

WOMEN'S LAW PROJECT

Western
Pennsylvania
Edition

Safeguarding Rights, Creating Opportunities

Winter 2010

Violence Against Women • Reproductive Justice • Gender Equity
Title IX • Economic Justice & Health Care Reform

And the Winner Is ... the Women's Law Project!

On November 4th, the Women's Law Project was honored with the Good Government Award from the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh. The award celebrates civic leadership in Allegheny County, and this year we shared the honor with Charles J.

Queenan, Jr., William Isler, and the Rand Corporation.

The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government.



From left to right: Arlene Levy, Susan Frietsche, Christina Cann, and Pamela Saunders. Levy and Saunders are Co-Presidents of the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh.

Thanks so much to them for honoring WLP!

Update from Sue and Carol

Some of the ways we would describe the time since our last newsletter: hectic but hopeful; rigorous but rewarding; local, regional and national.

With your support, we were the catalyst for a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing about the national crisis in the police mistreatment of rape victims. Our testimony included our *amicus* brief on behalf of a rape survivor from Cranberry Township, who also testified at the hearing in Washington, DC. We raised critical awareness and outrage among policymakers and the public.

This month, WLP, in partnership with law firm Pepper Hamilton, will defend a reproductive healthcare clinic and its director in federal court. Anti-abortion protesters have sued the clinic and the city government because of volunteer escorts' work to ensure patient access to the clinic.

We all know that knowledge is power and that's the thinking behind our Abortion Briefing Project. With your help as participants and/or donors, we can diminish damaging misconceptions about abortion and help our policymakers make informed decisions about an essential right for every woman.

It's a perfect time to say thank you to those who make our work possible with their financial support. Without individuals like you, we can't be the responsive and effective advocate our clients need and depend on. Please make a gift to advance women's rights in western Pennsylvania today.

Best wishes for the holidays and the new year,

Carol Cooney *Sue Frietsche*

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Support WLP in Your Workplace

SAVE THE DATE!

**RIGHTS TO REALITIES IV:
Women's Health, Women's Rights
Thursday, April 28, 2011**

**Host and Guest Auctioneer:
Sally Wiggin, WTAE-TV**

**Join us for WLP's annual
fundraising event!
Location to be announced.**

**Read inside for ways you can
help make it a success!**

**For more information,
infopitt@womenslawproject.org
or call 412-281-2892.**

Reproductive Justice — Update and Action Steps

Kuhns v. City of Allentown

Trial preparation is underway in this federal civil rights action in which the Women's Law Project, together with co-counsel Thomas Zemaitis of Pepper Hamilton LLP, represents two of the defendants, a reproductive health care facility and its director. Three anti-abortion protesters are suing the clinic and local police for allegedly permitting volunteer escorts to shield patients from aggressive protesters by carrying plastic tarps to create a safe tunnel to the clinic's door. Pending resolution of our motion for summary judgment, trial is scheduled to begin November 29.

Understanding Abortion Care in Pennsylvania

Too often, the only voices that legislators hear when considering abortion-related issues are those of abortion opponents, who perpetrate myths, stereotypes and outright lies about abortion care, women who need abortion, and religious perspectives on reproductive rights. The Women's Law Project convenes a statewide coalition called Pennsylvanians for Choice, which is engaged in a long-term strategy to change the political climate in Pennsylvania around abortion.

Through Pennsylvanians for Choice (PFC), a coalition of abortion rights organizations housed at the Women's Law Project, we've developed a plan to visit every state legislator in the Commonwealth for an informational visit about abortion. Staff and volunteers will take with them a manual, created by WLP and PFC, "Understanding Abortion Care in Pennsylvania," filled with facts about the procedure and demonstrating the necessity of abortion access for women throughout their lives. This briefing book reinforces that abortion is common, safe, necessary and under attack.

Take Action! Be part of the Abortion Briefing Project

The goal of these visits is to educate legislators on abortion, reduce the stigma of abortion, and put a human face on an issue that is all too often just an abstract for elected officials in Harrisburg.

