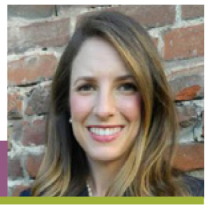
Melanie Corrin || Elizabeth Howard



2017 CWBA Mary Lathrop Award: Rebecca Alexander

Professional Advancement Committee

Each year, the CWBA honors a woman trailblazer with its prestigious Mary Lathrop Award. This award is given to women who have been trailblazers in the law, have served the mission of advancing women in the law, and have made notable and remarkable differences in our legal community.

This year at the CWBA's annual convention on Friday, May 19, the CWBA will honor Rebecca Alexander with the 2017 CWBA Mary Lathrop Award. Throughout her successful legal career, Rebecca has created a trail that has illustrated each of the traits that this award was created to honor.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." With her legal career, Rebecca has done just that. She is leaving a pathway for other women to follow to advance their legal careers while serving their community.

Rebecca completed her undergraduate degree at Swarthmore College in 1987 and her law degree, with honors, from Northwestern University School of Law in 1993. She became licensed to practice law in Colorado in 1993.

After a federal judicial clerkship with the Late Jim R. Carrigan, Rebecca joined BakerHostetler in October 1995 as an associate attorney, beginning her career as a litigation generalist. She gradually transitioned her practice to focus on the representation of individuals, where she discovered her passion for guiding people through difficult personal situations involving the law. Rebecca then successfully built a family law group with multiple attorneys in a national law firm, a rather difficult and unique feat.

Rebecca was promoted to partner in 2001 and made equity partner in 2008. She was the second woman to be promoted to equity partner in BakerHostetler's Denver office, and the first woman to be promoted to equity partner having spent her entire career with the firm. When Rebecca started with the firm, she had two children under the age of two. Nonetheless, Rebecca excelled in her position and reached these promotional milestones despite the demands of being a single parent for many of her career's formative years.

Rebecca designed and implemented the initiative "Get Out There" (GOT), which addresses the stagnation of attorneys moving through their careers with respect to business development, and ultimately impacts their promotional opportunities. In January 2016, she was named the Denver Office Business Development Leader. She also leads an informal mentoring group for Denver women attorneys, which meets regularly to discuss issues brought to it by female attorneys in BakerHostetler's Denver office.

Throughout her career, Rebecca has continuously and significantly contributed to the legal community. She founded the Florence Crittenton Legal Clinic, at

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in domestic relations cases. I also successfully passed a bill to change the way juveniles are charged as adults. Pursuant to the bill, if a DA wants to charge a juvenile as an adult, the juvenile has the right to a hearing and the judge (as opposed to the DA) makes the decision. I also sponsored and passed legislation requiring insurance companies to charge the same premiums for women and men and requiring coverage for maternity and feminine care; a bill to prohibit solitary confinement for juveniles who are incarcerated; a bill which provides due process in foreclosure proceedings; a bill to provide more funding for domestic violence victims, and two really challenging ones —the gun safety bills—one of which now requires a universal background check for gun purchases and the other helps to keep guns out of the hands of domestic violence offenders.

I also have a passion for the ethical and fair treatment of animals, so I started the CLAW caucus (the Colorado Legislators for Animal Welfare caucus), and, among other accomplishments, got funding for shelters through a state-issue license plate.

Why is the CWBA such an important organization?

For me, it was and remains a tremendous support network. If I have questions or need help, I tend to call a woman lawyer. I feel there is a special comradery and bond among women lawyers. Also, the networking opportunities are outstanding. Some of my best friends are women I met through the CWBA—it is a great, fun group of women. The support system the CWBA creates has been critical for me, and I believe is critical for others as well. Of course, the CWBA does important legal work for women, participates in selection of judges, lobbies at the Capitol, and keeps us informed of issues affected women and women lawyers.

Jennifer Tiedeken is a member of the CWBA Publications Committee and a litigation associate at Davis & Ceriani, P.C., focusing on employment law, securities law, and commercial litigation.

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Florence Crittenton High School, which serves to educate, prepare and empower teen mothers and their children through a public-private partnership with Denver Public Schools. More than 90% of the teen mothers in this Program graduate from high school, compared with 38% nationally.

Rebecca with her husband David Starbuck.

Rebecca has also served on the CBA Family Law Section's Executive Council since 2013. She completed 175 hours of pro bono work in 2015 and 136 pro bono hours for 2016. She has served as a legal advisor to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Denver Affiliate from 2008-2012, and was on the Board of Trustees for the CBA Legal Aid Foundation from July 2010 to December 2011.

Through her many accomplishments, Rebecca has illustrated that it is possible to reach, and even exceed, your personal goals and blaze trails for other women all the while giving back to your community.

Melanie Corrin is a CWBA board member and is Co-Chair of the Professional Advancement Committee. She is an immigration judge with the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review.

Elizabeth is a CWBA board member and is Co-Chair of the Professional Advancement Committee. She an attorney at Childs McCune LLC.

TRIVIA

Where did this year's Mary Lathrop Award recipient receive her undergraduate degree?

Send your answer to execdir@CWBA.ORG for a chance to win a discount on a future CWBA event.