WOMEN'S LAW PROJECT

Safeguarding Rights, Creating Opportunities

case statement

October 2010

Safeguarding Rights, Creating Opportunities for Women Throughout Their Lives

Rights, opportunities, support, hope: These are the foundations on which the Women's Law Project has built its mission since opening its doors in April 1974.

In the decades that followed, WLP has transformed the lives of countless women and girls, helping them fight injustice and find success in

them change their names without publishing the changes in the newspaper.

- *Creating fundamental systems reform that sustains the hope of justice for women victimized by* ***sexual assault*** *by changing how police departments handle sexual assault complaints.*
- *Winning a 200-400% increase in*

leave for our daughters and granddaughters is very much at risk.

That is why WLP turns to you – together with the other committed donors, foundations and law firms that make our work possible – to ask for your support in our major donor initiative, the **Myra Bradwell Fund**.

At the direction of WLP's

> **"They don't take a case because of the numbers, the dollars or the publicity, they take a case because they're genuinely concerned."**
>
> *– Nonprofit executive & women's health leader*

and success in their personal and professional lives.. By forging collaborations that enhance its impact, the Women's Law Project has brought about groundbreaking social change:

- *Protecting the right of women and girls in Pennsylvania and nationwide to control their bodies and destinies, by defending* ***safe and legal access to abortion and contraception.***
- *Increasing* ***athletic opportunities*** *for female students in colleges and high schools throughout Pennsylvania through strategic application of Title IX.*
- *Freeing* ***domestic violence*** *victims from the fear that their abusers will find them by amending the law to let* *400% increase in the amount of* ***child support*** *that can be passed through to women and children on welfare.*
- *Securing for the children of* ***lesbian and gay parents*** *the same legal and economic rights enjoyed by children of heterosexual parents.*

On each of these issues, the Women's Law Project has led the way, with women and their families as the direct beneficiaries.

Today, decades of legal victories for women and girls are on the chopping block. The deeply polarized Supreme Court has weakened equal pay protections and upheld abortion restrictions despite the danger to women's health. Even greater losses are on the horizon. The legacy we will

At the direction of WLP's Board of Trustees and executive director, the Bradwell Fund raises individual gifts of $1,000 to $25,000+ to allow WLP to pursue innovative collaborations and new opportunities to advance justice for the most powerless and oppressed women in our society.

We invite you to become a member of the Bradwell Fund, named for one of America's first women attorneys and a courageous 19th-century advocate for the rights of women. Your membership will strengthen WLP's capacity to create more landmark outcomes for women and girls of all ages and walks of life – throughout Pennsylvania and in every corner of this nation.

"They provide an undergirding for low-income families that goes across a range of human issues … [and] they're...relentless when they take on an issue."

– A senior foundation officer

How the Women's Law Project Makes a Lasting Difference

People turn to the Women's Law Project to learn about their rights, to look for resources in their own communities, to seek skilled advocacy, to amplify their voices, to find the best options for their lives and the best solutions to their challenges, to traverse systems, and to change what they have been told cannot be changed.

All this is possible due to the expertise of WLP staff, attorneys, social workers, and volunteers who:

- **Litigate and support progressive litigation, often precedent-setting,** from the trial level to the Supreme Court, through direct representation and *amicus curiae* briefs.
- **Forge legislative solutions**, sometimes with national ramifications, by lobbying and organizing at the grassroots level, and educating elected officials.
- **Offer expert telephone counseling**, regardless of income, and connect women in need to the resources they want.
- **Engage in research and public education** to allow citizens to understand the full implications of legislation, court decisions, and current events and which specific actions they can take.
- **Bring about fundamental systems reform** that turns institutions into allies.

These components form the Women's Law Project service docket – a unique and vital resource for women as they seek to navigate the often daunting landscape that lies between them and the solid ground of equal opportunity.

"The Law Project… brought [our] attention to the staggering statistics about … domestic violence in ways that touch every sector of our criminal justice, health and social services systems."

