



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Building on Our Strengths

by Lisa A. Freitas

As the year end approaches, I have begun to look back at this year and see all that we have accomplished. The Queen's Bench committees have worked tirelessly to keep our members busy with events and MCLEs. The Business Development Committee recently held the annual LEAADD Dinner with Professor Elizabeth Hillman from UC Hastings as the keynote speaker. In addition, our First Vice President, Vanessa Hierbaum, is diligently working to plan our Annual Past Presidents' Dinner that will be on November 19.



In looking at all we have achieved, I am struck by how all the people that make up our Queen's Bench family have supported one another in our endeavors. This includes our members, our board, our past presidents and everyone who has contributed to make this organization what it is today. I am so proud to be the president of an organization that supports women in such a positive and meaningful manner.

I think the discussions that have come from Sheryl Sandberg's book "Lean In" are important to have, and I am grateful that she began the discussion. However, since her book was released, the harshest criticism against women has been from other women. I find that to be counterintuitive to the advancement of working women today. It is my opinion, that every woman—single, married, mother, grandmother,

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2013 Annual LEAADD Dinner— Making Connections, Sharing a Cause

by Alice Purdy, Queen's Bench Business Development Committee Co-Chair

The LEAADD Dinner has a rich history extending back to the 1930's of bringing together women among several professions to discuss matters of common interest. This year, the Business Development Committee searched for a speaker who worked tirelessly for a cause that directly impacted women. We could not have asked for a better speaker this year. UC Hastings Professor of Law & Provost and Academic Dean Elizabeth L. Hillman brought a diverse group of women together to network while broadening our perspectives about an important current women's issue.

The dinner was very well attended this year. Old and new friends and colleagues gathered at the Marines Memorial Hotel and Club for a special Thursday evening. Guests of the event were welcomed into a crystal chandelier ballroom with soft lighting and elegant settings. While everyone chatted and shared stories of busy weeks and new projects, the room filled and the event began with a welcome from the Business Development Committee Co-Chairs, Alice Purdy and Nadia Brannon.

Keynote speaker Professor Hillman captivated the audience within her first few words. The topic at hand was sexual abuse of women in the military. This could have been an entirely somber discussion, but Professor Hillman has such a spark, an unmatched level of experience, and impressive pragmatism that the talk was fascinating, engaging, and enthralling. I could see the wheels turning for many women in the audience as



Professor Hillman spoke. Maybe they were thinking about what they could do to promote positive change within this women's issue. Maybe they were thinking about a connection they may have to some of the women Professor Hillman described. Whatever the private thoughts were, they were almost palpable. This was the kind of talk you were glad you attended.

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November is National Adoption Awareness Month

by Maria Schopp, Queen's Bench Board Member and Past President

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has dedicated November as National Adoption Awareness Month. There are currently 53,173 children in the foster care system in California, with 13,394 of those children available for adoption. While each person's path to parenthood is different, my path to parenthood started with the foster care system and the number 42.

I knew that I wanted to be a mother and at 42 years of age, I looked at my options. Several people who I am close to became parents through the adoption system. Others became parents on their own and still others had sought the assistance of science to build their family. Through my work as a family law attorney, I had on several instances worked with the dependency courts. I know that each year tens of thousands of children are removed from their birth homes due to abuse and neglect. The idea of sharing my home with a child from the foster care system seemed like a natural fit.

I attended an orientation for the foster-care adoption program, which is handled in each county by a non-profit agency. That agency has a contract with the county to provide background screening, to perform the necessary 40 hours of training and prepare a home-study for all prospective adoptive parents. Once the training is completed and the home study is prepared, my social worker was then able to send me a roster of children who were available for placement. I would then receive a call from my social worker and she would read me the information provided about available children located both in and outside of the City and County of San Francisco. It was

heart wrenching to hear the stories about abuse and neglect, but it was also a testament to the resilience of the human spirit to see the smiling faces of those very same children in the photographs that accompanied their written descriptions.

During those months of waiting for the right placement, I had to learn to say "no"—no to children with severe medical issues, no to rural children who would move into my very urban environment, no to a group of four siblings who needed to be kept together. During those months, I also learned to say "yes"—yes to the boy who wrote his own profile and called himself "soulful," yes to a boy coming from a very complicated family background. There was a lot of frustration, too, because like any other governmental agency, the foster care system is an administrative system that presents its own challenges, both in terms of the quality of the personnel and the senselessness of the endless rules governing the process. There is a lot that is unknown about the process, and there is a lot that you can just never know. I never heard back about the countless number of children who I did express an interest in adopting.