We're looking for abortion providers or clinic staff and volunteers, clergy members who have counseled women about abortion, and women who have had abortions and would be willing to discuss their story in a private meeting with their legislator to go on the visits along with a reproductive justice advocate. WLP would help you prepare for the visit in any way we can.

New Voices Pittsburgh's Leadership Institute



Sue Frietsche (standing, third from left) served on the host committee for New Voices Pittsburgh's Policymaker Leadership Institute on *Protecting the Rights of Incarcerated Women to Reproductive Health Care*. The Institute was held in Wilkensburg on October 22, 2010.

She also spoke on an afternoon panel about female prisoners' rights to reproductive health care.

In the News...

Psst...you might have seen WLP in the press recently!

ABC World News with Diane Sawyer — September 14, 2010

WLP Executive Director Carol Tracy asked for and testified at U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on the chronic failure of police departments to report and investigate rape cases nationwide. And correspondent Pierre Thomas interviewed Butler County rape survivor Sara Reedy about her treatment by the Cranberry Township police department.

The WLP submitted an *amicus curiae* brief in Ms. Reedy's case, which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit relied upon in holding the police department accountable for their treatment of Ms. Reedy. Watch it at <http://bit.ly/9HoYfV>.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette — October 21, 2010.

WLP Senior Staff Attorney Susan Frietsche was quoted extensively in this recent article about three anti-abortion bills introduced by local state Senators Jane Orié and Don White in the Pennsylvania legislature.

Two of the bills would drastically restrict insurance coverage for abortion in the state-run exchanges to be created in 2014 under the federal health care reform law, and one bill would impose yet another barrier on young women's access to abortion by requiring minors seeking a judicial bypass for the procedure to have their requests notarized, potentially violating their privacy by exposing their names in a notary's log. Read it at <http://bit.ly/9OV9NC>.

WLP Needs You — to Volunteer!

As we near our tenth anniversary in western Pennsylvania, our ability to advocate and litigate free of charge to advance women's rights depends on the increased involvement and financial commitments of individuals like you. We need your help to build greater awareness and to help us engage passionate individuals in the work of WLP.

Here are a few suggestions for expanding your involvement and engaging others. ***And we're eager to hear your creative ideas for friend-raising and fund-raising!***

Organize an event — by yourself or with friends — to introduce the Women's Law Project to your network

Recently, an airing of "The Assassination of Dr. Tiller" narrated by Rachel Maddow on MSNBC attracted thirty WLP supporters for an evening of networking, morale-building and discussion about ways to address ongoing threats to reproductive health providers. In January, another party will celebrate the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

Introduce your network to the WLP by hosting or co-hosting an event in your home or venue of choice. We can provide a general overview and/or focus on a specific area of interest. Call Christina today to discuss your topic and put a date on the calendar!

Volunteer for Rights to Realities IV

Our fourth annual fundraising party will be on Thursday, April 28, 2011. In addition to raising public awareness about the Women's Law Project, this is a critical source of unrestricted operating support. Since 2007, this event has raised nearly \$80,000 for the WLP's work in western Pennsylvania.

As a member of the Host Committee, you will assist with all aspects of the planning for the event including helping to secure sponsorships and donations for our live and silent auctions and increasing the audience.

Or volunteer for the day of the event. Help us set up, sign-in, manage our silent and live auctions, and more.

Intern at the Women's Law Project

We provide internships for law student, undergrads and grad students from a variety of programs. Interns are crucial to the WLP's mission. They assist with litigation and advocacy efforts, write posts for our blog, research topics relating to women's rights, assist with event planning, lobby for legislation, and more.

To apply, send your cover letter and resume to infopitt@womenslawproject.org. Undergrads and grad students should also submit a sample blog post on a current feminist issue (500 words or less), while law students should submit a short legal writing sample.

To respond to these opportunities or suggest new ideas, please contact Christina Cann at 412-281-2892 or by email: infopitt@womenslawproject.org.



WLP Blogiversary!

This October, the WLP blog turned two. We launched the blog on October 14, 2008, with the goal of writing about current events in women's rights.

Since that time, we've published 365 posts by staff members and interns, with our most-covered topics including abortion and reproductive rights, LGBT rights, Title IX and women's sports, employment, and rape and sexual assault.

