Greetings From the Director!

As we begin 2017, NAWJ is flourishing with news and events. We ended 2016 with the loss of one of our incredible founders, Justice Vaino Spencer. We have changed leaders, with enormous gratitude to Judge Lisa Walsh and are steaming full speed ahead with Judge Diana Becton at the helm. This edition is packed with many NAWJ events and acknowledgements from District 14. Cheers!

NAWJ MOURNS THE LOSS AND HONORS OUR CO-FOUNDER, Justice Vaino Spencer

A co-founder of NAWJ and a trailblazer for women and African Americans in the legal profession, the Honorable Vaino Spencer, passed on in October 2016. She served as the Presiding Justice of the California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District and retired in September 2007 after a distinguished 46-year career on the bench. Her appointment to the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1961 confirmed her status as a true pioneer - when she became California's first black woman judge, and the third in the nation. She went on to the Superior Court in 1976, and four years later was elevated to the Court of Appeal.

Justice Spencer was active in the Civil Rights movement and a leader in the community. She is also recognized for her groundbreaking efforts in support of gender equity in the legal profession and to increase the numbers of women appointed to the bench. In the 1970s, she founded the Black Women Lawyers Association, and co-founded the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) with Justice Joan Dempsey Klein. More than 100 gathered in Los Angeles for the first NAWJ conference in 1979. That number grew to over 273 members after one year and NAWJ boasts over 1200 members today. The mission has always been to address gender bias and race bias in the judiciary and in the courts.

Beyond the courtroom, Justice Spencer served on the California Law Revision Commission, National Judicial Council, Judicial Council of California, and Attorney General's Advisory Committee on Constitutional Rights, and was an officer and director of the Los Angeles County Commission on Justice. She held leadership posts in over two dozen professional and community organizations including the Democratic State and County Central Committees, the Democratic Minority Conference, the California Mental Health Association, the Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation, the NAACP Executive Board, the National Bar Association, and the Langston Bar Association.
Throughout the years, Justice Spencer remained closely involved with Southwestern Law School, her alma mater, serving on boards and committees, receiving the schools’ Outstanding Judicial Officer award in 1989.

Her numerous other honors include initiation into the Langston Bar Association Hall of Fame (1991); Honoree of the Year (1992) from the National Association of Women Judges; the Lifetime Achievement Award (1991) from the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association; the Trailblazer Award (1985) from the National Association of Business and Professional Women; the Bernard Jefferson Appellate Justice Award (1983) from the California Association of Black Lawyers; and the Judge Ernestine Stahlhut Award (1976) from the Los Angeles Women Lawyers Association.

On Saturday, December 3, 2016, Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Inc. (BWL) held a memorial tribute service at the Southwestern Law School in her honor. During the event, Justice Spencer’s friends, family, colleagues, bar leaders, attorneys, and court NAWJ President Diana Becton gave remarks on behalf of NAWJ and District 14 contributed to the Judicial Externship Endowment Fund established in Justice Spencer’s honor. The fund, will fund a judicial externship for a law student. Judge Marguerite Downing concluded the tribute.

Many local jurists attended, including California Appellate Justices Hon. Lamar Baker, Hon. Carol Codrington, Hon. Candace Cooper, and Hon. Gary Hastings; Los Angeles Superior Court Judges Hon. Irma Brown, Hon. Rupert Byrdsong, Hon. Marguerite Downing, Hon. Holly Fujie, Hon. Marion Johnson, Hon. Xenophon Lang, Hon. Veronica McBeth, Hon. John Meigs, Hon. Emily Stevens, Hon. Patricia Titus, Hon. Allen Webster; Los Angeles Commissioner Kristen Byrdson; and California State Bar Court Judge Yvette Roland. Other notable attendees included BWL Foundation President Syna Dennis; California Association of Black Lawyers President Camille Townsend; California Women Lawyers Association President Christine Goodman Chambers; Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law Executive Director, Betty Nordwind; and a host of lawyers other legal professionals.
The third summit on Diversity in the California Judiciary was co-sponsored by the Judicial Council, the State Bar Council on Access & Fairness (COAF) and the California Judges Association (CJA) and was held on 10/1/2016 in San Diego.

