



**Executive Committee**

Kate McDonough  
President

Heather Collier  
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Amanda Vann  
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Jessica Markham  
Treasurer

Lili Khozeimeh  
At-Large Member

Kristina Badalian  
At-Large Member

Ros Tang  
At-Large Member

**From Our President**

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! By the time you are reading this Museletter column, Lili Khozeimeh, Heather Collier, Roz Tang, Kristina Badalian and the many other committee members who were essential in making the MoCo WBA's Triennial Auction such a TREMENDOUS SUCCESS will have slept for 2 days straight – and deservedly so! It's hard to believe, but our co-chairs, Heather and Lili, have outdone themselves YET AGAIN in putting on a wonderfully successful auction. I will give a detailed event report in the April Museletter, but for now I simply want to thank the ENTIRE army of volunteers, planners, donors, sponsors and attendees who supported the WBA Auction.

ANNUAL MEETING. Registration forms are now available and hotel rooms are going FAST for the WBA Annual Meeting on April 8-9, 2016 at the Tidewater Inn in Easton, Maryland. For additional information, or to register, please contact me or WBA executive director, Maria Twigg (mlt.wba@gmail.com).

SPRING HAPPY HOUR. The WBA will be hosting a Spring Happy Hour on Wednesday, April 13, 2016 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at All Set located at 8630 Fenton Street in Downtown Silver Spring. Appetizers will be provided courtesy of Andalman & Flynn. We will be collecting donations at the Happy Hour to support Carry the Future, a non-profit that provides new and used baby carriers to refugee families across the world. If you are unable to attend the happy hour, but would like to donate either a baby carrier or cash/check, please contact Amanda Vann (avann@a-f.net).

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK LUNCHEON. We will be hosting our Annual Take Your Child to Work Luncheon on April 21, 2016. Be sure to check out our next newsletter, Facebook, Twitter and the listserv for information on this event.

CHAPTER MEETINGS - Please be sure to mark your calendars for our remaining 2015-2016 chapter meetings as listed in the calendar on page 3. All chapter meetings are held at 12:30 p.m. in the 4th floor Conference Room of the South Tower of the Circuit Court, unless otherwise noted.

NOMINATIONS. Alicia Lucero, our nominations chair, will be sending an email concerning the nominations process for next year's executive committee (see her announcement on page 5). We hope many of you will consider getting more involved in WBA leadership positions. It has been wonderful to have so many new, enthusiastic members in our chapter this year and I certainly hope this level of involvement and energy continues!

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RAINBOW PLACE AND THANK YOU. Finally, I want to thank everyone who made a donation to Rainbow Place at the holiday party in December. Rainbow Place notified us that we donated a total of \$1,116.00, which is more than we have ever been able to give to Rainbow Place in previous years. Thank you again to all of you for your generosity!



## Kate McDonough

President

(301) 563-6685

[kmcdonough@a-f.net](mailto:kmcdonough@a-f.net)

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### How Do I Become a Member of the MCWBA?

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of the MCWBA, visit [www.wba-md.org](http://www.wba-md.org) to submit a membership form.

### Updates or changes to e-mail addresses? New announcements?

Please contact:  
**Amanda Smith, Listserv Chair**  
at  
[acsmith@rbergmanlaw.com](mailto:acsmith@rbergmanlaw.com)

## 2016 Calendar

March 2016	April 2016 (cont.)	May 2016
<p><b>March 13</b>                      State WBA Domestic Violence Charity                      Fundraising Event                      Bloomingdale's                      5300 Western Avenue, Chevy Chase</p>	<p><b>April 12</b>                      12:30 p.m.                      Membership Meeting                      Conference Call</p>	<p><b>May 10</b>                      12:30 p.m.                      Membership Meeting                      MCCC South Tower                      4th Floor Conference Room</p>
April 2016	<p><b>April 13</b>                      5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.                      All Set Restaurant                      8630 Fenton Street, Silver Spring</p>	
<p><b>April 8-9</b>                      State WBA Annual Meeting                      Tidewater Inn                      101 E. Dover Street, Easton</p>	<p><b>April 21</b>                      Time TBD                      Take Your Child to Work Luncheon                      Location TBD</p>	

### WBA Mission Statement

The Women’s Bar Association of Maryland (WBA) is an organization of women and men committed to the full and equal participation of women in the legal profession and in a just society. The WBA believes that a strong community of women in the legal profession is essential to the administration of justice. The mission and goals of the WBA are to:

- Promote and assist women to obtain positions of influence and leadership within their workplace, the legal profession, the judiciary, and the community;
- Raise awareness of and fight biases against women within the community at large, the legal profession, and under the law;
- Promote and effect diversity, equality and justice under the law and within the legal system;
- Support women in the legal profession in their personal and professional lives;
- Provide opportunities for volunteerism and advocacy on issues affecting women;
- Collaborate with other individuals and organizations to improve the status of women;
- Celebrate the individual and collective achievements of women in the legal profession; and
- Promote full and equal participation of women in society by eliminating all forms of discrimination.

