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*the*  
**LAWYER**

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW  
*since 1912*



**WOMEN**  
in the **LAW**

■ **Balancing Act:**  
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Renee Reuther, Sherry Travers,  
Seanna Bodholt

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## MESSAGE from the DEAN

This issue of *The Lawyer* celebrates the impact that women have had on this institution and our profession. With that being the case, I thought I would begin by reintroducing you to Helen Grigware Lambert.

Helen, pictured at the bottom of this page, was the first woman to graduate from Gonzaga University School of Law. She was a native of Spokane and attended the Universities of Minnesota and Washington before graduating from our law school in 1935. Helen married Tom Lambert, also a graduate of Gonzaga, in 1937.

Helen began her career working at the District Court of Appeals in San Francisco during World War II while her husband served in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. At the end of the war, Helen traveled to Japan to join Tom where she became the only woman prosecutor on the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. In that role, she secured a life sentence against Naoki Hoshino, Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Tojo administration.

In the years that followed her success in Japan, Helen and Tom traveled the world as she continued her career as a lawyer and then as a noted painter and art critic. Tom worked as a journalist for, among other publications, Time Magazine, the New York Herald Tribune, and the Los Angeles Times.

The path Helen blazed has been followed by many women between 1935 and today. As I write this missive, we have 233 female students who will soon join the over 1700 women who graduated from this school before them. And these graduates, just like Helen, have made quite the mark on the profession. They have gone on to practice law in a wide variety of places and settings, and to serve in such notable positions as Governor of Washington State, Attorney General of Nevada, and Washington State Supreme Court Justice.

Another female leader in Gonzaga's history was Jan Ellen Rein, the first woman to earn tenure on our faculty. Professor Rein taught at the law school from 1976 to 1991, before moving to McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California. Today, our full-time faculty includes seventeen women, all of whom have a tremendous influence on our program of legal education. These women include scholars in such areas as property and health law, our only chair holder, expert legal writing professors, and present and former associate deans.

In the pages that follow you are going to be introduced to a sampling of our female graduates and law professors. These individuals offer just a few examples of the exciting things that our female alums are doing and the impact that our female professors have on the mission of this institution. I hope you take as much pride in their work and success as I do.



*Helen Grigware Lambert*

*Earl F. Martin*  
Dean Earl Martin  
Gonzaga University School of Law

# WOMEN IN THE LAW

*By Christianna Sharman  
Photos by Shane Young*

**“I absolutely feel satisfied in my career,”**

says Megan Ballard, associate professor. Some of Ballard’s female predecessors in the law might not have felt so sanguine. But women have come a long way since the days when former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor famously couldn’t find a job except as a legal secretary.

“That wouldn’t happen now,” says Linda Kawaguchi McLane, associate professor and director of Gonzaga’s Chastek Library. “And women have changed the profession. They’ve made the practice of law more humane. A lot of law firms have become more progressive and flexible in allowing people to have a life outside work.”

That shift opened the profession up to women who chose it just because it suited them as individuals — not because they were willing to take on a fight for all womankind. “I was frustrated with foreign policy,” says Ballard of her former occupation. “There were a lot of problems but very few solutions. I needed a career option that would allow me to focus on problem solving.”

She recalls a case involving a young Somali refugee who attained political asylum in the U.S. with Ballard’s help. “I am inspired by the

***Right: Megan Ballard***





transformative power of the law,” she says. “I think it potentially transforms everyone involved. My attraction to the law was its ability to problem solve.”

Gail Hammer had a similar idea. “I thought, ‘Here’s how it’s possible to change the world,’” says the assistant professor, director of the family law and domestic law project for University Legal Assistance, and co-director of the Institute for Law School Teaching. “But my notions about how one goes about changing the world have changed. I had the idea it was about being loud and obnoxious and shaming people into changing.” Now, Hammer has gained an appreciation for what she calls “the transformative power of good listening.”

Professor Sheri Engelken shares Hammer’s view. “To

succeed as a lawyer, you have to have the ability to listen to people,” she says. “Women are often perceived as good listeners and that’s a good skill to bring to the table.”

Like her colleagues, Engelken found her way to the law because it seemed like the right fit for her personality. “You have to be highly analytical — the stereotype for men — and I thought that was a strength I brought to the table,” she says. “Anybody looking for a career needs to find a good fit.”

Not only did the law provide the right match of interests and personality with career for these women, Gonzaga School of Law turned out to be exactly the right place to pull those elements together. “When I was interviewing with law schools a couple of things about Gonzaga impressed me,” Engelken

says. “They were the only school that showed even the slightest interest in my pro bono work. It told me that justice and public service were important components of our profession for Gonzaga.”

