, including changing paths, seeking new challenges, and planning for the future.

Candice Reed, EVP & President of Latitude Legal, moderated the panel. Featured on the panel were Denise Ceule, Chief Legal Officer of naviHealth; Honorable Anne Martin, Chancellor of the Davidson County Chancery Court, Part II; Cynthia Cutler Moon, Director of Recruiting & Placement at Latitude Legal; Dianna Shew, Senior Assistant Attorney General at the Tennessee Office of Attorney General; and Camille Steward, Staffing & Employee Relations Manager at Nashville Electric Service.

The panel began with each panelist discussing their career paths. Dianna Shew explained how her passions in commercial and employment litigation led her to being a partner at a law firm. At one point, Dianna felt like she had achieved what she wanted to do as a partner and therefore sought out a new experience at CoreCivic. There, she was able to learn about a publicly traded company inside and out, but she still felt like a “frustrated litigator” and had the urge to do “good, complex litigation.” This led her to her current position at the Attorney General's Office, where her primary role is defending constitutional challenges.

Chancellor Martin discussed her decision-making process for running for judicial office. Prior to running for office, she was a longtime partner at a law firm. Although she knew she would miss the litigation “highs” and the relationships with her clients, she wanted a change that would allow her to have more time to care for her special needs child. She knew she loved being in court, especially in Chancery Court. So, when there was an opening for Chancery Court Judge, she ran for the position. She was confident that becoming a judge would make her a “happier person and better mother.” Chancellor Martin remarked that becoming a judge has been a “great second act” in her career.

Denise Ceule knew that she wanted to do corporate or tax law since law school, and accordingly, she became a corporate and securities lawyer for a big law firm. After a few years, she saw a job posting for CareMark RX that required seven to ten years of experience. While she was interested in the job, she did not apply, as she did not have the required experience. Despite this, CareMark called her asking her to join the company. During her time at CareMark, she assisted with a merger and was placed on the company’s Go To Market Initiative team. After a few years at another company, Emdeon, she began her current role as Chief Legal Officer at NaviHealth. In recapping her career background, Denise noted, “sometimes you can navigate job changes, and sometimes they are handed to you.” She emphasized the importance of working for people you like.

Camille Steward began her career as a clerk for a federal court judge. After her clerkship, she became an associate and worked her way up to partner at a large law firm. She then moved in-house at Nashville Electric Service (NES), working primarily as a Labor & Employment Attorney. A few years ago, NES’s CEO asked her to fill the open Staffing & Employee Relations Manager position at the company. As a manager, Camille noted that she uses “every aspect of her legal career.” She mentioned that her litigation skills were beneficial in becoming a manager, and she has since refined her skillset, especially in terms of





teamwork. Camille concluded that moving from an L&E attorney to a Staffing and Employee Relations Manager was not a huge change in terms of subject matter, but it was nevertheless a huge change from the managerial aspect.

Cynthia Moon began her career as an associate at a big law firm and then became a solo practitioner and eventually an attorney for a trucking company. Cynthia strived for personal and professional happiness, but was not receiving it in her practice. Therefore, Cynthia decided to “call it quits for a while.” In making the decision to take a sabbatical, Cynthia asked herself, “How bad would it be if I turned my back?” Cynthia ended up traveling the entire United States with her husband. After her sabbatical, she was recruited to the team at Latitude. Cynthia noted that the position “fell into her lap.”

After discussing career paths, Candice asked the panelists about taking risks in their career moves. Dianna mentioned that in making the choice to take a career risk, she asked herself, “What will I do if I stay [in my current position] until I retire?” She also noted that it is important to be patient with the process. Dianna said that she self-reflected for “two to four years,” and her opportunities gradually unfolded. Denise recounted her experience as a single mom and sole breadwinner and how taking a risk meant having an intentional conversation with herself. Before making a career change, Denise had to ask herself whether she was happy professionally and personally. Chancellor Martin noted that many women think they are too young to run for a judicial position and that no one will take them seriously. She emphasized that those women should run anyway because judicial openings are rare. Chancellor Martin advised, “There is no such perfect time” to run for a position. She also emphasized the importance of having a trusted strategist in taking risks.