Former Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street

An Organization Like No Other

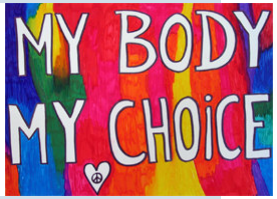
In 1974, the Women's Law Project launched its mission to

nings is a singular combination of legal expertise, public educa-

form, equitable policy for ma-
ternity leave

"[Their] guidance and support led to significant legislative accomplishments, including the establishment of Pennsylvania's first legislative buffer zone to protect patients and staff at reproductive health care centers in Pittsburgh."

Pittsburgh City Councilman Doug Shields



ject launched its mission to bring about equality and justice for women everywhere. In 2002, WLP opened an office in Pittsburgh to better serve the Western Pennsylvania area.

In choosing Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence was signed, WLP's founders consciously challenged the notion that men – but not women – are created equal. The new organization's focus tapped into the revolutionary atmosphere of the day. With *Roe v. Wade* barely a year old and advocates in many states pushing full-tilt for a federal Equal Rights Amendment, WLP founders identified a uniquely auspicious time to create the new organization.

Over decades of service, what has emerged from these begin-

of legal expertise, public education, and systems reform. This is a rare and dynamic hybrid found nowhere else in this region, perhaps not in this country. Nationally, few public interest organizations can claim such diverse services, executed so well, solely on behalf of women and their families.

APPROACHING THE BENCH

After early research and *amicus* work funded by the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Family Fund, WLP entered the courtroom in 1975. From the start, the results were transformative, with victories in landmark discrimination suits at the state and local levels. The outcomes ensured equal rights for Pennsylvania children born to single mothers and forced the City of Philadelphia to adopt a uni-

ternity leave.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE COURTROOMS

WLP soon set itself apart from other public interest law firms by recognizing that many women have needs requiring more urgent attention than legal remedies can provide. Its leaders reached beyond the courts to help establish other successful agencies dedicated to women's health and wellbeing, such as the Elizabeth Blackwell Health Center for Women and Women's Way.

CHANGE BEGINS WITH LISTENING

Since 1979, WLP's telephone counseling services have supported thousands of women through the guidance of trained volunteers who connect

(Continued on page 3)

An Organization Like No Other—continued

(Continued from page 2)

them to resources for both everyday and extraordinary problems – from locating unbiased medical services and no-cost family supports to gaining child custody rights and escaping an abusive spouse.

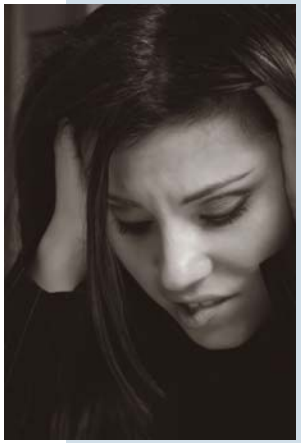
BECOMING A CATALYST FOR LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

When the law fails to protect women, WLP turns to changing the law. WLP's legislative advocacy has reformed Pennsylvania law and provided models for nationwide reform. ***For example, WLP's work on domestic violence has led to changes in insurance laws in Pennsylvania and 43 other states.***

WORKING FOR CHANGE THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX

An exciting WLP program, WomenVote PA, is building a statewide constituency of new voters and volunteers.

Launched in 2004, WomenVote PA has quickly tapped into the desires and goals of Pennsylvania women who feel disenfranchised, relying on modest contributions and our constituents' passionate commitment to advance this work. In 2008, side by side, students voting for the first time and seniors voting in their fifteenth Presidential election made a decisive impact at the polls.



"It's like the sun came back out."

—*Beth Choike*
Lead Plaintiff, Choike v. Slippery Rock University

An Opportunity to Do More

When you support the

director, Carol E. Tracy, and

The Myra Bradwell Fund helps

Women's Law Project, you don't just uphold a concept of justice or a dream of what America *should* look like. You support the forging of new realities.

WLP's leadership is determined to preserve hard-won victories, to open up new opportunities, and to strengthen the legal rights of mothers and their families.

WLP's dedicated and knowledgeable staff has the capacity to unify volunteers, funders, and advocates into a savvy force that can, indeed, move mountains. This work has notably taken place under the direction of veteran executive through a staff whose energy and expertise are widely respected.

The organization delivers this impressive array of services with a small staff working under strict financial constraints.

