



NAWJ District 11

Volume 1 Issue 2

March 2021

From the Director's Desk

Happy New Year, Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day!

Are you like me—thinking that we are going to get back to our lives as they were prior to March 2020 and then it's another day and another month and another catastrophic event (after another) and all of sudden we are still in pandemic mode one year after it started!! Time is a weird concept these days; some days I feel like things are the way they should be and I feel calm and blessed and the next day (sometimes it's one minute to the next), I'm filled with dread that life will never be the same.

Through it all, I am fortunate to have called on so many of you for advice and leadership. Since our last newsletter, we've met in District meetings, our Holiday Happy Drink and most recently in our Just Us social session. Talking with you, laughing, discussing and commiserating has been great for my sanity. Thank you.

Our work continues. We just held the first virtual Color of Justice program in Texas—out of Austin. Thank you to Judge Orlinda Naranjo, Judge Lora Livingston, Judge Karin Crump and Emily Morris for all your help. You may watch it on Judge Livingston's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCltYtLgXTXDaHawKmX0koGw>.

I sent to each one of you the information about IDLO's (International Development Law Organization) program "Women Delivering Justice: Achieving Gender Parity in the Justice Sector." I hope some of you caught it. The program was organized by the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ—to which we all belong as members of NAWJ), IDLO, the ABA and the Institute of African Women in the Law (IAWL).

ABA President Patricia Lee Refo remarked that the ABA's first report from the Commission on Women, delivered by Hillary Clinton, in 1988 found that the increase of women in the profession did not diminish the obstacles for women and that there remains a need to review the structures that create challenges and obstacles for women. In the most recent report of the Commission, President Refo notes that while there have been some improvements for women these improvements have not been experienced at the same level for women of color. And Dr. J Jarpa Dawuni, Howard University Professor, emphasized that this qualitative review should consider "lift experiences" from an intersectional perspective.

Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez, 4th Court of Appeals, asked what could be done about the perception that courts where women predominate are seen as less competent or effective. The answer given was that it will help once there are more women in those positions (that's how I heard the reply from President Refo). Is that enough? Can we be more proactive?

Justice Susan Glazebrook, Supreme Court of New Zealand and President-Elect of IAWJ, commented about the importance of addressing arguments that "merit" is an objective qualifier, when merit is only considered from one perspective, typically from that of dominant white males. She argues that merit could consider diversity as a qualification. We need to urge this!

Thank you for your membership and participation. Look for all our meetings coming up! See you there!

District 11 State Chairs

- Stacey Zimmerman (AR)
- vacant (OK)
- Eva M. Guzman (TX Supreme Court)
- Gina Benavides (Coastal Areas/Appellate)
- Julie Countiss (Harris/Appellate)
- Leticia Hinojosa (Coastal Areas/Appellate)
- Antonia Arteaga (San Antonio)
- D'Metria Benson (Dallas)
- Lesley Briones (Harris)
- Sarah Clark (rural judges)
- Jan Morrow (JPs)
- Orlinda Naranjo (Austin)
- Ronique Robinson (Harris; Municipal)
- vacant (Ft. Worth)
- vacant (west Texas)



- 4-7-2021 District 11 Meeting, noon
Zoom Meeting ID: 255 147 9825
- 4-8-2021 Just Us session
Zoom Meeting ID: 255 147 9825
- 4-13-2021 Texas Women's Day at the Capitol

4-15-16, 2021 **NAWJ Mid-Year Meeting**
(virtual) Cost is \$25.

REGISTER HERE

4-23-2021 **Color of Justice (Houston),**





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Why Participate in NAWJ?

I am a part of NAWJ because I love learning from brilliant, strong, female jurists from across the country. We empower each other, and by sharing our experiences and ideas— together—we improve the justice system.

*Judge Lesley Briones
Civil Court At Law #4
Houston*

NAWJ's "about us" information provides:

Since its formation in 1979, the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) has inspired and led the American judiciary in achieving fairness and equality for vulnerable populations. NAWJ's mission is to promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice.