The panelists then discussed their strategies when feeling stuck in their careers. Cynthia discussed the importance of connections and not burning bridges so there are opportunities when the time to make a career change comes. Dianna emphasized that making yourself happier should be the main argument for making a change, and that making a change can alter your outlook and enthusiasm. Denise urged lawyers to trust their gut and deflect the negative comments because “there will always be people that want to push you back to your original square.”

Lastly, the panelists discussed their plans for the second half of their careers. Denise explained that she wants to be a present parent and she will ensure her next career move allows for the opportunity. Camille mentioned that now that her children are older, she feels like it is a good time to “turn up” her career while still being present in their lives.

“The Halftime of Your Career” was an interactive and engaging panel discussing the unique experiences and issues facing lawyers at the midpoint of their careers. Stay tuned for details on the last panel in LAW’s three-part series, “Planning for Life After Law.”



*Tabitha Robinson is a First-Year Director for LAW and a Staff Attorney for Nashville Electric Service.*





LAW's statement on racism is not a fleeting thought; it is a call to action. It is a call to eradicate racism in the workplace. It is a call to promote diversity in the legal profession and within our organization. It is a call to not sit quietly while racial injustice unfolds around us. It is a call to open the dialogue, speak up, say more, and to end the silence and complacency that exists in the legal profession. The Diversity Committee encourages each member to make a conscious effort to do your part in advancing LAW's call to action.

To that end, we must keep the conversation going. We must stay engaged; we must read; we must listen. In the Diversity Committee's first installment of recommended readings/podcasts, we take a look into the protests and biases that have propelled the Black Lives Matter movement.

[The Author of 'White Fragility' Doesn't Think 'Most White People Care About Racial Injustice',](#) Cape Up with Jonathan Capehart (Podcast) (June 2, 2020)

[Who is "Karen" and Why Does She Keep Calling the Police on Black Men?,](#) On the Media (Podcast) (May 29, 2020)

[Op-Ed: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: Don't understand the protests? What you're seeing is people pushed to the edge,](#) Los Angeles Times (May 2020)

## HEALTH & WELLNESS BOOK CLUB



The Health & Wellness Book Club read [Homegoing](#) by Yaa Gyasi. [Homegoing](#) is a novel that shows the impact of slavery through eight generations of a family from West Africa. Each chapter depicts the life of a descendant of two sisters—one who was taken as a slave and one who was not.

Throughout the novel, Gyasi shows the reader facets of history that are relatively unknown, or in some cases, likely intentionally forgotten. For example, LAW readers were particularly struck by the story of a character who was arrested for a bogus crime during Reconstruction and forced to work in the coal mines outside Birmingham, Alabama with other convicts as his sentence.

Overall, the LAW Book Club found this book to be a fascinating, eye-opening take on American history and recommends the book to anyone trying to learn more about the history of race in America or simply read a compelling novel.

# Achieving Sisterhood in the Workplace

By Jane Salem

Consider the following statistics from recent American Bar Association studies:<sup>i</sup>

- Fifty-seven percent of women lawyers of color reported being confused for custodial, administrative, or courtroom staff, as compared to seven percent of white men.
- Women of color were the most likely to report that they had to go “above and beyond” to get the same respect and recognition as others and that they are held to a higher standard in the workplace.
- Women attorneys of color are significantly underrepresented as law firm equity partners and law firm leaders, making up only about three percent of all equity partners (men and women) and only 12 percent of female equity partners.

In June, the Lawyers’ Association for Women held a discussion within its mentoring circles about racism and sexism in the workplace, using the Harvard Business Review’s “Women at Work” podcast episode, “Sisterhood is Power,” as a launch pad.<sup>ii</sup>

The podcast is both eye-opening and practical. Below are some of the tips it offered on what white women can do promote “sisterhood” in the workplace. (But men, please feel free to follow these suggestions, too.)