Some fun facts about our blog:

- The first post was about a three-part series published by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on women and the military.
- Our busiest day was September 23, 2009, when we wrote about major college football's only female referee, Sarah Thomas.
- Three staff members and a dozen interns have contributed their time and efforts to writing our posts.

You can subscribe to our blog in several ways:

- Via RSS feed so the posts come directly to your Google Reader, Microsoft Office Inbox or any other RSS service.
- Via email — just click on the link in the sidebar at womenslawproject.wordpress.com.
- By becoming a fan of the WLP on Facebook, where all our blog posts are imported.
- Or by following WLP on Twitter, which is updated with every post we write.

And finally, thanks to everyone who reads the WLP blog and shares our posts with friends. You have helped us make this blog a success, and we're looking forward to many more blogiversaries in the future!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FISA Foundation

WLP is proud to announce a grant award of \$25,000 from the FISA Foundation to support an education and advocacy campaign to achieve equal opportunity and equal treatment for female high school athletes in Pittsburgh.

Action supported by this grant include: educating stakeholders on the gender inequity exposed by the recent Title IX audit; serving as a legal resource for parents and student-athletes seeking improved opportunities and treatment for female athletes; debunking myths about female athletes and Title IX; and creating and implementing an advocacy plan to eliminate at least one gender-discriminatory practice in each high school.

We are extremely grateful to the FISA Foundation for joining our ongoing efforts on behalf of female athletes.

Make a difference with your tax-deductible gift today!

- **Send a check** payable to **WLP**.
- **Make a donation online** at www.pittsburghgives.org or www.womenslawproject.org
- **Designate us** in the United Way Campaign: **#9867631**.
- **Choose the WLP (#41408)** in the Three Rivers CFC Campaign
- **Become a sustaining donor** via monthly credit card donations.
- **Give appreciated stock**.
- **Include WLP** in your estate plans.

Carol E. Tracy, Esq.

Executive Director

Susan Frietsche, Esq.

Senior Staff Attorney

Christina Cann

Program Associate

Workplace Donations Work for WLP!

Payroll Deduction

Make a gift to advance women's rights part of your "fair share" donation during the 2010 United Way Contributor Choice or Three Rivers Combined Federal Campaign.

Spread the Word!

Encourage your co-workers to join you in supporting WLP:

- **United Way of Allegheny County Contributor Choice: #9867631.**
- **Three Rivers Combined Federal Campaign: #41408**

Matching Gifts

Don't forget to ask your employer about matching your gift to the Women's Law Project.

MYRA BRADWELL FUND

In 2008, the Women's Law Project established the Myra Bradwell Fund to thank and recognize donors who make annual contributions of \$1,000 and more.

The Fund honors Myra Bradwell, who passed the test for admission to the Chicago Bar in 1869 but was denied admission by the Illinois Supreme Court on the grounds that she was married. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Illinois decision on the basis that "the natural and proper timidity and delicacy" of women make them unfit for "many of the occupations of civil life." Ms. Bradwell published the Chicago Legal News and worked tirelessly for expanded opportunities for women in the law. In 1890, she was granted an *Amenda Honorabile*, a license to practice law, by the Illinois Supreme Court, "to right a previous wrong."

Membership in the 2010-2011 Myra Bradwell Fund closes on June 30th. To become a member, please contact us at 412-281-2892 or by email: infopitt@womenslawproject.org.

Donate to the Rights to Realities Live or Silent Auction

Support the Women's Law Project as a donor to our live and/or silent auction on April 28th. Our lively and competitive auctions are a fun and successful part of every event. Auction items have included: tickets to sporting events and performances, a handmade quilt and purse, museum memberships, autographed posters and books, jewelry, wine baskets and much more.

The Women's Law Project

Western PA Office

401 Wood Street, Suite 1020

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

tel. 412-281-2892

fax 412-281-3054

infopitt@womenslawproject.org

Philadelphia Office

125 S. 9th Street, Suite 300

Philadelphia, PA 19107

tel. 215-928-9801

fax 215-928-9848

info@womenslawproject.org

www.womenslawproject.org

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



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