However, after eleven months of inquiries, I was ultimately placed with my son. It was a perfect match! I have now been a mother for almost 4 years. It is only now as I write this article that I realize my first meeting with him was scheduled in the month of November—what a fitting way it was to celebrate National Adoption Awareness month! Please join me in raising awareness of this very important issue.

2013 LEAADD Dinner

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The robust question and answer period that followed the keynote address was indicative of how much the audience really connected with this topic. There were a number of excellent questions. Professor Hillman was able to address psychological issues that continue to have an impact on domestic violence stateside. She was also able to describe the culture of changing military policy and her place at the table in all of this.

At the conclusion of the event quite a few people lingered over coffee and dessert to continue discussions sparked by Professor Hillman's enlightening perspective. This is what LEAADD is all about—bringing women together to make connections.

President's Message

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etc.—has to decide for herself what "leaning in" means for her. There is no standard measure for what it means to "lean in;" it is a deeply personal definition. But what is most disconcerting is that women are the first to judge—and judge harshly—the choices that other women are making. That needs to stop.

Rather than judge the choices that other women make regarding their careers, we need to support them for making those difficult choices so they can be successful. We need to build each other up, not break each other down. I think the discussions borne out of the "Lean In" book have been great, and those discussions should continue with the mindset that whatever you decide "leaning in" means to you, you will have the support of your peers.

It has been an honor to be the president of Queen's Bench because to me, Queen's Bench is an organization of women supporting women in all of their endeavors. There is no judgment; only support.

Queen's Bench Diversity Committee Holds Its First Meeting

by Sharon Alkire, Diversity Committee Chair

The QB Diversity Committee held its inaugural meeting on October 3, 2013 in a beautiful space generously offered by Long & Levit, LLP. In attendance were Sharon Alkire (Committee Chair), Crystal Cole, Verita Molyneaux, Kimberly Shane and Jennifer Wong Suzuki. This brainstorming session generated many potential avenues for the committee in the service of advancing diversity within Queen's Bench and the legal field.

The Diversity Committee is currently comprised of 30 members, and we would love to welcome more! As we are a nascent committee, now is the time to add your voice to the exciting development and directions this committee could take. Please email Sharon Alkire at sharon.alkire@gmail.com if you would like to join.



Left to right: Crystal Cole, Kimberly Shane, Verita Molyneaux, Sharon Alkire (Committee Chair). Photo by Jennifer Suzuki

Queen's Bench Mentorship Pod Takes in a Giants Game

Barbara O'Hearn's public/government law mentorship pod is still going strong—meeting regularly and meeting even before a night out at the Giants game on September 27. Mentor group leader Barbara took in the game with group members Mika Domingo-Spagna, Farah Hussein, Angela Habibi, Nicole Rosseau-McAllister, Sharon Alkire, Crystal Cole, Christine Dafforn, Karin Greir, Dawn Withers, Stephanie Smeekens, Kristen Verrastro, Whitney Miner, Laura Hadley, and Hana Hardy.



Queen's Bench Amicus Brief Committee Chair Honored by UC Hastings as Rising Alumnus of the Year 2013

Simona Agnolucci, Chair of the Queen's Bench Amicus Brief Committee, was honored at an October 11, 2013 gala as Rising Alumnus of the Year 2013 by UC Hastings. Simona was the first and only alumnus to receive this inaugural award.

Simona graduated from UC Hastings in 2006 magna cum laude. As an associate at Kecker & Van Nest in San Francisco, Simona specializes in complex litigation, including intellectual property matters, securities cases, white collar criminal defense and commercial disputes.

Simona also maintains an active pro bono immigration practice, in which she primarily represents women fleeing gender-based persecution. Her groundbreaking pro bono work has been recognized by national media, including the New York Times. She received the Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights Father Cuchulain Moriarty Award for making extraordinary pro bono contributions to the Committee's Asylum Project and was recognized as one of 50 Lawyers on the Fast Track by The Recorder. She has been selected as a SuperLawyers Northern California Rising Star every year since 2010.

Simona is extremely active in the community at large. In addition to her position as Chair of the Queen's Bench Amicus Briefs Committee, she serves on the UC Hastings Alumni Association's Board of Governors, the advisory board of Hastings' Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, the advisory board of OneJustice, and the Board of Directors of Girls on the Run.

This impressive honor from UC Hastings found Simona in the company of former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown, who was awarded Alumnus of the Year.

Congratulations, Simona!