“We saw that workplace sisterhood is too rare, and that we women hold ourselves back when we let race and other differences divide us,” the podcast hosts explained. “We also recognize that we will be a stronger force against both sexism and racism at work if we know and trust each other.”

The podcast begins with interviews of Professors Ella Bell Smith and Stella Nkomo, authors of the book *Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity*. The book investigated the experiences of Black and white female managers in corporate America. It came out in 2001 as the culmination of eight years of research.

Among their findings back then was that people were talking about women in management, but they meant *white* women, not women of color. Women of color were “invisible” in leadership positions. Further, managers seemed oblivious to the existence of any barriers, believing instead that advancement was solely merit-based.

The podcast also featured interviews with Professors Tina Opie and Verónica Rabelo. They agreed that not much has changed since *Our Separate Ways* was released, but they said that today more resources are available for white women to learn about Black women’s experiences, and to take action. For example, social media and especially Twitter can now be used to educate, share stories and strategies, and mobilize.

Rabelo emphasized that progress isn’t inevitable; it’s “negotiated, claimed and demanded” through hard work and intentional efforts to foster solidarity.

She said: “Sisterhood doesn’t mean we’re the same. It doesn’t mean that our struggles are the same. It doesn’t even mean that we have to like each other. But it is about viewing our struggles as interconnected, and this willingness to learn from each other’s experiences – and not throwing each other under the bus.”

Among the tips from this podcast:

**First and foremost, educate yourself.** Read *Our Separate Ways*, or other books and articles on the topic. Listen to this podcast, which lists a number of resources for additional information. Rabelo recommended learning about advocacy groups such as Showing up for Racial Justice.<sup>iii</sup> Or in your free time, check out television programs such as “Insecure” and “Being Mary Jane” that portray Black women’s experiences in the workplace.

**White women need to ask, “Where are the women who don’t look like me?”** Rabelo said that white women in positions of power need to flex that muscle. They need to create and promote opportunities for women of color in their workplaces and communities. Research shows white people are more willing to listen to other white people about race-related messages. Don’t be “angry,” but do be “passionate,” Opie added. Ask follow-up questions if you’re told “this isn’t a priority.” Don’t let it be dismissed.

**Beware of “blind spots.”** Among them is “white obliviousness.” In Bell Smith and Nkomo’s study, a whopping 90% of Black women said they had conflicts with white women at work, while only 4% of white women reported conflicts with Black women. In other words, white women “overinflated” the nature of their relationships with women of color, when in reality they had no actual relationship or camaraderie.

Another blind spot, per Rabelo, is defensiveness or “white fragility.” This is when a white woman displays discomfort, such as crying, when confronted by information about racial inequality. The tears, essentially, overpower the conversation.

**Recognize the stereotypes.** Bell Smith described the stereotypes for Black women. “The Mammy,” a/k/a “Big Mama,” is the Black woman at work who’s the caretaker. She solves everyone’s emotional problems and isn’t recognized for her analytical contributions. Then there’s the “Angry Black woman,” or “Sapphire,” who just doesn’t smile enough and has a chip on her shoulder.

When you hear coworkers (or anyone) talking about Black women, implicitly or explicitly, in these terms, Shut. Them. Down.

**Organizations need to do a better job of “storytelling.”** Bell Smith said that frequently no one discusses the Black women who came before them in the workplace. Women of color often feel they have no “legacy” to stand on, which can lead to “imposter syndrome.” Talk about the women of color who preceded the current women of color.

**Affinity groups need to be more inclusive.** Bell Smith said that women’s affinity groups tend to attract white women only, while women of color go to the ethnic affinity groups. It’s not enough to say, “The door is open” to women of color; invite them, again and again, and understand that their concerns will be different – they contend with racism as well as work/family balance, etc.

**“Apologize”/acknowledge.** Opie doesn’t mean that white women literally have to say “I’m sorry” to every Black woman. In fact, she’d rather not be the repository for anyone’s guilt. Rather, they make the point that acknowledging a past wrong can go a long way toward building a current and future relationship.