The summit was led by NAWJ President Becton. Prior summits were convened in 2006 and 2011. The summit reviewed accomplishments since the 2011 summit and established a pipeline and a newly introduced wind tunnel for ongoing dialogue and continued increases in diversity on the bench. The summit acknowledged accomplishments and the diversity that includes economic disparities, academic and practice backgrounds, as well as the traditional race, ethnic, gender and sexual orientation diversity.

The summit was well attended by the bench, students, the community, as well as jurists—young and seasoned and concluded with a lively fireside chat. Kudos for a job well done!
The 7th Annual Speed Mentoring event at Chapman University Law School was held on September 15, 2016, co-sponsored by NAWJ and the Orange County Women Lawyers.

Judge Jamoa Moberly and Deirdre Kelly chaired the event, which began with a buffet dinner. Over 70 students and mentors attended. Students rotated around 12 tables staffed with mentor judges from the Orange County Superior Court and attorneys from diverse practices. Another overwhelming success!
On September 27, 2016, NAWJ Judges Ted Weathers & Tamila Ipema, both of the San Diego Superior Court, hosted a group of transgender activists from India at the San Diego Superior Court for a cross-cultural dialogue on justice for the transgender population in India and the USA.

San Diego Judge Tamila Ipema hosted a group of Mongolian Judges at the San Diego Superior Court for a discussion about the rule of law in Mongolia and the USA. NAWJ members: Judges Ted Weathers, Terrie Roberts, Laura Halgren, Lisa Rodriguez, and Patricia Garcia were present. The assistant supervising judge for the San Diego County Superior Court, Judge Peter Deddeh was also in attendance.

Justice Margaret McKeown, 9th Circuit Court of Appeal, hosted a lovely reception in her home in honor of the visiting Mongolian Judges.
October 5th through 9th, 2016, over 300 Judges, attorneys, government officials, academic and legal experts convened for NAWJ’s 38th Annual Conference, Faces of Justice, in Seattle, Washington. Instrumental to bringing the conference to life was the conference planning committee led by the conference chair, Hon. Susan Owens, Washington State Supreme Court, and co-chairs Hon. Mary Fairhurst, Hon. Barbara Madsen, Hon. Sheryl Gordon McCloud and Hon. Debra Stephens, her colleagues on the Washington State Supreme court. All supported by NAWJ 2015-2016 President Lisa Walsh, 11th Circuit Court of Florida.
Event chair, Hon. Marilyn Paja, Kitsap County District Court, coordinated a memorable, misty ferry excursion to the Squamish Tribal Court and Museum, a tour of the modern Seattle Municipal Court led by its Presiding Judge Karen Donohue, and the world famous Chihuly Garden & Glass Museum. Fun was had at the Experience Museum Project, where many of our members became video recorded musicians!

A wonderful picture timeline of the conference seminars and events can be found by following the links on the NAWJ website, “www.nawj.org” or at:

On October 27, 2016, members of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, who are also members of NAWJ, hosted their 4th annual NCBJ-NAWJ Meet and Greet Breakfast at the NCBJ Conference in San Francisco.

The breakfast, held in the Wine & Stables at the Cavalier restaurant at the Hotel Zetta, was a warm and wonderful success. Much gratitude went to NCBJ-NAWJ liaison committee chair, Rosemary Gambardella and NAWJ Federal Judges Committee co-chair Colleen Brown. NAWJ President Diana Becton was present and offered inspiring remarks and an overview of upcoming NAWJ projects.
Judge Tamila Ipema, San Diego County Superior Court, chaired the 7th annual Color of Justice and mentor jet programs at the San Diego Superior Court.

The Honorable Randa Trapp inspired the students with her own life story and eloquently moderated the Color of Justice portion of the program. Mr. John Gomez, Esq, and Ms. Renee Galente, Esq, were truly phenomenal and engaging speakers and the students truly enjoyed listening to their paths to success.

The 40 students from King Chavez Community High School were further engaged and motivated through their one-on-one conversations with more than 40 mentors during the jet mentor portion of the program. The program was a huge success!
The Honorable Lidia S. Stiglich was appointed to the Supreme Court of Nevada in November 2016.