McLane — who gravitated toward a helping profession but felt too squeamish for nursing — had a similar experience. “When I came to Gonzaga to interview, I wasn’t necessarily intending to take the job,” she says. “The emphasis on public service was really noticeable during the interview process. I think people do end up holding true to their ideals here more than at other law schools.”

Hammer was looking for the same focus on ideals. “What drew me to Gonzaga was the mission, hands down,” she says. “I like the idea of justice, and I see my job as trying to make the law work justice. It contains within it the possibility of justice — and I’m going to try to hold it to that.”

Ultimately, though, gender makes little difference. The combination of the right minds and talents with the right institution advances the right principles to do that work of justice — and transform all involved. 📖



**Above:** Linda McLane **Left:** Gail Hammer

# BALANCING ACT

By Christianna Sharman

**While the law has adapted** — by necessity — to women’s competing priorities, there is still work to be done. The time pressures of private practice present a real challenge to women attorneys who want to “have it all,” but these four Gonzaga alumni have found the balance they need in a profession they still find inspiring.

“It’s a consuming profession,” says Renee Reuther, founding partner of Rice Silbey Reuther & Sullivan in Las Vegas. “The trick is to not let it become *all*-consuming. Although I think the profession has evolved significantly, I think women attorneys feel a need to prove themselves more.”

She avoids that self-imposed burden with a little help. “My family and friends help keep me grounded,” she says.

What’s more, given the success of her practice, Reuther hardly has anything to prove. Her work focuses on commercial

real estate and condominium developments, and residential and mixed-use planned developments in rapidly growing Las Vegas. She represents many of Southern Nevada’s leading real estate developers and builders.

She also takes that expertise into her public service work on the board of trustees for New Vista Ranch, a nonprofit organization providing homes, employment, and support for adults with developmental disabilities.

“I’m inspired by the concept that we all have equal justice under the law,” she says. “The legal system mandates that we all get a fair shake.”

The struggle for a fair shake influenced Sherry Travers from early on. “I grew up in the Pittsburgh area during the steel mill era and was fascinated by the union organizing campaigns and contract disputes common to that part of the country,” she says.

Today, she specializes in labor and employment law at Littler Mendelson in Dallas. In her work, the law’s flexibility plays a significant role. “An employee’s private property today is quite different from what it was two or three decades ago, but the same principles of law apply,” she explains, “and their adaptability leads to the right result for our times.”

Women have had to demonstrate flexibility, too, she says. “Your time and energy are divided and restricted by strongly competing personal and professional interests. The majority of married attorney-mothers I know have defined the career component of ‘having it all’ as something other than equity partnership, with many opting for in-house counsel or other non-firm positions that enable them to best allocate their time and responsibilities.”

Women still have a lot of choices, though, says Seanna Bodholt, a partner at Spokane’s Paine Hamblen. “There are practice areas in the law that may be more a challenge than others, due to the time pressures that lead to a lack of flexibility. In talking to young women entering the legal profession, I encourage them to think about the balance they need in life, and really evaluate what area of law may lend itself to that balance.”

For Bodholt, that’s taxation, closely held business, estate planning, charitable organizations, and probate and trust administration. And not only do Bodholt’s career choices facilitate balance, they deliver gratification in her daily work. “Legal issues are scary to many clients,” she explains, “and I find it inspiring to play a key role in finding solutions and assisting them to that end.”

A desire to help others brought Kathy Brindley to law, as well. She started her professional life as an R.N., then landed on the idea of combining her medical background with the law.

In a fine example of balance, Brindley worked full time as a nurse while she attended Gonzaga.

Today, she maintains a growing trial practice at Seattle’s Hessel Fetterman defending healthcare clients in medical malpractice matters and individuals facing discipline from state licensing authorities. She works with hospitals on risk management and business transactions, and she also serves as a guest speaker at area nursing schools. Armed with her preparation from Gonzaga — “Gonzaga clearly prepares students for the real world and lasting careers” — she’s optimistic about the future of her second profession.

“Over the past twenty-five years, women have made tremendous strides in the law, anywhere from managing partner to part-time lawyer,” she says. “Women lawyers today are able to set and pursue career goals without limitations.” 🌟



KATHARINE  
WITTER  
BRINDLEY



RENEE  
REUTHER



SHERRY  
TRAVERS



SEANNA  
BODHOLT