The first step of an acknowledgement, per Rabelo, is simply to listen to a woman of color, if and when she wants to talk about a past injustice. Thank her for sharing, and validate her bravery. And don’t judge or give advice, unless she asks for it. Ask: “Do you want me to listen, or would you like me to respond?” Or, try to count to five or ten in your head before speaking. And follow-up later. Show support.

**Be authentic.** Opie cringes when a white woman, or someone she doesn’t know well, says “Hey girl” or calls her “girlfriend.” It’s even worse when the speaker’s accent changes. In other words, don’t express “assumed familiarity that’s racialized.” Watch your body language, too.

Also, be patient. Bell said she has built strong relationships with white women colleagues, over time, through shared experiences.

So, if you’ve come this far, let’s end with the benefits of sisterhood at work.

Opie said that achieving equal opportunity benefits all women. Moreover, people in a trusting, connected workplace get much more done, and everyone is happy to be there.

Finally, it’s a “model” for others: Opie explained, “Can women—what if we were able to get ourselves together? What would that represent to rest of the world, in terms of having a multicultural society? In other words, how can we use

ourselves as a way to say, ‘This is possible. We’re getting along as women. Now, can we get along based on religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender orientation or gender preference, socioeconomic status?’ It’s a model to hopefully reflect how we can advance as a society as well.”

---

<sup>i</sup>*LEFT OUT and LEFT BEHIND: The Hurdles, Hassles, and Heartaches of Achieving Long-Term Legal Careers for Women of Color*, by Destiny Peery, Paulette Brown, and Eileen Letts. The American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Legal Profes-

<sup>ii</sup><https://hbr.org/podcast/2018/11/sisterhood-is-power>

<sup>iii</sup><https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>; it has a Nashville chapter, by the way.



*Jane Salem is a staff attorney with the TN Court of Workers' Compensation Claims in Nashville. She is a frequent contributor to the LAW newsletter.*

## **What Happened to the New Admittees' Breakfast?**

**The committee co-chairs are planning a virtual celebration for New Admittees in early 2021.**

**LAW will continue the tradition in today's unprecedented times.**

## VOTER SUPPRESSION PROGRAM RECAP

By: Emily Warth

On September 22, 2020, National Voters Registration Day, LAW put on a timely CLE to discuss the state of voting rights in the state of Tennessee. Panelists at the CLE included Dawn Harrington, the executive director of Free Hearts, a non-profit organization that advocates for restoring voting rights for convicted felons; Brandon Tucker, the policy director for the ACLU-TN; Kyontze Toombs, a founding board member of The Equity Alliance, as well as a Nashville Metro council member for District 2 (and LAW board member); and Steve Mulroy, a professor at the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis, as well as a former civil rights lawyer for the United States Department of Justice. All four panel members provided insight into the challenges facing voters today, as well as the history of advocacy to secure the right to vote.