This is why the Women's Law Project turns to you to increase your commitment by becoming a member of the Myra Bradwell Fund.

Your contribution will build WLP's capacity to advance its feminist agenda by enabling leadership and staff to respond to the most promising, yet unbudgeted, opportunities to make a lasting difference in women's lives.

WLP expand its casework, especially in core issues – from reproductive rights to gender equity – and broaden its advocacy, especially in the areas of family justice and empowerment of the economically disenfranchised.

In partnership with its clients, with the help of prominent private law firms and like-minded organizations, WLP has shown that each victory moves us closer to the world of justice and equality that our daughters and granddaughters deserve.

"Thanks for all your time and effort. Thank you for listening and helping. It means so much. I can't thank you enough."

—*Submitted on a Telephone Counseling and Consumer Education Service evaluation form 10/23/08*

WOMEN'S LAW PROJECT

Safeguarding Rights, Creating Opportunities

case statement

The Promise of Tomorrow

Today, the need for the Women's Law Project is just as great, the value of its work just as relevant, and the potential for positive outcomes just as promising as the day it was founded.

Despite hard work and many successes, the need to protect women's rights has not vanished.

- Many of the rights American women enjoy are tenuous. Others have yet to be codified.
- The pleas of victims of violence inside and outside the home find just as many closed doors in a world of diminishing options – a world in which one deaf ear is one too many.

Your generous support helps the Women's Law Project win and preserve individual and collective freedoms and give voice and name to silent, anonymous women by telling

to support their family's success.

ties, from each neighboring state, from other parts of this nation. They are our mothers, sisters, and daughters who come forward wanting to be heard. Their yearning inspires us to do more.

Your contribution of $1,000 or more to the Myra Bradwell Fund will increase by these same multipliers because it represents more than your voice.

Wherever a woman in this region – or anywhere our victo-

Visit our website!

www.womenslawproject.org

Check out our blog!

womenslawproject.wordpress.com

- The glass ceiling may be higher than before, but it remains.
- Mothers on welfare are still the first stripped of resources

their stories to judges and juries, officials and advocates, and the larger community.

These women are from every one of Pennsylvania's 67 coun-

ries reach – seeks a new day, your support will light their way.

Thank you for bringing us one step closer to tomorrow.

MAIN OFFICE
The Sheridan Building
125 South 9th Street
Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19107
T 215.928.9801
F 215.928.9848
E info@womenslawproject.org

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
The Arrott Building
401 Wood Street
Suite 1020
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
T 412.281.2892
F 412.281.3054
E infopitt@womenslawproject.org

Our Board of Directors

David F. Abernethy, Esq.
Catherine T. Barbieri, Esq. (Chair)
Suzanne Sheehan Becker
Jessica Beckett-McWalter, Esq.
Stephanie Bellamy
Robin Coward, Esq.
Gerianne DiPiano
Nancy O'Mara Ezold, Esq. (Secretary)
Dianne Coady Fisher, Esq.
Amy Frazier, CPA
Margaret F. Goldfarb
Vicki W. Kramer
Sophia Lee, Esq.
Paul Messing, Esq.
Leslie Anne Miller, Esq.
Laval Miller-Wilson, Esq.
Mary F. Platt, Esq.
Catherine Raphael (Vice Chair)
Sarah E. Ricks, Esq.
Judith A. Ruszkowski
Margaret Sadler
Robin A. Stuntebeck (Treasurer)
Carol E. Tracy, Esq. (Ex-officio)
Thomas E. Zemaitis, Esq.

Our Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Carol E. Tracy, Esq.

MANAGING ATTORNEY
Terry L. Fromson, Esq.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Dabney Miller

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Nan Langen Steketee

SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY (WESTERN PA)
Susan Frietsche, Esq.

STAFF ATTORNEY
Amal Bass, Esq.

PROGRAM MANAGER
WomenVote PA
Barbara B. DiTullio

BUSINESS AND FINANCE MANAGER
Jane Whittaker

PROGRAM ASSOCIATE (WESTERN PA)
Christina Cann

ACCOUNTANT
Grace Knight

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Kathy Eisenberg

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.