



|| CWBA Professional Advancement Committee ||
Kym Sorrells & John Tatlock



2018 Mary Lathrop Award Recipient: Alli Gerkman



Each year, the CWBA gives its highest honor – the Mary Lathrop Award – to an honoree who is a recognized trailblazer in the law, has served the mission of advancing women in the law, and has made notable remarkable differences in our legal community. It is with great pleasure that the

CWBA will present **Alli Gerkman with the 2019 Mary Lathrop Award** at the CWBA's Annual Convention in May. Alli has blazed her own path – pursuing a non-traditional career – that will have a lasting impact on women in the law for generations to come.

After graduating from DePaul University College of Law, Alli moved to Colorado and began her legal career in private practice with Winzenburg, Leff, Purvis and Payne, where she remained until 2006. Then, Alli worked with CLE International (a national CLE organization), until 2009 when the CBA-CLE sought her out to work with them. During this time, Alli devoted herself to many volunteer organizations. She was – and still is – an active member of the CWBA, assuming numerous leadership roles on the Board of Directors, including as Chair of the CWBA's Professional Advancement, Public Policy, and Convention committees. She also has served on the Colorado Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Providers of Alternative Legal Services, the Law School Transparency National Advisory Council, and served as Chair of the New Lawyers Working Group of the Chief Justice's Commission on the Legal Profession. Alli also served on the Editorial Review Board of the Touro Law Center's Journal of Experiential Learning.

These are just a few of the many organizations for which Alli has made a difference. Her vision, energy, and contributions did not go unrecognized. She was selected for the Colorado Bar Association's Leadership Training Program (COBALT).



Alli at the 5th Annual Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers Conference in Denver, CO (2016)

In 2011, Alli chose to take a different course, joining the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) at the University of Denver. As a Senior Director for IAALS, overseeing its programmatic objectives and strategy, Alli collaborated with the Institute's leaders and innovators, including former Colorado Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Love Kourlis. Under Alli's leadership, IAALS launched "Foundations for Practice" to identify the foundations new lawyers need for success, to develop models of legal education that support those foundations, and to advance a culture of legal hiring that results in a better fit for the employee, the employer, and the client. More than 24,000 lawyers across every type of practice setting participated in IAALS' national

survey, the outcomes of which are driving the development of learning in law schools, facilitating the creation of improved hiring rubrics in legal organizations that hire entry-level lawyers, and renewing conversations about what minimum competence should be for entry to the legal profession.

Alli took the results from this one-of-a-kind study, molding and shaping the findings, which she then presented at a 2016 meeting of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professional Development. Following her presentation, then-Chief Justice Nancy Rice recognized Alli's significant contributions, noting that "Alli encouraged us to rethink what makes a 'practice-ready' lawyer." In a similar vein, former ABA President Linda Klein remarked that Alli's study "challenges us all to reevaluate assumptions about developing 'good lawyers.' This is just the beginning, and if not for Alli, we might be having the conversation at all."



Alli at Zion National Park

Alli's next challenge - "Think Like a Client" - was another one-of-a-kind study designed to identify what clients most value in their attorneys. In an innovative partnership with the attorney-rating website Avvo, IAALS collected a decade's worth of client reviews of lawyers, spanning a wide-range of legal practice areas and regions, which provide insight on what the consumers of legal services

most value in their attorneys. In a new project Alli is leading, IAALS is building on lessons from Foundations for Practice, Think Like a Client, and other studies to redefine the definition of minimum competency for lawyers. Alli hopes results of this project will challenge how we currently think about the bar examination and pave the way to entrance requirements that are both more inclusive and better aligned with knowledge and skills that lawyers must have. Alli's work has been featured on Colorado Public Radio and in the Denver Business Journal, the National Law Journal, the Wall Street Journal, and U.S. News & World Report.



Alli with her mom, Betsy Alles, in South Africa (2017)

Alli's innovative contributions to improvements in the legal system make her a true trailblazer, well-deserving of the **2019 Mary Lathrop Award**. The CWBA is looking forward to celebrating Alli's accomplishments at the CWBA's Annual Convention in May.

Kym Sorrells is a CWBA Board Member and Co-Chair of the CWBA Professional Advancement Committee. She is currently the First Assistant Attorney General of the Tort Litigation Unit, defending state agencies and its employees in lawsuits seeking damages for personal injury and property damage, and for alleged constitutional violations.

John Tatlock is a member of the CWBA Professional Advancement Committee and a partner at the Epstein Patierno, LLP family law firm, specializing in high-asset, high-net-worth domestic relations cases.