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An Interview with Judge Lidia Stiglich

By Diana Zuccarini, Esq.



Judge Stiglich was gracious enough to allow NNWLA to interview her twice for this article after we forgot to check the batteries of the recorder before the first meeting. The subsequent attempt to write the article obviously proved impossible and Judge Stiglich thankfully did not hold our lack of proper preparation against us.

Our second conversation with Judge Stiglich was even longer, carrying on about an hour and forty-five minutes. Both times, the conversation was an inspiring and uplifting experience. Her comments and stories are filled with enthusiasm and her brilliance is . . . (Continued on p. 3)

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CASA Program Seeks Volunteers & Business Partners

By Jill I. Greiner, Esq., Washoe CASA Foundation Board Member

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program of the Second Judicial District Court trains volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children in temporary foster care. CASA volunteers ("CASAs") are appointed by family court judges to work one-on-one with their assigned child throughout the court process, until the child is placed in a safe, stable, and permanent home. Without the voice of a CASA volunteer, children in temporary foster care face a higher risk of being returned to unsafe homes or languishing in long-term foster care.

Family Court Judge Egan Walker describes the CASA program as follows:

CASAs provide an invaluable service to the Court. Children who might otherwise live in only the two dimensions of court paperwork are brought into three . . .

(Continued on p. 2)

April 13th: NNWLA Lawyer in the Library Volunteer Event

In celebration of National Volunteer Month, please join NNWLA and the Washoe County Law Library for a large Lawyer in the Library Event on Wednesday, April 13th from 5:30—7:00 p.m.

To staff this event, NNWLA is looking for volunteer attorneys who are able to spend time advising individuals with legal questions. Experience in the areas of family law, estate planning, contract law, landlord/tenant matters, criminal law or record sealing is helpful. Please email us at nnwla.rsvp@gmail.com if you are interested in participating. Snacks will be provided to all volunteers. We hope to see you there!

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A Word From Our President



By Lauren Berkich

Happy Spring to all of our members. Thank you to our panelists who spoke at our March Distinguished Women in the Law event: Justice Nancy Saitta, Nicole Hicks, Maizie Pusich, Sallie

Armstrong, Kathy Breckenridge, and Ann Morgan. These women came from diverse practice areas and each had a unique perspective on a variety of topics.

This month, our NNWLA Lawyer in the Library event will be held April 13, 2016 beginning at 5:30 p.m. NNWLA is partnering with the Washoe County Law Library to host a large-

scale Lawyer in the Library evening for our community. We are looking for volunteer attorneys particularly in the areas of: family law, estate planning, contract law, landlord/tenant, criminal law, and record sealing. Please email us at nnwla.rsvp@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering. Snacks will be provided for all volunteers.

Finally, please save the date, May 17, 2016. NNWLA will host a lunch event on the topic of lawyer safety. Judge Chuck Weller and Jessica Anderson will discuss how attorneys can protect themselves from unsafe parties and situations. The event will be held at SoDo beginning at 12 p.m. CLE pending approval.

CASA Program Seeks Volunteers & Business Partners, Cont.

. . . dimensions by the services the CASA Program. Individual CASAs act as the literal eyes and ears of the Court, meeting with children and everyone in and around the children's worlds, gathering information about the specifics and details of the children's needs.

NWLA member and CASA Volunteer Shannon Parke describes her work for CASA:

When children are involved in legal disputes the stated paramount interest is "the child's best interests." However, it is only through my work as a CASA that I truly feel I am advocating for that. Whenever I meet my CASA kids and explain I am their CASA and what my role is, I am always surprised by how eager they are to spend time with me and how much trust they place in me. I am further gratified by the consideration and weight given to my reports by the Court. In short, when it comes to my CASA kids, I love

them, they love me, and the Court recognizes mine as the voice for their best interests. I recommend volunteering as a CASA to anyone who wants to advocate for our children.

With only 95 CASA volunteers to serve more than 950 children in the foster care system in Washoe County, there is a tremendous need for more CASA volunteers. For more information about becoming a volunteer, visit www.washoecasafoundation.com. The next CASA volunteer training session is June 14-16, and June 21-22, 2016, with an application deadline of May 27, 2016. Donations and/or business partnerships can also be arranged through the Washoe CASA Foundation, which provides support to the CASA Program through fundraising, advocacy and community outreach.



Washoe CASA
Foundation
Court Appointed Special Advocates **FOR CHILDREN**





An Interview with Judge Lidia Stiglich, Cont.

. . . astonishing. She spoke to me like a friend and colleague, not as a judicial superior. I left our meeting feeling proud to be a woman lawyer and motivated to do great things with the opportunity I've been given to practice law.