Prior to her appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Stiglich was appointed District Court Judge of the Second Judicial District Court by Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval in November 2012, and was subsequently retained by voters in 2014. As the presiding Judge of the District Court, Justice Stiglich heard civil and criminal trials. In addition, she served as the probate Judge for the district and was also the co-founder and Presiding Judge of the Youth Offender Drug Court. This specialty court was designed for the young adult population (ages 18 to 24) who are opiate/heroin users, as an alternate sentencing/rehabilitation program.

Justice Stiglich was the Chair of the Court Automation Enhancement Project (CAEP) Committee, the Co-Chair of the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC), the Co Chair of the Civil Bench/Bar Committee, and an At-Large Board Member of the Nevada District Judges Association. Justice Stiglich served on the Washoe County Law Library Board of Trustees, is a Master Member of the Bruce R. Thompson Inns of Court, and was formerly an alternate member of the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline.

Justice Stiglich is a member of the Nevada Supreme Court’s Indigent Defense Commission and the Commission on Statewide Rules of Criminal Procedure. Justice Stiglich has previously served as a member on the Supreme Court’s Commission on Statewide Rules of Criminal Procedure, Jury Instruction Subcommittee and the Nevada Legislature’s Advisory Commission on the Administration of Justice, both as a member and on the Victims of Crime Subcommittee. She is a member of the Washoe County Bar Association, the Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association, and the National Association of Women Judges.

Justice Stiglich graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, emphasis in Finance. While at UC Berkeley, she was a member of the intercollegiate softball team. Justice Stiglich received her Juris Doctorate from the University of California, Hastings College of Law.

Justice Stiglich’s vast experience includes significant federal and state criminal and civil matters, as well as administrative law. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Justice Stiglich was the founder and managing partner of Stiglich & Hinckley, LLP. In addition to her role at the firm, she also served as special counsel to Lieutenant Governor Brian K. Krolicki, where she advised on legal matters related to economic development, tourism, cultural affairs, and other special projects. Justice Stiglich is admitted to practice law in Nevada and California.

In addition to her professional affiliations, Justice Stiglich participates in several community organizations. She is a member of the Reno Sunrise Rotary, serves as a board member for Friends of Nevada Mansion, and is a member of the Sierra Nevada Ballet Board of Directors.

Justice Stiglich currently serves as a faculty member at the National Judicial College and an instructor at the University of Nevada, Reno. She has served as an adjunct law professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Law, Golden Gate University School of Law, and New College of the Law.

CONGRATULATIONS JUSTICE STIGLICH!!!
ANNOUNCEMENTS—continued

DISTRICT 14 STATE CHAIR FOR NEVADA, JUDGE PATRICIA LYNCH, TRAVELS TO AFRICA TO TRAIN WITH A LOCAL JUDGE

In December 2016, Nevada Judge Patricia Lynch traveled to Zimbabwe with the Northern Nevada International Center and met with Chief Nelukoba of the Tonga Tribe in the Matabeleland Province in North Western Zimbabwe. Chief Nelukoba has judicial training and is the judge in his community. His court follows common law for the most part and most fines are paid in terms of cattle or a monetary or other equivalency of cattle. Custom allows male heirs to be the chief but Chief Nelukoba has stated his intent to designate his eldest daughter as the Chief to succeed him. Judge Lynch was struck by how conscientious and dedicated he was to insuring justice in his community.

JUDGE TAMILA IPEMA HONORED BY LA VERNE LAW SCHOOL AS AN OUTSTANDING JURIST

On 10/1/2016, NAWJ’s Hon. Tamila Ipema was honored by La Verne Law School as an Outstanding Jurist for her many contributions to the bench and the community. These include chairing the NAWJ Color of Justice and Mentor Jet programs in San Diego and being on the Access and Fairness Membership committees of NAWJ and serving on the NAWJ board.

Well deserved KUDOS to you, Judge Ipema!
PLAN TO ATTEND THE NAWJ MID-YEAR CONFERENCE & RED CARPET GALA EVENT!

JUNE 7-8, 2017
BEVERLY HILTON in Beverly Hills


Go to “www.nawj.org” to register now!
Please feel free to contact me at asant@contracosta.courts.ca.gov, or your state chair, with information about members, awards, retirements, Color of Justice, Mentor Jet or any other NAWJ program or activities presented in your area so that we can share them with all of District 14!

Anita Santos

Judge, Contra Costa County Superior Court
NAWJ District 14 Director
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