**Time to Renew
Your Queen's
Bench 2014
Membership**

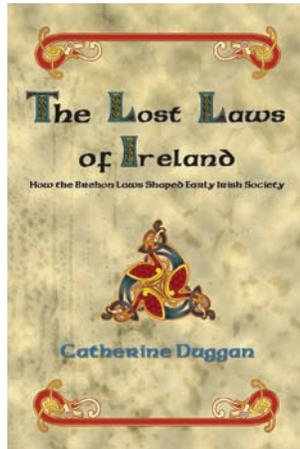
Fascinating Look at Traditional Irish Law — *The Lost Laws of Ireland*

by Catherine Duggan, Queen's Bench Past President

My recently published book, *The Lost Laws of Ireland*, provides an intriguing glimpse into early Irish law and society. Known as Brehon Law, this extraordinary legal system reveals a complex society in which learning was revered, social mobility was expected, and fairness and harmony were social goals.

The laws were the customs of the people, made by the jurists. The book demonstrates how the early laws reflect a highly developed society, which applied surprisingly modern approaches to many legal issues.

Women gained certain property rights, could divorce, and under specific circumstances, could inherit real property. Indeed, the problem of inheritance depicted in the TV series "Downton Abbey" could have been avoided if Lady Mary and her sisters lived in seventh century Ireland! Traditional Irish law provided that if there were no sons in the family, daughters could inherit the land. Known as female heirs, such women gained additional legal rights and status.



The legal system specifically provided for social mobility, so that a person's legal and social status was not static, and did not depend on a person's birth. The law stated that "A man is better than his birth", meaning that a person could move up or down in society, even attain nobility for his family, through his personal efforts, contrasting greatly with the rigid social ranks of feudal Europe, where a person was born, lived, and died in the same social rank.

The Celtic legal tradition in Ireland came to an end in 1603 when its use was prohibited. The extraordinary traditional legal system of Ireland had lasted for over 1000 years. Its

resilience demonstrates its acceptance and recognition as well as its value and effectiveness.

Ancient Irish Law is remarkable because of the many ways in which it took a modern approach to timeless issues. It reveals that in early medieval times, Ireland was a complex sophisticated society.

Queen's Bench New Members

Please welcome the following new members who joined between July 11 and October 23, 2013:

- Rachel Betts
- Liene Biksa
- Kelly Breen
Tucker Ellis LLP
- Nicole Coon
Superior Court of San Francisco
- Shauna N. Correia
Weintraub Tobin
- Kyndra Cox
- Ellen Denham
- Shannon Edelstone
- Rochelle Ellenburg
City and County of San Francisco
- Angel L. Garrett
Trucker Huss
- Sasha Gibbons
- Jessica Gomez
- Angela Habibi
- Andrea Hicks
Bryan Cave LLP
- Nicole Horowitz
- Lisa Huang
- Tiffany Hufford
- Sonia Jacob
- Larissa Jones
- Molly Kagel
- Sarah Kerley
- Natalie Koski-Karell
- Dorothy Ma
- Phoebe Marcinek
- Morgan McGinnis
- Lindsay McKasson
- Carter Meader
- Cecilia Nguyen
- Katie Padilla
- Lauren Quint
Meyers Nave P.A.
- Sonya L. Rahders
- Summer C. Selleck
SC Selleck Law
- Green Son
- Ellen Schuster Strauss
*University of San Francisco
School of Law*
- Heather Varanini
- Rosalyn Wall
- Julie Westerling
- Kim Whitlow
- Noël Wise
Wise Gleicher
- Jenna Yott
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP



HUD Conducts First Large-Scale Study Of Housing Discrimination Against Same-Sex Couples

by Sharon Alkire, Queen's Bench Diversity Committee Chair

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released a groundbreaking study measuring discrimination against same-sex couples in the rental market.¹ Using 6,833 e-mail responses to rental listings nationwide, HUD found that heterosexual couples were favored over gay male couples 15.9% of the time, and over lesbian couples 15.6% of the time. Surprisingly, test results in states with legislative protections, such as California, demonstrated slightly more discrimination against same-sex couples overall, compared to states without these protections.

Study Methodology

This study looked at the initial point of contact via email between housing providers and “respondents” representing same-sex couples, employing matched-pair inquiries about the availability of the rental unit. Each email inquiry was identical except for the sexual orientation of the “respondents.” Two emails were sent to each housing provider, one from a heterosexual couple and one from a same-sex couple.² Emails from same-sex couples received significantly fewer responses than those from heterosexual couples, thereby greatly reducing access to housing at the threshold level.

Federal Housing Laws and Regulations Prohibiting Discrimination

Currently there are no federal laws that prohibit housing discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, but does not include sexual orientation. However, courts have held that transgender individuals are protected under the rubric of “sex” when discrimination is due to gender non-conformity.

In February 2012, HUD released its final rule ensuring that HUD programs do not discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. This applies not only to HUD programs, but also to housing providers that receive HUD funding or have loans insured by the

Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and to lenders insured by the FHA.³

California Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, or source of income. Cal. Govt. Code § 12955.

