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NJWLA – Best Practices Seminar a Huge Success

RUTGERS LAW SCHOOL, NEWARK – The New Jersey Women Lawyer Association (NJWLA) presented a fantastic seminar, **Balanced Hours: The Dollars and “Sense” of Attorney Retention**, on November 3, 2006. This was the first in a series of Best Practices Seminars.



LEFT: Kirsten S. Branigan, President NJWLA, with keynote speaker Joan C. Williams (center), Director of Center for WorkLife Law and Co-Director of Project for Attorney Retention (PAR), and Natalie Hiott-Levine, Co-Director of Best Practices NJWLA and Assistant Director PAR (right).

NJWLA would like to give special thanks to the memorable featured speakers, Joan C. Williams, Dianne Mills McKay, Michael E. Nannes and Deborah Epstein Henry.





Joan C. Williams, Distinguished Professor of Law at University of California Hastings College of the Law, is Co-Director of the Project for Attorney Retention (PAR) and Founding Director of the Center for WorkLife Law. In her Keynote Address, she explained how unexamined biases and stereotypes about women and mothers impede women attorneys' successes and how adopting and actively implementing a comprehensive balanced hours program is key to any firm's initiative to retain and advance talented attorneys. She also made the "business case" for such non-stigmatized policies and debunked common myths about reduced hours programs.

In 2006, Professor Williams received the ABA's Margaret Brent Prize for Women Lawyers of Achievement for her groundbreaking scholarly contributions to the field of work/life studies. She is a prize-winning author and co-author of four books, including *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do about It*, which won the 2000 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award, and *Solving the Part-Time Puzzle: The Law Firm's Guide to Balanced Hours* (Cynthia Thomas Calvert, Co-Director PAR, co-author). Professor Williams has also authored and co-authored over 50 law review articles, including "Beyond the Maternal Wall: Relief for Family Caregivers Who Are Discriminated Against on the Job," 26 *Harvard Women's Law Review* 77 (2003) (Nancy Segal, co-author), which was prominently cited in *Back v. Hastings on Hudson Union Free School District*, 2004 U.S. App. Lexis 6684 (2d Cir. April 7, 2004).





Dianne Mills McKay, a long-time advocate for women's equity, is Chair of the New Jersey Council for Gender Parity in Labor and Education, which oversees the State's efforts to remove barriers related to gender in education and the workplace. In 1998, Ms. McKay was appointed by the Governor to Chair the New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women, and served as President of the NJ American Association of University Women from 1994-1998. She also chaired the Gender Equity Advisory Committee for the NJ Department of Education, and currently serves as the chair of the Advisory Committee for the Nontraditional Career Resource Center at the Rutgers University Center for Women and Work. Professionally, she is a trainer and consultant on gender equity and diversity issues, an adjunct professor for the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University, and a lecturer of continuing education at Farleigh Dickinson in sociology. Ms. McKay explained and invited law firm and attorney participation in a work-life balance survey that the Rutgers Center for Women & Work and PAR will be conducting in New Jersey once funding for the project is secured.

Michael E. Nannes, Chairman of Dickstein Shapiro LLP, was among the distinguished panelists. Before the full panel discussion, he delivered a presentation regarding the success the Firm enjoys by utilizing non-stigmatized part-time and flexible work arrangements. Both he and the Firm have been recognized for their outstanding achievements in providing quality of life to all



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attorneys in their employ. Mr. Nannes was instrumental in developing the Firm's Quality of Life programs, including paternity leave, nanny care, "managed time" arrangements, and "Dickstein Shapiro University." As a result, in 1999, Dickstein Shapiro was the first large law firm to receive The Bar Association of the District of Columbia's Constance L. Belfiore Quality of Life Award. The Firm has been ranked four times among the "Great Places to Work – 6 Best Law Firms" in Washingtonian Magazine (most recently in 2005) and also appeared in the "50 Best Places to Work in Greater Washington" issue of Washington Business Journal in June 2005. In both 2005 and 2006, Vault's Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms ranked the Firm in the overall "Best 20 Law Firms for Diversity," as well as in the "Top 20 for Diversity" categories specifically related to Minorities, Gays and Lesbians, and Women. In August 2002, the Firm received the ABA's National Association of Women Lawyers President's Award for a "strong record of support for the advancement of women in the law"; and in September 2006, Mr. Nannes was named a "Star of the Bar" by the D.C. Women's Bar Association for having "made a difference in the professional lives of women attorneys by encouraging their advancement and retention."

Deborah Epstein Henry, Founder and President of Flex-Time Lawyers LLC, moderated the Panel Discussion. Flex-Time Lawyers is a networking and support organization with a mailing list of over 2,000 lawyers who work a flexible or reduced schedule and/or who seek a work/life resource



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in New York and Philadelphia. Ms. Henry's work has been featured in The New York Times, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, National Public Radio's Morning Edition and Radio Times, XM Satellite Radio, The National Law Journal, New York Law Journal, ABA Journal, and Working Mother, among others. She is a commercial litigator and Of Counsel to the Philadelphia-based law firm of Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP. Ms. Henry also has a national consulting practice focusing on issues of work/life balance and attorney retention, with a particular emphasis on retaining and promoting women lawyers. Recently, she teamed up with Working Mother and next fall, the 2007 list of Working Mother & Flex-Time Lawyers Best Law Firms for Women will debut in the September issue of the Magazine.



ABOVE: Natalie Hiott-Levine, NJWLA, Deborah Epstein Henry, Kirsten S. Branigan, President NJWLA, David Jay, Michael E. Nannes, Lynne Anne Anderson, Holly English and Christine A. Amalfe.

The Distinguished Panelists, **Christine A. Amalfe**, (Chair, Employment Law Department, Co-Founder & Member, Women's Initiative Executive Council, Gibbons, Del Deo, Dolan, Griffinger & Vecchione, P.C. (Newark, NJ) and Member, NJ Gender Parity Council in Labor & Education), **Lynne Anne Anderson**, (Member of the Firm & Co-Chair Women's Group, Sills Cummis Epstein & Gross, P.C. (Newark, NJ)), **Vincent A. Cino** (Partner, National Director of Litigation, Jackson Lewis LLP (Morristown, NJ)), **Holly English** (Author, *Gender on Trial, Sexual Stereotypes and Work/Life*





New Jersey Women Lawyers Association

Balance in the Legal Workplace and Of Counsel, Post, Polak, Goodsell, MacNeill & Strauchler, P.A. (Roseland, NJ)), **David Jay** (Hiring Partner, Greenberg Traurig, LLP (Florham Park, NJ)), and **Michael E. Nannes** (Chairman, Dickstein Shapiro LLP (Washington, D.C.)), educated us all on the successes and challenges they had experienced and witnessed in implementing programs to retain and advance reduced hours attorneys (mostly women), as well as how they had personally achieved and/or assisted others to achieve success and work-life balance through flexible and reduced hours work arrangements.

NJWLA sincerely thanks its committee members, program sponsors, co-sponsors, and all of the program participants and attendees for making the first Best Practices Seminar such a success.

