A Night to Honor Women Judges

The Role and Influences of Women
in the Legal and Judicial Professions

Thursday, October 15, 2009
7:00 P.M.

Northern Illinois University Auditorium
8500 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford and the American Association of University Women, Rockford Area Branch
A Night to Honor Women Judges

The Role and Influences of Women in the Legal and Judiciary Professions

Welcome ................................................................................................................................. Leigh Lakey, President, League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford
Faye Marcus, President Emeritus, AAUW, Rockford Area Branch

Introduction of Program ..................................................................................................... Janyce Fadden, Mistress of Ceremonies


Presentations by Judges ..................................................................................................... Hon. Rosemary Collins
Hon. Janet Holmgren
Hon. Kathryn Zenoff
Hon. Lisa Fabiano
Hon. Gwyn Gulley
Hon. Mary Linn Green

Presentation of Appreciation ......................... $500.00 donation to Winnebago County C.A.S.A. Program (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children)

Closing Remarks .................................................................................................................. Janyce Fadden

Please join us in the common area for refreshments and fellowship after the celebration.
**EDUCATION:** St. Ambrose University, B.A.; J.D. from John Marshall Law School.

**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:** Judge Collins has worked since age 14 in a wide variety of work experience – from head lifeguard at a lake to a college campus security guard. She worked for the Chicago Board of Elections during the presidential election of 1980, was the third woman attorney ever hired by the Winnebago County State’s Attorneys office, and later served as an Assistant Public Defender for Winnebago County. Then, in 1989, breaking through an over 119 year old glass ceiling, Judge Collins became the first woman judge to serve in the history of the 17th Judicial Circuit.

**JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:** Judge Collins has served in almost every courtroom of the circuit during her 20 year career on the bench. She currently has a full time felony criminal caseload and a supervisory role as the head of the Family and Juvenile Division. She’s the long-standing Chair of the 17th Circuit Family Violence Prevention Coordinating Council and the President of the Board of Children’s Safe Harbor. Her training as a mediator and her experience in Small Claims Court, had her start the project in Rockford where trained volunteer attorney mediators provide free mediation services to pro-se litigants at their first court appearance. She also assisted in making orders of protection available on-line to make them easier for the public to access.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Community service is an important facet of Judge Collins’ responsibility as a member of the judiciary. She has been a member of many organizations including the Winnebago County Bar Association, Rockford Rotary, and the League of Women Voters. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts, Contact, Keith School, Illinois Judges Association, and as a Past Chairman of the Winnebago County Bar Foundation. She was the Chair of the ISBA Committee on Judicial Advisory Polls in 2008-9 and serves on the State Steering Committee for Family Violence Prevention. Judge Collins spends a lot of time as a public speaker, and was selected to present a paper on the issue of family violence at the First World Conference on Family Violence held in Singapore. She has received the YWCA Altha Hulett Award for the Professions, the Athena Award, the Rockford Rotary Service above Self Award, and the prestigious Justice Benjamin K. Miller Recognition Award for her work in violence prevention.

**LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRED YOU TO FOLLOW THE LAW:** Judge Collins decided to become a lawyer because of a book. No one in her family had any ties to the legal profession – her father was a family physician, her mother had been a teacher, but after reading *To Kill A Mockingbird* in high school, she decided she wanted to be like Atticus Finch and become a trial lawyer. It still is her favorite book, and one that she has presented discussions on throughout the community.
Hon. Janet R. Holmgren

EDUCATION: Rockford East High School; University of Denver, B.A.; Northern Illinois College of Law, J.D., 1985, magna cum laude

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:
Rockford Clutch Corporation, inside sales correspondent; 1977-1982; Holmstrom & Green, n/k/a Holmstrom & Kennedy, associate attorney, 1985-87; Clark, McGreevy & Johnson, associate attorney, 1987-1992; Donohue and Clark, Ltd., associate attorney, 1992-1995. Responsibilities as an attorney in private practice were concentrated in all areas of civil litigation, with an emphasis on personal injury and insurance defense matters.

JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Associate Judge, 1995-1998, duties included traffic, DUI, misdemeanor, juvenile abuse and neglect, felony matters and major civil trials.
Circuit Judge, 1998 to present, assignments include juvenile abuse and neglect, major civil litigation, and the Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP) Court as well as administrative duties as Presiding Judge of the Family Division, 1998 to 2007. Chief Judge, 2007 to present, duties include administrative responsibilities for judicial assignments, court calendar, trial court administration, budgets, court services department, public defender’s office, court reporters, and bailiffs. Judicial assignments include presiding judge of the TIP Court and back-up for all court calls and jury trials.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:
Current: Chairman, Illinois Supreme Court’s Conference of Chief Judge’s Specialty Courts Committee; Member, Illinois Supreme Court’s Judicial Conference Criminal Law and Probation committee; Member, Illinois Judge’s Association Board of Directors; Member, Executive Advisory Board for Resolution Systems Institute, dedicated to alternative dispute resolution; Member, Equal Justice Illinois Campaign Blue Ribbon Committee; Member, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; Member, Illinois State Bar Association and Winnebago County Bar Association.
Past: On the Waterfront, Inc., Board of Directors (Chairman 200-2002); Board of Directors, Winnebago County Bar Association; Board of Directors, Winnebago County Bar Foundation; Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, member; Illinois Children’s Justice Task Force, member; Rockford Downtown Rotary, Board of Directors.

Winnebago County CASA Program
ADVOCACY & HUMAN RIGHTS, CHILDREN & YOUTH, COMMUNITY
Every year more than a million abused and neglected children are in need of safe, permanent, nurturing homes. The abuse and neglect these children originally suffered at home doesn't continue as abuse and neglect at the hands of children in court. The result is that a child is placed into a safe, loving home where he/she can thrive. It is the CASA vision to provide a volunteer for each and every abused and neglected child who needs one. The League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford and the American Association of University Women, Rockford Area Branch are proud to donate $500.00 to CASA to help them continue their mission.
Winnebago County CASA Program

Every year more than a million abused and neglected children are in need of safe, permanent, nurturing homes. That’s where CASA steps in. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) was created in 1977 to make sure the abuse and neglect these children originally suffered at home doesn’t continue as abuse and neglect at the hands of the system. As trained advocates, CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to be a voice for these children in court. The result is that a child is placed into a safe, loving home where he/she can thrive. It is the CASA vision to provide a volunteer for each and every abused and neglected child who needs one. The League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford and the American Association of University Women, Rockford Area Branch are proud to donate $500.00 to CASA to help them continue their mission.

Hon. Kathryn E. Zenoff

EDUCATION: Stanford University, B.A.; Columbia University Law School, J.D.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE: Private practice in New York City and Chicago; Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office; Part-time Instructor at Chicago’s Kent Law School; Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office

JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Currently Presiding Justice of the Second Appellate District in Illinois; formerly Chief Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit; former Presiding Judge of the 17th Circuit Criminal Division; former Presiding Judge of the Therapeutic Intervention Project, (Winnebago County mental health court); former Chair, Specialty Courts Committee of the Illinois Conference of Chief Judges; National Co-chair of the Judges Leadership Initiative for Mental Health and Criminal Justice Issues; Member of the Illinois Supreme Court Committees on Professional Responsibility, Legislation and Complex Litigation

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Member, League of Women Voters, Rockford Downtown Rotary; former member of the Board of Directors of the Rock River Valley Council of Girl Scouts; former member of the Board of Directors of the Winnebago County Bar Association; former member of the Rockford College Board of Trustees; member of the Board of Visitors of Columbia University Law School; former Facilitator of the Children’s Advocacy Project (to coordinate the county-wide response to child sexual abuse); former Facilitator of the Community Task Force to establish a supervised children’s waiting room in the courthouse; former Facilitator of the Community Task Force to establish a Mental Health Court in Winnebago County

LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRED ME TO FOLLOW THE LAW: Recently the Women’s Bar Association of Illinois established an award entitled The Esther Rothstein Rise Up and Reach Back Award to honor my aunt, who had unmatched vision and quiet determination to give women their rightful place in the law. She was the first woman President of the Chicago Bar Association, and she was always a role model for me, as was my father who practiced law in Chicago for over 50 years. They both saw the law as a calling to improve the common good and to help their fellow man. I was inspired by both of them, but it was my mother who encouraged me not to give up on pursuing my dreams of becoming a judge and who knew also that women could be effective leaders.
Hon. Lisa Fabiano


EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE: Fifteen years in various positions as a Registered Nurse: staff nurse, nursing supervisor, nursing instructor, clinical nurse specialist and hospital administration. Seventeen years practicing law, first as an Associate Attorney, then eventually a partner Kostantocos, Reuterfors, McWilliams, Brandt and Green, P.C.; also served as a partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson in medical malpractice defense and civil litigation.

JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Currently I preside in Probate Court, hearing decedents’ estates and guardianships for disabled adults and minors, and small claims court, hearing civil matters in which up to $10,000 is at issue.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Secretary and Board Member of the Greater Rockford Italian American Association, which sponsors Festa Italiana and other events to raise money for parochial school scholarships. Vice President of the Winnebago County Chapter of the Justinian Society of Lawyers, and a member of the Winnebago County Bar Association.

LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRED ME TO FOLLOW THE LAW: I was inspired to a career in the law by my father, who has practiced law in this community for many years. He also inspired my brother and sister to become lawyers. His pleasure in the practice of law instilled in me a love of the law as well as a deep appreciation for its importance in a civilized society.

Hon. Mary Linn Green

EDUCATION: Rockford Guilford High School; University of Illinois, 1985; Loyola University of Chicago School of Law, 1992.


JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Serving full time as Traffic Court Judge and as backup Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP) Court judge.
Hon. Gwyn Gulley


EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE: Seventeen years of private practice as an attorney in private practice in all areas of civil litigation, with an emphasis on workers’ compensation, probate, real estate, estate planning. Served as an Assistant Public Defender in Winnebago County.

Judicial Responsibilities: Supervising Judge of Mandatory arbitration, 2008-present, assigned to the Civil Division and hear cases involving lawsuits between $10,000.00 and $50,000.00, post judgment calls.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Rockford Association for Minority Management (RAMM), Rockford Chamber of Commerce Minority Business Council (present Chair), Illinois Judge’s Association, Winnebago County Bar Association, Member of Zion Missionary Baptist Church.

LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRED ME TO FOLLOW THE LAW: I have always had a sincere appreciation and respect for the law. As a young girl I wanted to become an attorney to help others resolve their disputes. After seventeen years of practicing law and representing my clients, I continue my interest to have justice served in a fair manner. I decided then that I aspired to become the 'Ultimate Public Servant': to become a judge.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Current Board Membership: Rock River alley Blood Center; OSF St. Anthony College of Nursing, Lector of St. Bernadette’s Church.

FORMER BOARD MEMBERSHIP: Alzheimer's Association, Rokford Sexual Assault Counseling, Northern Illinois University College of Law Alumni Council, Visiting Nurses Association Professional Advisory Committee, OSF St. Anthony Medical Center; Crusader Clinic Foundation.

LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRED ME TO FOLLOW THE LAW: I have combined my experience as an R.N. and my degree in law in order to represent other nurses and healthcare professional when they were sued. I practiced in civil litigation in courts all over Northern Illinois in this capacity for over sixteen years.
Great Thanks to...

Donors
Northern Illinois University:
the Office of President John G. Peters
The College of Law
Anonymous
Winnebago County Sheriff Dick Meyers
Anonymous
Delta Kappa Gamma Sorority, Beta Gamma Chapter
Winnebago County Bar Association
Anonymous
Anonymous
Winnebago County Chairman Scott Christiansen
Alpha Kappa Alpha

Generous Assistance
Northern Illinois University:
Media Relations and Public Affairs
Women's Studies Department
Junior League of Rockford
Rockford Woman's Club
Womanspace
National Council of Negro Women
Boone County Bar Association

Co-Sponsors
League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford
Local Government Committee
Voter Service Committee
American Association of University Women, Rockford Area Branch

Great Thanks
Design by Janie Wilson-Cook
Judges' portraits by Michael Smith of Winnebago County