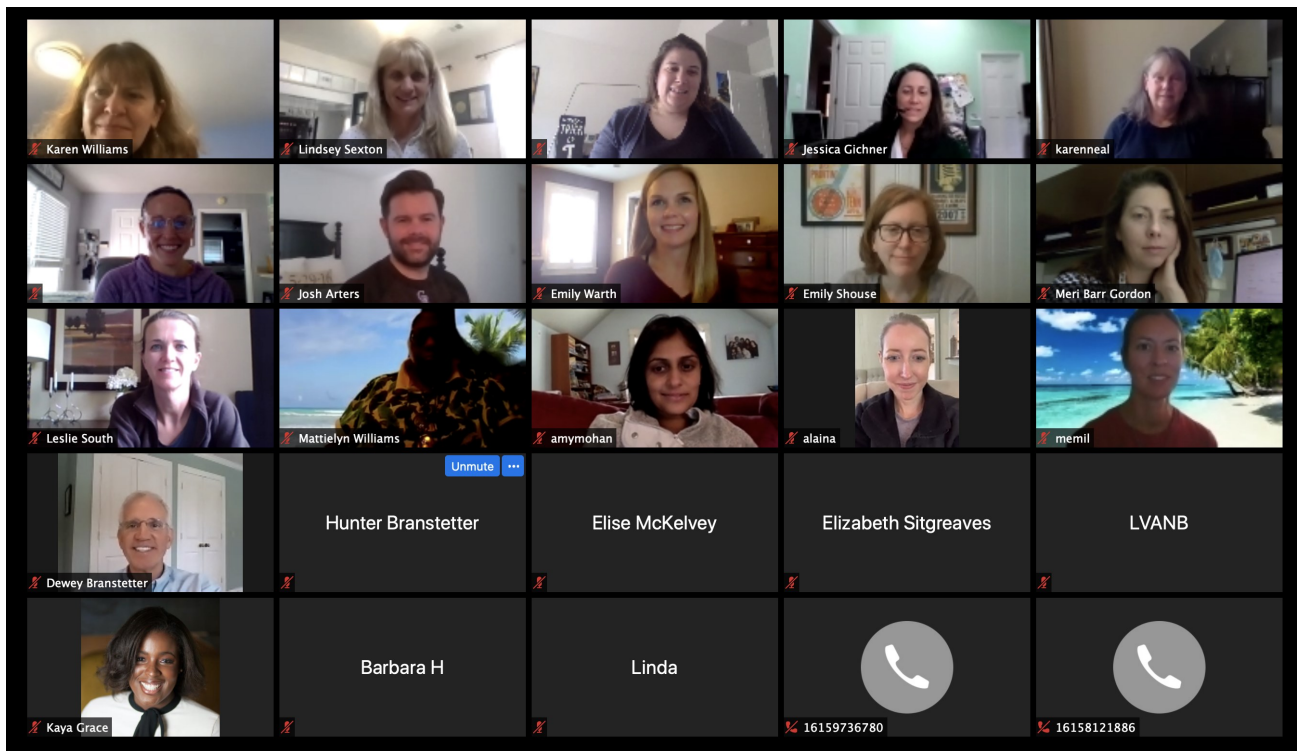
Professor Mulroy started the discussion by giving a primer on the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed discriminatory practices such as poll taxes and literacy tests, as well as racial gerrymandering, and also touched on some subsequent acts passed to make voter registration easier. He then discussed the impact that the 2013 United States Supreme Court decision, *Shelby County v. Holder* had on the Voting Rights Act, striking down the previous pre-clearance requirements of the Voting Rights Act, which required certain states and local governments with a history of voter discrimination to obtain federal pre-clearance before implementing changes to their voting laws or practices. Dawn Harrington then discussed the particular barriers for those who have been convicted of felonies, and her work with Free Hearts to help those convicted of felonies to restore their voting rights. She shared that Tennessee is second in the nation for felony disenfranchisement and has one of the most complicated processes for voter reinstatement. The panelists also discussed voter suppression, and shared that Tennessee does not rank well among the other states in relation to voter registration or turnout.

From there, the panel discussed the work being done to increase voting and restore voting rights. Free Hearts has helped more than 1,000 people restore their rights to vote, and continues to work with other organizations to reform Tennessee's complicated voter restoration laws. The Equity Alliance has focused on increasing the number of registered voters, and Kyontze Toombs shared that it registered 100,000 black voters across the state of Tennessee last year by hiring people from within their communities to canvas and encourage people to register to vote. Brandon Tucker shared that the ACLU is taking several steps to try to make voting easier, including working to expand the window of time for potential voters to register to vote and launching a campaign to educate voters on how and when they can vote absentee. The panel also specifically talked about the cases that have recently been making their way through the Tennessee courts related to trying to relax the rules on absentee voting during a pandemic, including trying to expand the definition for who qualifies to vote absentee and trying to ensure that a law requiring all first time voters to vote in person before they are permitted to vote absentee is not enforced during the pandemic.

