

A Conversation with 2017 President Elect Wendy Weigler

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By Evan Jones

I recently met with 2016-17 CWBA President Elect Wendy Weigler, to interview her for this article. She joined the CWBA in 2005, and the Board of Directors in 2008. Wendy was chair of the Judicial Committee from 2008 to 2013, the Historian for 2013-14, and Secretary from 2014-16. In addition Wendy’s long history of service to the CWBA, she spent four years on the Board of the National Conference of Women’s Bar Associations. That experience gave her additional exposure to the issues that face women’s bar associations and women lawyers nationwide.

I asked Wendy for some insights on the ongoing struggles of women lawyers, and her upcoming year as President. We touched on many topics that we are all focused on these days, but the three big things were: pay inequity (a private and public sector problem), bias (explicit and implicit), and leadership.

Wendy observes that women in positions of significant power and authority are still routinely assessed on the basis of aesthetics; women candidates for judicial nominations are still described with such terms as “emotional” or “testy” by opposing counsel while men are not; and if you leave to have a child, your own partners may assume that you’re never really returning to work--as though mothering and lawyering are mutually exclusive. All juxtaposed against the lawyer, mother, and grandmother who is on the brink of being the first woman to accept the nomination of a major political party for President of the United States. Shaking your heads yet?

Wendy expressed specific interest in increasing the participation of public sector and non-profit attorneys in the CWBA, and in the development of women as leaders—some are just naturals, others not so much, but often leaders find their way from the latter group. There are obvious leaders who are on a track, have specific long range goals, and are moving towards them. (You know who you are). Others—maybe most of us--get involved, sometimes very deeply involved, but don’t move to the front. These women are always described as helpful, go-to people, but may not be viewed by anyone, including themselves, as “leaders.” Wendy’s insights on this subject begins with a look at her own path to President Elect. As much as Wendy has done to serve the CWBA and advance the cause of women lawyers in Colorado and nationally, she never thought of herself as someone who wanted to run for CWBA President, until someone asked, and she said yes. The CWBA can look forward to an interesting, insightful and inspiring year, both this year and next. Because, leaders.

Wendy is currently Of Counsel at Winzenburg, Leff, Purvis & Payne. She lives in Denver with her husband, daughter and dog, and enjoys reading, cooking, crossword puzzles, yoga, hiking, camping, skiing and running.