## First Look: Photos from the MCWBA Triennial Auction (More to Come!)



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## Announcements

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### Meet Our New Members



#### Jessica Hall

EMPLOYER: Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office

BAR ADMISSIONS: Maryland

PRACTICE AREA(S): Criminal Law

ALMA MATER: University of Maryland (2002)

OUR NEWEST MEMBER BECAUSE: I feel that it is important to give back to the legal community by becoming more involved.

#### FUN FACT:

- I'm a Toddler Wrangler – I have twin three-year-olds and a five-year-old.

CONTACT: [jessica.hall@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:jessica.hall@montgomerycountymd.gov)

### Executive Committee Nominations

Our Chapter is presently seeking active members in our chapter to fill vacancies on the WBA Executive Committee for the 2016-2017 calendar year. Heather Collier has agreed to serve as the next President for our Chapter and Lili Khozeimeh has volunteered to serve as President-Elect. In addition, Jessica Markham has graciously agreed to serve out her second year term as Treasurer of our Chapter.

At this time the following one-year term positions are available:

1. Secretary
2. At Large (1 year term)
3. At Large (1 year term)

The following two-year term position is also available:

At Large (2 year term)

Please contact our nominations chair, Alicia Lucero, if you are interested in any one or more of these positions. Feel free to nominate someone for a position as well. Submissions will be received via email at [alucerolaw@gmail.com](mailto:alucerolaw@gmail.com), and a confirmation receipt email will be sent back to you advising that your submission was received. If you have already been in contact with our nominations chair you need not resubmit your preference for a desired position. Thank you in advance for your willingness to serve.

## Spotlight Series



*Spotlight on*

### Sheila Sachs

For a special March issue, we had the pleasure of interviewing the 2015 recipient of the Rita C. Davidson Award, Gordon Feinblatt's Sheila Sachs – a veritable trailblazer for

women in the law. A simple interview over lunch turned into so much more as we learned about Sheila's unique perspective on family law, law school, the WBA, mediation and so much more!

When Sheila began law school at The University of Maryland in 1961, there was one women's restroom in the entire law school, and it was in the basement. "I kept my head down and stayed focused on what I was supposed to do," she recalls, casually noting that she was the only woman in her class; "I knew there were comments behind my back, but I didn't know



*Sheila K. Sachs, Esq.*  
*2015 Recipient of the Rita C. Davidson Award*

what they were and I didn't want to know."

Her first years of practice in the 1960s were filled with moments of solitude, too, as she knew she was surrounded by strong, competent lawyers, but the camaraderie she observed and the camaraderie she felt were quite different. "Each day groups of [male] attorneys would go to lunch together, and I was never invited.... Eventually I sought out the other female professionals – the few of them that there were (not attorneys), and we began a tradition of women's lunches, where we talked about our professional experience and the ways in which we could market, and where."

Sheila consistently recommended this throughout our lunch – explaining that "women should form groups at work and support each other because as young women work together, they raise their profile, and become referral sources for each other." She encouraged women attorneys to meet other female professionals, both inside and outside of the law, to make sure they know what others do and go through every day. "It can only help," she said.

On maintaining legal competence, Ms. Sachs strongly emphasized continuing legal education. "When I was coming up in my practice, there wasn't a CLE I missed," she remembered fondly. "I took them all – evidence, trial skills – after all, I didn't start practicing family law right away, I kind of fell into it."

While we wondered how this family law giant simply "fell" into her field, Sheila explained that general litigation, her practice when she started with a firm in Towson, Maryland, posed a risk that she would find herself on the other side of a case in which her husband, then the Attorney General for Maryland, might have been involved. She couldn't risk that kind of conflict of interest. Family law presented a practice area where that kind of conflict would never arise. Plus, as Sheila pointed out, "Someone had to make up for the shortfall in family income when my husband

## Spotlight Series

decided to devote himself to public service.”

She picked up that burden and marched on. In 1979 and 1980 the Marital Property Act and the new Alimony Act changed the playing field for family lawyers, and Sheila knew she would be on the cutting edge of this evolving area of law.