We all know Judge Stiglich's basic background facts - she went to undergrad at UC Berkeley and then law school at Hastings, her early employment was through the Solano County and San Francisco Public Defender's Office; she then went into private practice starting the firm of Stiglich & Hinckley LLP before moving to Reno in 2008. What many of you may not know is that Judge Stiglich was a star softball player in college, played in the Olympic festival after undergrad and trained throughout the years with the US National team. She con-

tinued to play softball all through law school and after graduating from Hastings, she explored being a member of the Olympic team.

For most people, attending law school and playing an extremely competitive sport at the same time would have been enough to make us keel over from exhaustion, anxiety, or both. Judge Stiglich is a different kind of person. She maintained a good GPA in law school, was an outstanding softball player, worked during her second and third year of law school for a criminal trial/appellate firm, and she participated in the clinical program at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office where she was able to help represent criminal defendants as a third-year law student. While I'm thinking that Judge Stiglich . . . (Continued on p. 4)

SAVE THE DATE

JULY
28²⁰¹⁶

Third Annual Benefit
Dinner for Survivors of
Human Trafficking

THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF RENO & THE NEVADA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION PRESENT:

SUPPORTING
OUR SURVIVORS

DINNER, SILENT AUCTION, MUSIC AND SPEAKERS

at half past five in the evening

The Silver Legacy Casino

407 North Virginia Street

\$75/plate; \$700/table of ten

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An Interview with Judge Lidia Stiglich, Cont.

... must be a time-bender to be able to create more hours in the day to accomplish all of these things at once, she adds that she was also the Note Editor for the Constitutional Law Quarterly at Hastings. That final little tidbit was nice to know before giving her this article to review before publication. No pressure there at all.

So, we know that Judge Stiglich is smart, athletic, has an endless amount of energy, and a high tolerance for stress. But what is most impressive is the love she exudes for the practice of law and the empathy and compassion she has for people involved in the criminal justice system. In discussing her early work at the Public Defender's Office she expressed, "To be a Public Defender is very rewarding. You have the opportunity to do something for people who are in a bad situation, they don't have much going for them and they just want to be heard. To connect with them, give them representation and stand with them is very valuable. I don't think people are outcome determinative, I believe they are process determinative. So if you stand with your client and give them your all, give them the decency and the courtesy of representation, they can generally accept the consequences. They are wrapped up in you being interested in them and their lives as a person in a system where you are the only opportunity to humanize them and treat them like a human being. That has a lot of value."

Judge Stiglich recommends the District Attorney's or Public Defender's Office as an ideal job for a new young lawyer, "you get your trial experience when it is still okay to sleep on the couch at the office all night, or run out to a scene at 2:30 a.m. to look for witnesses." So for those new lawyers looking to get their feet wet, get in there before you have kids at home and significant responsibilities. You can give the job your all and reap a significant return.

So why did she change careers? Because she wanted to expand and practice different areas of the law. "At first you think the cases are amazing and they are new and exciting, then they become second nature and you have to expand. To me it was exciting to start a practice." Judge Stiglich teamed up with another public defender who had been a federal defender and started the firm of Stiglich & Hinckley LLP, a two-partner firm generally practicing state and federal criminal defense. They also did some civil, other defense, and personal injury work as well. The firm was a success and they soon were primary counsel for the San Francisco Police Officer's Association.

She was killing it in California, so what made her move to Reno, Nevada? Family. Judge Stiglich's roots run deep in Nevada and after welcoming a beautiful baby girl to the family in 2004, she and her partner decided to move closer to the rest of the family. In making her decision to move she explained, "It was just perfect coming out here. San Francisco is a hard place to raise a family. The world shifted after having a child. It was mostly pedestrian things. You have court all over town and in other states, before kids you don't care. But then you need milk and it takes two hours! We had other family in the bay area but not in San Francisco, the family support here is amazing. It feels so much more cohesive, it is working to live here instead of living to work, and that is possible because of family."

Her daughter is now 11 years old and in 6th grade. All of the members of NNWLA had the opportunity to meet her when Judge Stiglich recently brought her to the NNWLA Christmas party at Judge Simons's home. When her daughter was born, Judge Stiglich took off 6 months and stayed at home. "I was in private practice at the time and so fortunate to be able to take the time off . . . (Continued on p. 5)





An Interview with Judge Lidia Stiglich, Cont.

