



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Conference Focused on Women Elevating Each Other

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Photos on SmugMug:

<https://wvcourts.smugmug.com/Photo-Galleries/2021/Events/October-11-2021-Women-and-the-Law>

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Believe in yourself, take risks, and empower each other were the messages given Monday during a panel discussion entitled “The Current Landscape in West Virginia: Women and the Law.”

The panel was part of “When There Are Nine: A Day of Elevating Women,” an event held at the University of Charleston.

“These discussions are important to bolster young women in pursuit of their professional goals,” said Thirteenth Judicial Circuit (Kanawha County) Judge Joanna Tabit. “We were so fortunate to have a team of wonderful panelists for the students to learn from. Having had the pleasure of moderating two of the sessions, I may have learned as much as the students!”

One of those sessions, “The Current Landscape in West Virginia: Women and the Law,” included former Supreme Court Justice Margaret Workman, Solicitor General Lindsay See, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit (Kanawha County) Judge Tera Salango, and Kathy Beckett, Environmental Attorney at Steptoe & Johnson PLLC.

“I never felt like being a female was a hindrance,” said Justice Workman, who was the first woman in her family to graduate from college, was one of two women to graduate in her law school class, and the first woman elected to statewide office. “I think we have made remarkable progress as far as women attorneys go, and the number of female judges is growing. But there is still a long way to go.”

Solicitor General See said she never wants to give the impression that her resume is just one success after another. There were many jobs over many months she didn’t get, and

those are the ones that help you become more open to other opportunities. “You have to learn how to be successful while being true to yourself and authentic.”

Judge Salango talked about balancing work life and home life, saying “for many women, childbearing years overlap the same years women are in private practice trying to become a partner.” She encouraged the young women to consider a career in law, stating “you are the future.”

Attorney Beckett told participants the opportunities for women lawyers are more robust in government than private practice. “Consciously protect yourself, protect your career, and protect every aspect of your life,” Beckett said.

More than 100 students and members of the public participated virtually and about twenty attended in person for the two live events, the panel discussion, and the live recording of the podcast “Lady Justice: Women of the Court,” hosted by Justice Beth Walker, Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget McCormack, and Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Rhonda Wood.

Other conference sessions included “Learned Lessons from Underrepresented Leaders;” “Addressing Discrimination, Inequality, and Poverty: Work in Public Interest Law;” “Mastering the Code: How to be Heard in Male-Dominated Spaces;” and “Voices from Current Law Students and Recent Graduates: Lessons from the Classroom.”

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