It was then that Sheila explained how she had found and made her niche. With the new family law practice opportunities on the horizon, she learned some basic tax, business and real estate in general practice, and developed an expertise in the intersection of tax and domestic matters. When asked about her reaction to family law now being a practice area with many female practitioners, Sheila didn't necessarily see it that way. "I'm not sure how female-dominated I see the practice area now, but I do think the work presents a lot of unique opportunities for women; there are a number of different issues at play that require analysis and compromise – it is a similar skill set needed for another role women traditionally play as managers of the home front." She pointed out that family law requires an understanding of business and financial issues and a human emotional perspective, with many other factors that must be weighed against one another.

When we asked Sheila about her favorite aspect of family law, she quickly answered "it's that feeling when you're working through a resolution, collaboratively, with another lawyer, and you're both trying to solve a problem with joint interests, rather than with adversarial inflexibility." This is part of why Sheila became interested in mediation, and she reported training as a mediator with some of the original and most respected players in mediation. "Now, at least in Baltimore, mediation is ordered in all

cases – but I prefer working with people who want to mediate toward settlement before litigation is initiated, rather than those that are already in litigation." She said "being a mediator helps you see important issues for a family before they necessarily see them, and you're able to neutrally help them look at issues and arrive at the right conclusion... for children in particular,

or when there are mental health or other serious issues involved – the less adversarial one is in handling the matter the better."

When asked about gender issues and the challenges women still face at work, Sheila says there is still work to be done. She continues

to feel that it is harder for women to get clients – especially in the business world where the top CEOs are still, for the most part, men. Other than in family matters, Sheila shared that, in her experience, men still often want to hire other men; they play golf together, and they build relationships outside of the office. She advised all women attorneys to focus on the women in other industries to refer them work, and create our own referral network just like men do.

Finally, in response to her prestigious award, Ms. Sachs expressed only gratitude and honor. "I knew Rita Davidson. She was a smart, engaging and savvy person – the award is aptly named for her, and I feel so thankful for being recognized in this wonderful way."

A trip to Baltimore well worth it, we thought. We hope you learned even a portion of what we did from meeting with this great attorney and female role model, and that you will take her advice to heart. Thank you, Sheila, it was our pleasure.

*Women should form groups at work and support each other because as young women work together, they raise their profile, and become referral sources for each other.*

*Rachel & Emily*

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## Law 101

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*In an effort to learn more about each other's areas of practice (and keep our minds sharp), the Law 101 column will allow us to learn about a different area of law each month. Have a suggestion for next month's column?*

*Email Emily Gelmann at [egelmann@steinsperling.com](mailto:egelmann@steinsperling.com) or Rachel Coll at [rcoll@steinsperling.com](mailto:rcoll@steinsperling.com).*

### Tax Law: First Comes Love, Then Comes the Prenup

*By: Kendra Merchant*



Between 37% and 50% of all marriages end in divorce. Despite this dismal success rate, everyone from first-timers to couples on their second or third marriages all continue to throw their hats into the marriage ring. Marriage should be celebrated but also recognized as a matter of great responsibility. Part of the role as a trusted advisor to a client should include a hearty "congratulations" followed by a discussion on the value of a prenuptial agreement. And while a client is unlikely to be considering the tax consequences of marriage, you should be.

#### *Putting All Cards on the Table*

The process for creating a valid prenuptial agreement requires full financial disclosure. Revealing all assets, liabilities and sources of income helps ensure that the parties to a marriage are aware of everything the other

has when entering into the marriage. Money disputes are a frequent reason for divorce, and a prenuptial agreement is invaluable should the marriage fail.

The full financial disclosure that accompanies the creation of a prenup makes it less likely the couple will argue over finances because everyone starts with the same knowledge and expectations. For example, though Joe is very proud of Jane for landing her dream job and the rewards that come with it, Jane may have incurred substantial student loans in the preparation for that dream job. A premarital agreement can specify how existing debt will be paid, and from what source, as well as what properties will be considered as marital assets.

#### *Protecting Your Assets*

They say when you marry your spouse you actually marry their whole family. It may be important for one spouse and or the spouse's family to keep certain valuable or sentimental premarital assets separate from the marital assets, whether it be the parrot Joe inherited from Aunt Myrtle or the stock Jane inherited from Grandfather Willard. A

prenuptial agreement can cover all assets and debts of a spouse or instead be tailored for those that are particularly noteworthy. Remember, the goal is not typically financial independence but rather a balancing of the scales so that spouses feel like they are building a happily-ever-after, together.