One point of confusion for housing authorities and transgender advocates has been whether the category of “sex” includes gender identity and expression. Many transgender individuals have historically not filed discrimination complaints because they do not realize they are protected. In order to clarify the inclusion of transgender individuals within the classification of “sex”, the California Legislature passed the Gender Nondiscrimination Act, explicitly enumerating gender identity and gender expression as protected categories.⁴

The Unruh Civil Rights Act, Calif. Civil Code § 51, provides additional protection against discrimination in “all business establishments of every kind whatsoever,” including housing rentals and sales. While the Act specifically covers only race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, or disability, courts have held that it applies to “arbitrary discrimination based on personal traits, beliefs, or characteristics” such as sexual orientation and gender identity.⁵

Implications of the Study's Findings

Same-sex couples experienced significant levels of adverse treatment when they responded to online housing advertisements nation-wide, manifesting mainly as a lower likelihood of receiving an initial response to requests for information. The study may underestimate the extent of actual discrimination because it did not employ in-person

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¹U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “An Estimate Of Housing Discrimination Against Same-Sex Couples,” Office of Policy Development and Research, May 2013. www.huduser.org/portal/publications/Hsg_Disc_against_SameSexCpls_v2.pdf

²“Hello, My [relationship identifier], [partner name], and I are writing in response to your listing for the 1 bedroom apartment located at _____. Is it available? May we come and see it?
Thank you for your time, [sender name].”

³U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, LGBT Housing Discrimination, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/LGBT_Housing_Discrimination

⁴Equality California, “Fact Sheet: Gender Nondiscrimination Act AB 887,” www.eqca.org/atf/cf/{34f258b3-8482-4943-91cb-08c4b0246a88}/AB%20887_GENDER_NONDISCRIMINATION_ACT_FACT_SHEET.PDF

⁵State of California Department of Justice, Civil Rights Handbook, Chapter 3 - The Fair Employment and Housing Act and The Unruh Civil Rights Act. http://oag.ca.gov/publications/CRhandbook/ch3#L_52_.

Announcing the Queen's Bench Board of Directors Slate for 2014

Queen's Bench is honored to announce the 2014 slate for the Queen's Bench Board of Directors:

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 Second Vice President Pauline Farmer-Koppenol
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 (term ends 2014)
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 (term ends 2015)
 Director 2-7 years..... Laura Vocke
 (term ends 2016)
 Director at Large Anoush Lancaster
 Director at Large Clarissa A. Kang
 Director at Large Sophia Andritsakis



HUD Same-Sex Discrimination Study

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tests and it focused only on metropolitan housing markets. Nevertheless, it is clear that housing discrimination impacts many same-sex couples before they even get their foot in the proverbial door.

Nationally, up to 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBT. Of the 6,436 homeless individuals counted by the San Francisco Human Services Agency in 2013, 29% identified as LGBT. Housing discrimination at every stratum, combined with discrimination on the job and at school, in the judicial system and with health care providers, not only engenders a feeling of second-class citizenship, but can also push LGBT individuals out of housing markets available to their heterosexual counterparts. Further studies are necessary to understand the surprising level of discrimination in states with legislative protections as compared to those without anti-discrimination housing laws. However, HUD's initial research provides a substantial platform from which to analyze and develop the most effective methods of increasing access to equitable housing opportunities for the LGBT population.

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Clarissa A. Kang

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

816 E. Fourth Avenue
 San Mateo, CA 94401-3317
 Telephone: 415-249-9280
 Facsimile: 650-344-1588

E-mail: admin@queensbench.org

Internet: www.queensbench.org

ADMINISTRATOR: Maurine Killough

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November

- 5 Board of Directors Meeting**
6:00 p.m.
Sideman & Bancroft
- 6 Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center
375 Woodside Avenue
- 19 Past Presidents' Dinner**
6:00 p.m.
Concordia-Argonaut Club
1142 Van Ness, San Francisco
[See flyer](#) for more information.
- 20 Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center
- 20 QB Employment/WorkLife Roundtable**
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
“**FLEXing Your Muscles and Leaning In—Practical Perspectives on Negotiating Your WorkLife Balance**”
Moderator: Cathy Yanni
Panelists: Judge Mary E. Wiss, Karine Bohbot, June Bashant, Karen Johnson-McKewan
JAMS, Two Embarcadero Center, Suite 1500, San Francisco
[See flyer](#) for more information.
- 26 Business Development Committee**
6:00 p.m.
Ernst & Young, 560 Mission Street, Suite 1500, San Francisco

December

- No Board of Directors meeting
- 4 Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center
- 18 Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center



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