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Tuesday, March 13, 2007
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
445 Park Avenue at 57th Street

Please RSVP to Teresa Schiller at
teresa.schiller@cliffordchance.com

No admittance if no prior RSVP because space is limited.

Mortgage Re-Financing Seminar

March 20, 2007

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Boardroom at American Home Mortgage
90 Park Ave., 25th Floor, NYC

RSVP to Suzanne at (212) 317-1717 or
Suzanne@cmftlaw.com.

See Page 3 for Details

For the latest news and information on programs and events, check NYWBA online at www.nywba.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

March 2007

**Gender Diversity in Large
Law Firms**



Teresa Schiller

President Teresa Schiller was interviewed recently for an article in the New York Law Journal about gender diversity in large law firms. In the interview, she provided a version of the following remarks, addressing the basic question, "Why are there so few women partners, and what is being done or could be done to change that?"

Although there are many reasons for the paucity of women partners - perhaps as varied as the individual preferences and career choices of women -- some systemic causes are worth exploring: (1) lack of support in advancement; and (2) the desire for work/life balance.

Regarding lack of support in advancement, it is important to examine the leadership in law firms first. The lead partners at many large firms are white males, and some have observed that such leaders tend to support other white males. This support may be provided in informal networking events, such as chats among men in the hallways at work, in offices, over drinks, or at sporting events. Through these informal networks, male associates may learn, for example, about the business development and self-promotional skills that are needed to climb the ladder. Certainly, women need the same support networks - or at least significant formal training -- to acquire and polish their business development and self-promotional skills. A hope is that more women will ascend to leadership positions, which, in turn, will make it easier for other women.

A desire for work/life balance may be another cause of scarcity of women partners in law firms. Many law firms require high billable hours, which can be an unattractive aspect of law firm life for women who are wives and mothers. Women may be more likely than men to exit law firms -- perhaps searching for less-prestigious and lower-paying, but more life-balanced jobs. In addition, women are more likely than men to seek flexible work arrangements at law firms, and there is at least the perception - if not the reality - that working part-time during child-rearing years lends a balance, but at the same time is detrimental to the career of a woman lawyer.

The NYWBA is taking several approaches in response to the problem of too few women partners, which may serve as

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NYWBA FOUNDATION FELLOW INTERNEED AT INMOTION, INC.

Genevieve Beyea

At the beginning of my second year of law school at New York University School of Law, I received an exciting opportunity from the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation (NYWBAF): a fellowship to spend the semester working part-time at InMotion, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides free legal services for underprivileged women in New York City.

Having just completed the rigorous process of interviewing and receiving an offer for a position as a summer associate at a large corporate law firm, I found this internship to be an excellent way of reminding myself of the power of law to help individuals and the responsibility of lawyers to give back to the community. I was deeply impressed by the dedication of the people who work at InMotion, as well as of the volunteer attorneys from law firms around the city who devote their limited time to taking on cases pro bono.

InMotion primarily assists women with family law matters, including both contested and uncontested divorces, custody and visitation issues, and child support matters. The organization also takes on immigration cases under the Violence Against Women Act for women married to U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are victims of domestic violence. During the course of my fellowship, I was able to work on each of these kinds of cases and learn about a wide range of legal issues that affect thousands of women in New York City every day.

Many of the women who come to InMotion are victims of domestic violence. All have limited incomes and the chances of them finding assistance in dealing with the complicated legal issues they face would be slim without the services provided by InMotion. Many also have children who have suffered because of their mothers' situations, whether it is the abuse they have faced at the hands of a spouse or the strain of working multiple jobs to provide for the family because of a father who refuses to pay child support.

This internship experience was particularly rewarding for me not only because of the ability to help some of the most vulnerable and needy members of the community but also because of how much I learned and the high level of responsibility I was given from day one. After a brief but thorough training, I was entrusted with working directly with clients on their cases. Throughout the internship, I also assisted InMotion by conducting initial client intake interviews, in both English and Spanish. This aspect of the job was instrumental in furthering my understanding of the law, forcing me to think on my feet in applying my knowledge of the law to each client's case in order to advise them on initial steps to take and place their case with the correct attorney for review. It was also incredibly rewarding on a personal level to listen to these women's stories and speak with them; for many, it was the first time they were opening up to anyone about the hardships they faced in their daily lives, and the relief they felt from simply talking to someone who understood potential legal remedies for their situations was often tangible in their voices.

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templates for how law firms might start thinking about the issue. First, the Association is developing a survey to evaluate women's issues in law firms. With the survey results, we hope to increase awareness of practices of large law firms regarding women, including practices relating to support in advancement and work/life balance. This information may help women to be wiser about their career choices, and it may also help law firms and their leaders to be more aware of their own practices, particularly as they compare with other firms. Secondly, the NYWBA provides mentoring opportunities. To the extent that women may have fewer mentoring opportunities at firms where the more senior leading lawyers "do not look like them," the Women's Bar has instituted some formal mentoring programs to help women along. In addition, the NYWBA provides informal mentoring opportunities to women who participate in programs that provide networking opportunities with more senior women. Finally, the Association provides training for our members. Programs on topics such as rainmaking and networking help women to develop skills that they need as partners.