#### *Predetermining Spousal Support*

In addition to asset and liability considerations, a prenuptial agreement can deal with spousal support (though not child support). If the couple does not agree on spousal support prior to the marriage, and their marriage happens to end in divorce, there are significant risks to letting the courts decide such intimate issues. It is certainly preferable for two parties together to decide their future, if separate, instead of leaving it to a third party.

#### *Tax Planning*

Property division, alimony, and child support all have important tax implications. If two people have such irreconcilable differences leading to a divorce, it is unlikely they will be able to



## Law 101

communicate at this point about something seemingly trivial – but really significant – such as taxes. Accordingly, tax planning, even in the prenuptial process, is imperative because the tax effects of a divorce can be substantial.

For example, the potential payor of alimony generally will want to ensure that spousal support payments are tax deductible. Any provision in the prenuptial agreement regarding the amount of alimony may be drafted to ensure that the “recapture” rule does not apply if there are quick drops in the amount of support; the recapture rule requires the payor to add back into his or her income monies that were previously paid as alimony and deducted from the payor’s income if certain conditions are met. Alimony payments generally cease on the death of the recipient though not necessarily on the death of the payor or remarriage of the recipient.

Similarly, the potential recipient of a monetary award may want to use appropriate language to ensure that monies paid incident to divorce will have no or minimal tax consequences. Generally, inter-spousal property transfers related to the termination of a marriage are tax-free to the transferor. However, careful consideration must be given to the type of property conveyed

because a disproportionate division of “ordinary income property” as opposed to “capital gain property” may cause a spouse to be taxed in the future in a disproportionate way.

Special thought should be given in the prenuptial agreement to what is or will be the family home because it is often a couple’s most valuable and most sentimental asset. If the home has appreciated in value, there is a timing issue in order for the couple to utilize the gain exclusion generally available on sale of a “principal residence.” Either spouse may utilize an exclusion for up to \$250,000 or both spouses may utilize an exclusion on the same property for up to \$500,000 together. To utilize the exclusion, each spouse must have lived in the home as his/her primary residence for two of the past five years and one spouse must have owned it for the same period. Where the property is occupied by one spouse pursuant to a written agreement or court order, occupancy will be attributed to the other spouse.

Should a spouse decide to remain in the family home, the departing spouse may transfer his/her interest in the home to the remaining spouse and such transfer incident to divorce is tax-free to both spouses. However, the spouse retaining the property will “carryover” the couple’s tax basis in the property – often low – as his/her basis and will have only a single exclusion on a subsequent disposition.

In conclusion, a premarital agreement should be viewed as a type of marital insurance and recommended to anyone contemplating marriage. Active, informed discussions about finances should precede a written prenuptial agreement to prepare a couple to start their “happily-ever-after.” Such agreement should consider tax technicalities as part of this insurance plan.

*Kendra Merchant is an attorney in Stein Sperling’s tax law department. She can be reached at [kmerchant@steinsperling.com](mailto:kmerchant@steinsperling.com).*