... I would never trade that 6 months with my daughter. Your priorities shift, everything changes. Your world is just different. Once you understand your family is first, the other decisions make themselves easier. You pare back your work. I tried to do my work on my time, not on my family's time. So when in practice, if I had to get out of bed at 4:00 a.m. and run down to Starbucks and read, then that is better than me having to do it at 4:00 p.m. when my family is home and I want to have dinner with them. If I have to stay up later, that's on my time. That short amount of time you have every night with your family, that's a hole you can't fill with something else because it's such a short window."

Judge Stiglich supports her daughter's pursuit in anything that interests her, and she doesn't try to push her daughter towards softball or any particular activities, "I just want her to have a passion about something that she loves and enjoys, that she gives her all to." However, there is one exception when it comes to her daughter's career choice, "We have our fingers crossed she will want to be a lawyer. I think a law degree is one of the coolest, most versatile, most interesting things you can do. You can take it anywhere."

So what made Judge Stiglich decide to expand once again from private practice and put in for the open seat in the Second Judicial District Court in November 2012? "I knew that [being a judge] was something that I aspired to do. I had reached a turning point in my career and although you never master anything in the practice of law, once I had like 50 trials I felt like I was ready for the next challenge. It was great standing next to a real person and being their advocate and having that connection. I don't think I ever slept an entire night and it was a constant worry that can take its toll, but I'm grateful I had that experience. Then the opportunity presented itself here and I decided to go for it. It is a different lifestyle now. It is very different being responsible for decisions which affect people's lives. I will be forever grateful that Governor Sandoval gave me the opportunity to serve. Without that opportunity, it could have been something that I just

always wanted to do and never was able to accomplish. So every day, I'm just trying to go out there and earn it."

With her intellect, vast experience and enthusiasm, she is looking to make great improvements to the court system. "I think the Second Judicial is one of the best in the state. We are big enough and small enough that we can provide a level of service and access other counties cannot achieve. The environment here is much more conducive to achieving great work. I have great colleagues, old and new, who are very helpful and it is a very collegial bench. The things I have tried to do since getting on the bench is just get my sea legs first and learn from my colleagues. But now, I really want to increase efficiency, access and transparency. I am really pushing mandatory e-filing and that's our number one goal at this point. We are trying to bring it to everyone for free, trying to get it all online and get people into court sooner. Technology really affects that. In five years, there shouldn't be paper. So our goal is to do things in a way that achieves efficiency and access. I am also involved in the juvenile offender program with 18-24 year olds. It is therapeutic rather than disciplinary. We are extremely involved in these kids' lives and hope to make a difference and help them turn things around."

In conclusion, for our fellow women lawyers some wise words of advice, "You just have to keep going and be yourself. Soon enough you will gain the respect of others. So many times we are so caught up in what others think of us, that it distracts from doing your job well. You cannot care what others think. You have a job to do and you have to do the best that you can. When you start to wonder how this argument or that question will make you look, you are spending too much energy that you should just direct to your case and being the best advocate that you can. Don't spend energy on worrying about what others think of you, you have enough to worry about without that clouding your mind. And just be yourself. Be your best you and be passionate about what you do."





NNWLA BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 2, 2016 AT 5:30 P.M.

1. Present: Lauren Berkich, Laury Macauley, Anjali Webster, Marilee Breternitz, Katie Hoffman, Kaitlyn Miller, and Diana Zuccarini
2. Bank Balance: \$3,169.52
3. Housekeeping
 - a. Bank Account
4. Newsletter
 - a. Brainstorm future articles
5. February Event Wrap Up
6. Discussion of Upcoming Events
 - a. March "Distinguished Women in the Law" Event (3/16)
 - b. April Lawyer in Library Event (4/13)
 - c. Ideas for future events
7. Next Newsletter Deadline: March 25, 2016
8. Next Board Meeting: April 5, 2016





Heels & **Hounds**

Bubbles & Brunch

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NevadaHumaneSociety.org

LACE UP & GO

Saint Mary's Fitness Center

645 N Arlington Ave

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

11:30am-1:00pm

Welcome Presentation begins at 12:00pm – Walk at 12:20pm


Join us over the lunch hour for FREE heart health information, healthy snacks and a group

Walk around the Saint Mary's Campus

All attendees will receive a free 7 day pass to Saint Mary's Fitness Center and be entered to win the Finish Line Raffle for a FREE fitness tracker!

Commit to walking 30 minutes/day! Get healthier and raise awareness about the importance of being physically active. On this day, millions of people throughout the United States will come together to take steps toward a healthier life for themselves, their families and their communities.

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SIP & SHOP

Mimi Ellis Hogan invites NNWLA

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Clothing for the modern professional women

Thursday, April 28th

5:00PM – 7:00PM

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RSVP: 829.1051 or maryellishogan@aol.com

Individual appointments available from 4/24-5/4