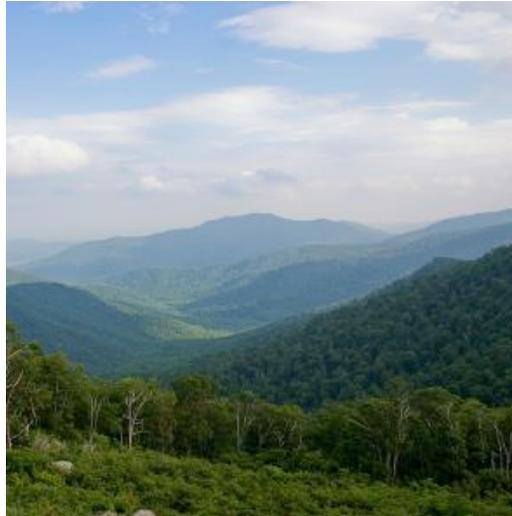




Seeking Judicial Reception Sponsors

Opportunities to contribute towards our annual event celebrating our local judiciary

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2014 Lex Claudia Excerpt by Jonnie Speight

"Women in the Law: The Women"

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VWAA Mission

- To advance the interest of women attorneys in Virginia;
- To encourage their mutual improvement and social interaction;
- And to promote the interests of women under the law.

VWAA Legislative Committee

Devon Slovensky, VWAA Roanoke Chapter, Board Member at Large

The VWAA Legislative Committee helps fulfill our goal of advancing the law and impacting public policy for the benefit of women in the Commonwealth. Our Annual Survey helps inform the organization of the membership's positions and priorities. After compiling last year's results, VWAA adopted legislative positions on increasing remedies available in protective orders for victims of family abuse; increasing criminal penalties for their abusers; and protecting victims of human trafficking while increasing penalties for human trafficking.

Of particular interest to our membership is VWAA's goal of promoting increased compensation for indigent defense counsel and guardians ad litem as well as supporting a fully funded judiciary. I look forward to keeping our membership informed of proposed legislation related to these positions and other issues of interest to our members this coming General Assembly session.

LEX
 CLAUDIA

2014

Excerpt from “Women in the Law: The Women”
 By VWAA Board Member and Roanoke Chapter Member Jonnie Speight

Nineteenth Century media often portrayed women lawyers as “Portias,” a reference to Portia, the heroine in Shakespeare's late 16th Century play, *The Merchant of Venice*, who disguises herself as a male “doctor of laws” to argue in court against Shylock’s claim that he is entitled to a pound of flesh from Antonio. Would Shakespeare have portrayed Portia as such an effective courtroom advocate absent her male disguise?

Despite judicial resistance and media ridicule, women lawyers continued to achieve significant professional goals in the late 19th Century. By 1878, women were admitted to the bars of the District of Columbia, Maine, Utah, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, California, and North Carolina.

In 1897, Lutie A. Lyle, a black female attorney, became the first woman law professor in the nation

when she joined the faculty of the Central Tennessee College of Law. In 1898, several women founded Washington College of Law in the District of Columbia – now American University Law School -- to accommodate female students rejected from established schools due to their gender.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, women used their law degrees in a variety of ways: some did trial work, particularly criminal defense; some entered academia; some became active in the temperance movement or in politics. Surprisingly, only a handful of late 19th Century women lawyers seem to have been active suffragists. Mary Greene, an American female lawyer in 1895, explained her views on suffrage:

My views on the subject differ in so many ways from those of the leaders that I cannot work with them.

I do not believe that the ballot will cure all ills, nor do I believe that women are powerless without the ballot. I prefer to teach women how to use the power and the rights they already possess in order that they may know how to ask intelligently for changes in the laws.

... Women attorneys will know they have truly arrived when the news is no longer about being “the first woman lawyer” – of any ethnicity – to attain a certain honor or goal. A major issue that continues to confront women lawyers, as it confronts many male lawyers, is the age-old conundrum about how best to balance home and work, family responsibilities, and professional responsibilities.

To read Ms. Speight’s article in its entirety, please see the [2014 Lex Claudia](#) online.



Get to Know Kathleen L. Wright, Esq.

Kathleen Wright joined Gentry Locke in 2002. After several years with the Insurance Defense practice group, she began work in commercial litigation, with a focus on the areas of local government law (including zoning, subdivision, and taxation), and estate litigation. Kathy has also enjoyed working on mineral rights cases, UCC disputes, criminal investigations, construction and other litigation, as well as appellate work.

Q: What made you decide to practice law in the Roanoke region?

A: I originally came to Roanoke because my husband had a business opportunity here (plug for Wright Dental Associates); but, now that I've been here 12 years, I really love Roanoke.

Its size makes it small enough that I see my colleagues around the community as well as at work, and large enough that the work is interesting and challenging. There is no place I'd rather be a lawyer.

Q: What is the most challenging aspect of your practice?

A: I struggle to be more efficient, particularly with computers. Learning how to use new software can be frustrating (yes, I am that old person).

I have trouble finding the time to learn how to really maximize all of the wonderful programs, apps and systems out there. Efficiency takes too much time.

Q: What is the most rewarding aspect of your practice?

A: The opportunity it presents to learn about different industries and subject areas, and to help people achieve goals, from the mundane to the grand. I love to dig into the facts of a new lawsuit and piece together where and how things went wrong, and figure out how people can avoid having the same situation develop in the future.

I also love working with the people at Gentry Locke – no job is perfect, but working with people you can laugh with makes a huge difference in the daily grind.

The things these people accomplish (and sometimes, just the things they think they can accomplish) are truly impressive.

Q: If you were to write a book, what would the title be and what would it about be?

A: That's unlikely, but if pressed, it would probably be a book of other peoples' insightful quotes, wise words, and brilliant come-backs. Things I wish I could think of myself. There was one on TV last night: "Vision without execution is just hallucination." Funny and true.

Q: What is one of the bravest things you have ever done?

A: Good question. I did do a tandem skydive once, but practicing law everyday probably requires more bravery.

We will be featuring a Q&A with different members of our local chapter in each monthly newsletter. If you are interested in being featured, please contact Jennifer Dean at jennifer@poarchlaw.com.



+ Event Schedule 2014-2015

November

Thursday, November 6th
Noon Luncheon at Blue Apron

December

Thursday, December 4th
Evening Judicial Reception at Schaal's

January

Wednesday, January 7th
Noon Luncheon at Carlos

February

Thursday, February 5th
Noon Luncheon at 202 Market

March

Wednesday, March 4th
Noon Luncheon at Blue Apron

April

Wednesday, April 16th
Noon CLE Luncheon at Schaal's

May

Thursday, May 7th
Annual Elections at Carlos

SEEKING JUDICIAL RECEPTION SPONSORS

Our chapter would like to invite all of our members to attend our December Judicial Reception. During the event, we will be honoring our local judiciary and their important work in our community.

We are looking for local firms and organizations to help us make this event truly special for our judges and attendees. If your firm or organization is interested in joining our effort to show our support for the local bench, please contact Jennifer Dean at jennifer@poarchlaw.com. All sponsors will be recognized for their contributions through our publicity outreach in print and online, as well as having their logo affixed to a welcome placard on the check-in table at the reception.