## Get More Involved with the WBA

### EVENT COMMITTEES

#### Leadership Luncheons

Jessica Hepburn Sadler  
(301) 664-6218  
sadlerJH@ballardspahr.com

Molly Cooper Milam  
(301) 231-0955  
mmilam@shulmanrogers.com

### OTHER COMMITTEES

#### Montgomery County Commission for Women

Sharon Johnson, Liaison  
(301) 251-5510  
sjlaw51@aol.com

#### Membership/Mentor Program

Mary Lombardo  
(301) 838-3226  
mlombardo@steinsperling.com

#### Mentor Program

Wendy Satin  
(301) 762-1000  
wendysatin@plantasatinlaw.com

Sharon Johnson, Liaison  
(301) 251-5510  
sjlaw51@aol.com

#### Member Directory

Christine S. Pugh  
(301) 656-2707  
cpugh@bregmanlaw.com

#### Listserv

Amanda Smith  
acsmith@rbergmanlaw.com

#### Liaison/Bar Association of Montgomery County

Erin Kopelman  
(301) 347-1261  
elkopelman@lerchearly.com

#### Historian

Donna Van Scoy  
(301) 610-0110  
esqvanscoy@aol.com

#### Bylaws

Nancy Sachitano  
(301) 657-8808  
nas@nasfamilylaw.com

#### Pictorial Historians

Wanda Martinez  
(301) 340-1616  
wmartinez@rismillerlaw.com

Theresa Chernosky  
(301) 563-8944  
theresa.chernosky@gmail.com

#### Foundation

Hon. Katherine Savage  
(240) 777-9372  
ksavage@mcccourt.com

Donna Van Scoy  
(301) 610-0110  
esqvanscoy@aol.com

#### Nominations

TBD

#### State Website

Amanda Vann  
(301) 563-6685  
avann@a-f.net

#### Judicial Selections

Heather Mehigan  
(301) 255-0552  
hmehigan@shulmanrogers.com

#### Social Networking

Kate McDonough  
(301) 563-6685  
kmcdonough@a-f.net

## SUBMIT SOMETHING MUSEWORTHY

The Museletter editors are always in search of new submissions from members and others. If you have any articles, announcements, photographs, etc., that you want included in the Museletter, please remember to send them to us by the 20th of each month!

#### Co-Editors

Rachel E. Coll  
rcoll@steinsperling.com

Emily B. Gelmann  
egelmann@steinsperling.com

Stein Sperling Bennett  
De Jong Driscoll PC  
25 West Middle Lane  
Rockville, MD 20850  
301-340-2020

## MENTOR VOLUNTEER FORM

The Montgomery County WBA is launching a new Mentor/Mentee Program designed to provide guidance to women in the early stages of their legal career. One of the objectives of this program is to forge relationships between seasoned practitioners and women in the beginning stages of their legal practice. As members in the past have paved the way for us, we can share our experience and wisdom to support women in the practice of law; help them to achieve success and reach their goals; and lend a guiding hand when needed. Mentoring is also a way to ensure that women continue to be a viable presence whether in law firms or private practice, in the courtroom, on the bench, and in the legal community in general. It is one way we can “pay it forward” and enjoy the satisfaction of helping a beginning attorney find her way in establishing her legal career.

### Criteria for Mentors:

- \* At least 7 years experience as an attorney; member in good standing of the Maryland Bar Association; and a member of the Montgomery County WBA
- \* Mentors must be willing to commit to one (1) year as a Mentor but may continue beyond the year if the Mentor and Mentee wish
- \* Upon accepting a Mentee, Mentors should make initial contact with the Mentee within five (5) days and have a face-to-face meeting with their Mentee within thirty (30) days. Thereafter, contact can be scheduled as you both deem appropriate
- \* Mentors must be willing to be reasonably available to answer questions and assist Mentees with questions, concerns, etc.

If you are interested in serving as a Mentor, please complete the form below and return to:

Wendy Satin

or

Sharon Johnson

Tel: 301-762-1000

Tel: 301-251-5510

Fax: 301-610-0021

Fax: 301-251-5530

Email: [wendysatin@plantasatinlaw.com](mailto:wendysatin@plantasatinlaw.com)

Email: [sjlaw51@aol.com](mailto:sjlaw51@aol.com)

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I am willing to serve as a Mentor.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I prefer to mentor someone who is interested in my area of practice.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I have no preference as to the Mentee’s area of practice.

My legal practice primarily involves the following area(s):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND, INC.  
COMMITTEE SELECTION**

**Please designate below the committee(s) in which you are interested in becoming a member or chairing and send this form to Diane Bristow, President-Elect at 410-332-8588(fax) or [dcb@nqgrg.com](mailto:dcb@nqgrg.com).**

\_\_\_\_\_ Annual Meeting Committee. Responsible for the program for the annual business meeting of the Corporation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fundraiser and/or Golf Tournament Committee. Raise funds for the Corporation and/or for a selected charitable or community organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ Legislative Matters Committee. Studies proposed state and federal legislation and shall recommend such action thereof by the Corporation as it considers desirable or advisable. It may, upon its own initiative, submit to the Corporation recommendations for amendments or revisions to existing laws to be sponsored by the Corporation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Membership Committee. Promotes, maintains and keep accurate records of the membership of the Corporation. Works on building membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Year Meeting Committee. Plans the first meeting of the Corporation to be held in the fall of each year (Rita C. Davidson Award dinner).

\_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Committee. The Newsletter Committee shall publish a newsletter at least four times between August and May of each year for circulation to the members of the Corporation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Pro Bono Committee. The Pro Bono Committee shall plan, coordinate and publicize opportunities for pro bono and community service work to the members of the Corporation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Long Term Planning Committee. Review current operation of the WBA and propose long term plans.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Montgomery County Women's Bar Association Co-Editors

**Rachel E. Coll**  
**Emily B. Gelmann**



**STEIN SPERLING**

BENNETT • DE JONG • DRISCOLL PC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Stein Sperling Bennett De Jong Driscoll PC  
25 West Middle Lane, Rockville, MD 20850