The panel ended with some ideas on how CLE attendees can get involved in the fight to ensure more people have the opportunity and right to vote, including donating to or volunteering with Free Hearts (email [info@freeheartsorg.com](mailto:info@freeheartsorg.com) for more info) or volunteering with The Equity Alliance (go to [www.theequityalliance.org](http://www.theequityalliance.org)). And, of course, remember to fill out your census form! (Go to [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov)).



*Emily is a 2020-2021 Newsletter Editor. She is an Assistant General Counsel at Asurion.*





Now that we're more than 6 months into a pandemic, we may all be searching for a new and fun distraction to keep us occupied in these socially distanced times. LAW President-elect Kimberly Faye and First Year Director Brooke Coplon share their latest pandemic hobbies, complete with some helpful tips, pictures, and (spoiler alert) cute dog photos...

## Super Easy Acrylic Pour Painting

By Kimberly Faye

With the pandemic still happening, many of us have probably run out of fun things to do at home. There are only so many puzzles, bread making, Netflix binging, etc. that one can do. While scrolling around on social media, I stumbled across several how-to videos on acrylic pour painting. I'm definitely not very crafty, but this looked like something easy I could do with my nephews or on my own. I ordered all my supplies on Amazon, and good news, it was as easy as it looked!

Here's what you'll need to do your own acrylic pour painting:

**Canvas** – Any cotton canvas primed for acrylic paints will work. I ordered a package of five.

**Drop Cloths** – You definitely need something to protect the table or furniture from the paint. I ordered plastic drop cloths online, but they were way too big for the project. The second time I did the painting I used garbage bags as a drop cloths, and it worked great.

**Acrylic Paint** – There are different types of paint, and some require mixing with water or an acrylic medium. I actually found paint that didn't require either, so you can pour straight from the bottle. You'll need more white than any other color, because you have to coat the canvas before pouring. For the other colors, you'll want at least two colors. I used four or five colors on mine.



**Gloves** – Any type of latex glove or something similar will work.

**Push Pins** – You need four push pins for each canvas. These will go on the back of each corner of the canvas to elevate it enough off the table so it doesn't sit in the paint.

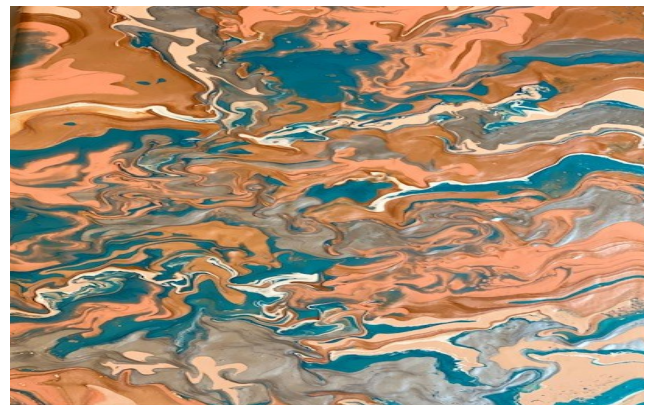


## Step by Step:

- You begin by inserting the push pins into each corner of the wood backing of the canvas. This will keep the canvas from lying in the paint.
- Pour the white paint onto the canvas and spread until the canvas and the corners are covered. Since I had gloves, I used my hand to spread the paint.
- Begin pouring your paint colors in circles on the canvas, then pour another color into the same circles. There's no real way to mess this part up, because it'll all blend together. I'm sure there is an art for knowing how the colors will pour or what colors will show up more, but this is the very easy version of acrylic pour painting.



Once you have the paint poured to your liking, begin tilting the canvas in different directions, until the entire canvas and the sides are covered with the paint.



Voila! Your painting is complete and will take about a day or two to dry.

It only takes about 20 minutes from start to finish to get the final product. I can't find the original video that I followed for my painting, but there's a lot of videos on YouTube that will show different techniques and methods. I may try the swirl technique next! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yndPwAMGEgg>.

