

# The Macomb Chapter of Women Lawyers Association of Michigan (WLAM): Rising Like A Phoenix!



*By Michelle Lundquist, O'Reilly Rancilio PC*

Last year, I was amongst a small group of WLAM members who got together with the president to discuss ways to resuscitate the Macomb chapter. Despite the best of intentions, the Macomb chapter of WLAM has fallen into some disrepair, a disappointing development considering its illustrious past. Many of us remembered the very famous and successful WLAM silent auctions and other endeavors to benefit charity. We recalled the hundreds that came out to support the club and its charitable endeavors. Others discussed the importance of continuing on the club that Kimberly Cahill worked so hard to establish.

We all believed that WLAM Macomb was worth saving. I spoke to several formally active members of the Macomb chapter in an effort to learn from our mistakes. I have to admit my findings were discouraging. Some said many "next generation" women lawyers are

active in the Young Lawyers section of the MCBA, and do not have the desire to commit to two clubs. Older, more established attorneys were busy with the monumental responsibilities that come with balancing a career and a

family. I carefully reflected over the two prevailing explanations. It occurred to me that this trend was typical of most working women. Most women work very hard to establish themselves early on in their career, then, as

they marry and have families, they have a tendency to shift their focus upon their family. Most of these attorneys have already figured this balance out, and for that very reason a Macomb chapter is needed. Thus, we need YOU to



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become a member and support the cause!

It was recently estimated that only 28% of all lawyers in Macomb County are women! When that statistic was introduced, many couldn't believe the number was so low. Considering in law school they tell us that the national average of women to men in law school is nearly equal, this Macomb County statistic is frightful. The statistic underscores the need for a voice in issues affecting women lawyers in Macomb County.

A fellow lawyer recently asked me if the need for a women's lawyer association

exists. Absolutely! If we do not give voice to our issues, we can never complain that our needs have not been met. And, make no mistake; the WLAM has a voice in the Macomb County Bar Association. The chapter president holds a seat on the MCBA Board of Directors. Our Macomb region fought for years to hold this seat, a seat that most members need to run for and be elected to. If we fail to maintain our status, we will lose a very important voice on a very effective board. We have the ability to mentor one another and provide essential networking contacts that are

critical in our economy. Most importantly, our existence will provide financial assistance and highlight many charitable organizations that need our voice to speak for them.

As with any ambitious endeavor, WLAM Macomb needs to build momentum. Last year we held our first event in several years. WLAM Macomb hosted a Kentucky Derby party. Approximately 25 people attended, sang their best rendition of "My Old Kentucky Home," donned creative derby hats, drank mint juleps and watched the race. It was a fun and unique event that

we hope to host every year. WLAM Macomb also is hosting a round table discussion featuring Judge Diane Druzinski on Monday, March 29 at 12:00 p.m. in the jury conference room at the Macomb County Circuit Court.

If you have not yet become a member please consider joining, of course men are always welcomed to join! You can log onto <http://www.womenlawyers.org> to join, applications can be found on the website. ■