Led by two visionary women - Justice Joan Dempsey Klein and Justice Vaino Spencer - 100 brave and intrepid women judges met and formed an organization dedicated to the following ideals:

- *Ensuring equal justice and access to the courts for all including women, youth, the elderly, minorities, the under-privileged and people with disabilities;*
- *Providing judicial education on cutting-edge issues of importance;*
- *Developing judicial leaders;*
- *Increasing the number of women on the bench in order for the judiciary to accurately reflect the role of women in the democratic society;*
- *Improving the administration of justice to provide gender-fair decisions for both male & female litigations.*

NAWJ was at the forefront in the establishment and implementation of gender bias task forces in both federal and state courts. We have greatly advanced the administration of justice in areas of domestic violence, child support and child custody, and the treatment of women in the courts of America.

But with all you do and with so many organizations to which you can donate your time, why NAWJ?

** Because it has enabled me to meet so many incredible women who I admire and can learn from—both professionally and personally.*
-Ret. Judge Kitty Schild, El Paso

**Why not? -Judge Toni Arteaga, 57th Civil District Court, San Antonio*

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM TEXAS WOMEN LAWYERS

We are committed to the EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN ATTORNEYS....through our network we advocate THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN in the JUSTICE SYSTEM AND SOCIETY - TWL Mission Statement

We can't achieve these goals without **YOU!**

Texas Women Lawyers invites you to get involved today in 3 simple ways:

1....SIGN UP to attend our virtual annual meeting/CLE on March 25, 2021 at 3:00 pm. Attendance is free.
I hope some of you did.

2....JOIN OR RENEW your membership! Dues are only \$50/year for attorneys (licensed 6+ years), \$35/year for attorneys (licensed 1-5 years), \$35/yr. (members of judiciary) and \$10/yr. (law students). There are also memberships for women's organizations, sustaining members and lifetime members.
To join or renew, click [here \[r20.rs6.net\]](http://r20.rs6.net).

3....SERVE ON OUR BOARD! If you are interested in a board or advisory position, or to find out more information, please send an email to Deborah Cordova at dcordova@wmcnlaw.com.



NAWJ District 11



Judge Lora Livingston

KUDOS

Judge Lora J. Livingston, 261st District Court (Austin) is receiving the Jurisprudence Award from the Anti-Defamation League (Austin) on April 13, 2021, noon CST. For more information and to register to attend, visit the event website: www.adl.org/JurisprudenceAustin

Judge Tonya Parker, 116th Civil District Court (Dallas) received the Dallas Bar Association Martin Luther King Jr. Justice Award in January 2021. The award is presented to local leaders whose lives and practices exemplify the principles embodied by King's leadership.

Judge Emily Miskel, 470th District Court (Collin) was awarded the 2020 William H Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence by the National Center for State Courts in September 2020.

~ Send superlatives, recognitions and award information to me ANY time—masalas@epcounty.com~

TEXAS WOMEN JUDGES DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL



NAWJ is proud to collaborate with Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez, who has ensured the support of Senator Judith Zaffirini to sponsor a resolution honoring Texas Women Judges on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. **DETAILS TO FOLLOW.**

The State Bar of Texas Women and the Law Section is seeking nominations for the Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award and the Louise B. Raggio Award.

The Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award honors women attorneys who have achieved outstanding recognition in the profession and paved the way for others. More information on award criteria can be found [here](#).

The Louise B. Raggio Award honors attorneys (and legal associations) that further justice in our society, particularly for women. More information on award criteria can be found [here](#).

Nomination letters or statements and the nominee's resume can be submitted by email to sbotwomenandthelaw@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is April 23.

IAWJ Biennial Conference *Auckland, New Zealand | May 7-9, 2021 (NZ time)*

We are very excited to be hosting the IAWJ Biennial Conference from May 7-9, 2021 (NZ time). We have a glittering array of speakers and the conference will have a real New Zealand flavor, while retaining the usual features of IAWJ conferences. It is disappointing not to be able to welcome you to New Zealand in person but we really look forward to seeing as many of you as possible virtually. Please do not let COVID-19 deprive us of the pleasure of connecting globally with judges from around the world at the IAWJ's signature event.

In the interests of having as many of you at the conference as possible, we are pleased to announce that we have extended early bird to **April 12, 2021**. For IAWJ members, this means a registration fee for virtual attendance of USD 275. For non-members, the early bird registration fee is USD 400. To register, please click [here \[iawj2021auckland.com\]](http://iawj2021auckland.com).