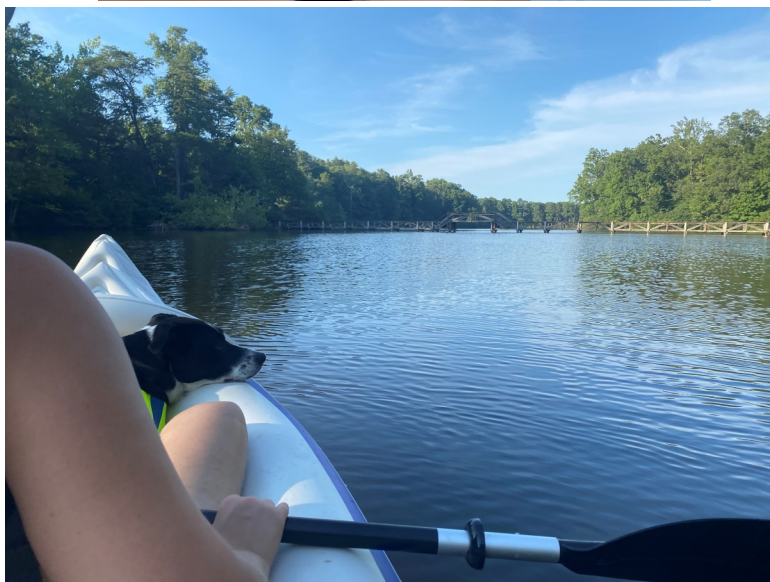
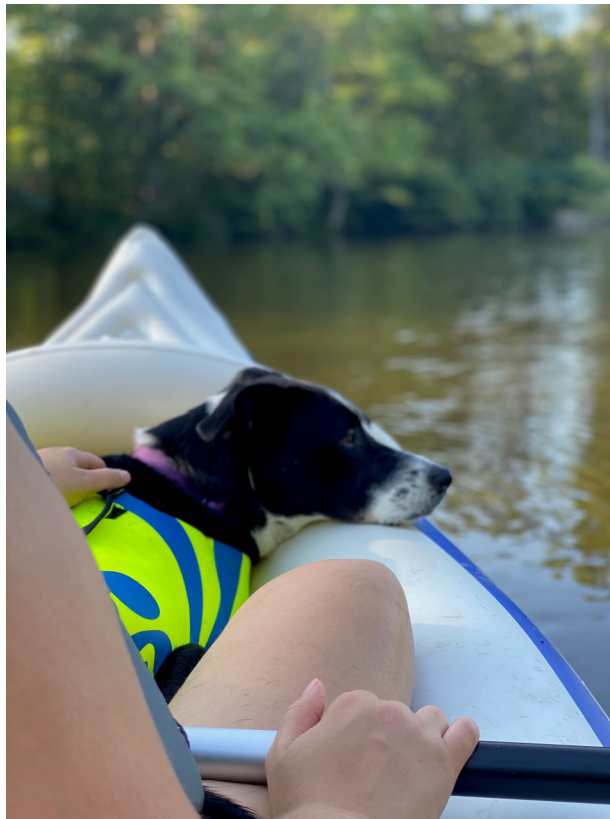
My nephews loved making these, and honestly, I did too! If you try acrylic pour painting, please share your final product with me and any tips you stumble across. Enjoy!

## Kayaking – Inflatable Style

By Brooke Coplon

When we realized we would be limited to socially distanced activities this summer, my husband and I started by trying out new state parks—only to find them completely packed with people. After a few weeks of becoming more and more frustrated with our options, we decided to buy a kayak—only to find that many Americans were doing the same thing, and there was a nationwide canoe and kayak shortage. Somehow, through persistent online shopping, we were able to order an inflatable kayak, which had the positives of being dog-friendly and easy to store when we weren't using it.