First, the NYWBA -- led by Committee to Advance the Status of Women in the Profession Co-Chairs Donna Praiss and Brenda Pomerance -- is developing a survey on women's issues, which will soon be issued to Manhattan firms with fifty or more attorneys (about 300 firms). With the eventual survey results, the Association hopes to measure and promote the progress of women in the legal profession. We also hope to establish the NYWBA as a source of statistics on women lawyers. Finally, we hope to have the opportunity to influence decisionmaking and process at law firms. The survey will seek data on such topics as the number of women partners, the number of women in leading positions at firms, and the ability of parents to take part-time positions and stay on the partnership track.

In addition, the Association provides formal and informal mentoring to its members. Through the "mentoring circles" program, which was established in 1994 and is led by Elise Yablonski, groups of members at different levels and positions have the opportunity to meet several times a year to discuss career issues. Some mentoring circles have met consistently for years, developing trust and cohesiveness and fostering the honest exchange of practical advice, perspective, wisdom, and friendship. Also, through our strong affiliation with the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, members meeting certain qualifications have the opportunity to participate in one-on-one mentoring through the LINK program, which was established in 2002 and is led in our chapter by Jackie Braunstein. LINK is designed to provide a "link" to resources in the legal community for third-year law students and first-year practicing attorneys who are transitioning into legal careers. These "proteges" are matched with more senior mentors who have valuable advice for those new to the profession. Finally, the NYWBA offers informal mentoring at Association events. For example, networking occurs at events such as the annual Reception for Newly Elected and Appointed Judges, at which members have the chance to meet socially with attorneys

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MARCH 2007

MORTGAGE REFINANCING SEMINAR March 20, 2007

Join us on March 20, 2007 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. for a seminar on mortgage refinancing. The seminar will be held in the boardroom at American Home Mortgage, 90 Park Avenue (between 39th and 40th Streets), 25th Floor, New York, NY 10016.

Ellen Morgenthal, Senior Loan Officer with American Home Mortgage, a top-ten direct mortgage lender throughout the fifty states (NYSE:AHM), will discuss the ins and outs of financing the marital home in the divorce setting. She will also discuss the process of getting a mortgage, what lenders look for, when to start shopping for a mortgage and the length of time expected, the ramifications of remaining on the mortgage, the advantages of refinancing as opposed to selling, and the ramifications of one spouse remaining on the mortgage.

A CPA who is a noted matrimonial forensic expert will also be featured. He will discuss the tax implications of refinancing as opposed to selling, as well as the tax and saving aspects associated with negotiating and refinancing.

Please RSVP only if attending to Suzanne at (212) 317-1717 or Suzanne@cmftlaw.com. Please include "AHM" in the subject line.

President's Message continued from page 2

who have a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Indeed, the NYWBA counts among its members prominent and accomplished lawyers in New York. As a result, junior attorneys share an impressive network just by joining the association and meeting their colleagues.

In addition to providing mentoring opportunities, the NYWBA also provides formal training opportunities. These opportunities are designed to support our members and prepare them to be better-equipped to deal with colleagues and clients. Often, they also provide CLE credits as well. Examples of our past training programs are "Rainmaking Strategies for Attorneys," "Networking Skills Workshop: How to Work a Room," "What It's Really Like to Practice Law as a Woman in New York," and "Just the Facts, Ma'am: Fact Interviewing Techniques."

In conclusion, as described above, the NYWBA is working to address the problem of too few women partners in large law firms: through the development of a survey to gather information on advancement and work/life balance, through mentoring, and through training. Please join me and our committee leaders on these projects. Hopefully, as a result, we can serve as a source of information and as an example to the law profession.

Teresa Schiller

NYWBA Foundation Fellow continued from page 2

In addition to working directly with clients, I gained valuable legal experience drafting a variety of court documents and conducting research on family law. I assisted in the preparation of materials for training sessions for the volunteer attorneys, and was also able to attend court hearings with InMotion staff attorneys as an observer.

I am truly grateful for this opportunity to work at InMotion that I have enjoyed as a result of the NYWBAF Fellowship. It has been a rewarding experience for me both on a professional and a personal level, and has greatly contributed to my legal education.



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Newsletter Deadline and Contact Information

Submissions must be sent to the Newsletter Committee by the **10th** of the month for potential publication in the following month's newsletter. Please email articles, notes on members, committee calendars, and any other announcements to **Diana Ceccacci, Esq.** (tel. no. 718-229-4932) at **newsletter@nywba.org**.

NYWBA List Serve

The NYWBA List Serve provides up-to-the-moment information concerning events, programs, and job announcements through email. Please email us at **info@nywba.org** if you have an announcement you would like to post on the list serve or if you would like to be added to the list serve.

Have you changed your address, firm, phone number, or other information? Please call 212-490-8202 or send an email to **info@nywba.org** with the updated information. This will help us keep you informed and our records up-to-date.

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