Since we got the kayak, we have been out on the water almost every weekend. Nashville has many locations where you can easily bring your own boat—including Percy Priest Lake and Narrows of the Harpeth. We have also ventured outside to Nashville to Natchez Trace State Park, which has a lake that only allows non-motorized boats. The best part of our new kayak is that our dog (unexpectedly) loves riding in it and loves wearing a life vest, even though she hates swimming. We also hope to continue to use our kayak on warmer weekends through the fall and winter as a way to get out of the house.



**Thank you to our Sustaining Members who support the programs,  
Mission and purposes of LAW above and beyond the Sliding Income Scale categories.**

Audrey Anderson	Grace Fox	Ann Murphy	Scott Tift
Anne Arney	Victoria Gentry	I'Ashea Myles-Dihigo	Kyonztè Toombs
Kristy Arth	Jessica Gichner	Karen Scott Neal	Martha Trammell
Gail Ashworth	Madeline Gomez	Leighann Ness	Judge Aleta Trauger
Katherine Austin	Elizabeth Gonser	Magistrate Alistair Newbern	Bryron Trauger
Catie Bailey	Shellie Handelsman	Larry Papel	Robert Tuke
Laura Baker	Corey Harkey	Rebekah Parkhurst	Vanessa Vargas-Land
Cindy Barnett	Laura Heiman	Janice Parmar	Erica Vick
Kathryn Barnett	Lisa Helton	Andrea Perry	Helena Walton Yarbrough
Margaret Behm	Candi Henry	Barbara Perutelli	Emily Warth
Sonya Bellafant	Jenny Howard	Bart Pickett	Elizabeth Washko
Rachel Berg	Kimberly Ingram	Erin Polly	Malaka Watson
April Berman	Mene Jividen	Sara Anne Quinn	Bernadette Welch
Judge Cheryl Blackburn	Michele Johnson	Jimmie Lynn Ramsaur	Karen Williams
Christen Blackburn	Judge Kelvin Jones	Candice Reed	Susan Neal Williams
Judge Melissa Blackburn	Judge Lynda Jones	Lauren Roberts	Leticia Mayberry Wright
Chancellor Claudia Bonnyman	Brendi Kaplan	Jennifer Robinson	Tyler Yarbrow
Jan Bossing	Anne Marie Kempf	Linda Rose	Jane Young
Dewey Branstetter	Quynh-Anh Kibler	Rachel Rosenblatt	Mandy Young
Hunter Branstetter	Dean William Koch, Jr.	Abby Rubinfeld	Gulam Zade
Josh Burgener	Nina Kumar	Jennifer Rusie	Rachel Zamata
Dr. Tracey Carter	Lauren Lamberth	Amber Rutherford	
Kay Caudle	Lynn Lawyer	Joyce Safley	
Jenny Charles	Courtney Leyes	Maria Salas	
Justice Cornelia Clark	Judy Lojek	Julie Sandine	
Brooke Coplon	Wendy Longmire	Caroline Sapp	
Nancy Krider Corley	Haverly MacArthur	Elizabeth Scaglione	
Judge Patricia Cottrell	Alexandra MacKay	Carolyn Schott	
Chelsea Curtis	Nancy MacLean	Michael Sheridan	
Cynthia Cutler Moon	Chambre Malone	Cynthia Sherwood	
Carrie Daughtrey	Chancellor Anne Martin	Dianna Shew	
Rebecca Demaree	Kell McCarthy	Judge Marietta Shipley	
Jacqueline Dixon	Judge Amanda McClendon	Emily Shouse	
Brenda Dowdle	Chancellor Carol McCoy	Elizabeth Sitgreaves	
Sherie Edwards	Elise McKelvey	Laura Smith	
Judge Ana Escobar	Laura Merritt	Mary Dohner Smith	
Raquel Eve	Amy Mohan	Leslie South	
Amy Everhart	Valerie Diden Moore	Abby Sparks	
Doreen Farthing	Marlene Moses	Joycelyn Stevenson	
Kimberly Faye	Chancellor Patricia Moskal	Mariam Stockton	
Shana Fonnesbeck	Barbara Moss	Judge Jane Stranch	