



## Houston Association of Women Attorneys

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Lauren Waddell

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a joyous holiday season. We are moving full speed ahead into 2018. Our AWA Judicial Screening Committee has been working hard and started interviewing the judicial candidates who have a contested primary. We will have our membership endorsement meeting to vote on the primary judicial candidates on February 12th at Gardere downtown office, 20th Floor, beginning at 5:30 p.m.



Due to the erratic Texas weather, we had to reschedule our January meeting due to the icy wintery blast, but Jon Krop from Brooklyn, New York is still going to lead a Mindfulness Workshop to help us reduce stress and become happier, healthier lawyers on the rescheduled date of February 7th. Please join us for this event!

On February 28th, we will have the Cocktail Reception for the Premier Women in Law Honorees. And, please join us on March 28th for the Premier Women in Law Luncheon at the Hyatt Regency.

- Lauren

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### RECENT EVENTS

*October 18, 2017*

#### *Self-Defense Class at Crossfit Roughnecks*

On October 18th, we had a member's only self-defense class. The instructors at Crossfit Roughnecks showed us how to defend ourselves from attacks. We watched the instructors demonstrate ways to get out of holds, including the use of knives. We also paired up and practiced the moves we learned. The class was very informative and empowering. Thank you, Crossfit Roughnecks, for your instruction!



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#### Luncheon on November 15, 2017 Speaker Allison Standish Miller

On November 15th, Allison Standish Miller spoke to our members about the prevention of legal malpractice claims and grievances. It was a helpful and practical presentation. Thank you, Allison!



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#### December 8, 2017 Holiday Party

On December 8th, we celebrated the holiday season at Randall and Allison Wilhite's home. There was a Kendra Scott "pop-up" shop and 20% of the sales at the party benefited the Tahirih Justice Center. Anne Chandler, the Executive Director of the Houston office for Tahirih, spoke to us about the women they are helping and the services they provide to protect immigrant women and girls fleeing gender-based violence. We also had the opportunity to hear from the women who are working in their AWA Foundation Fellowships at the Tahirih Justice Center and the Houston Volunteer Lawyers.



Thank you to the Tahirih Justice Center for the amazing work they do to help immigrant women and girls and to Kendra Scott for donating 20% of the profits from the sales to the Tahirih Justice Center! Thank you, also, to Randall and Allison Wilhite for opening your beautiful home for this event. It was a very festive holiday celebration!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

February 7, 2018 1:30-1:00	Jon Krop – Lawyer Wellness – “Mindfulness for Lawyers: How to Reduce Stress and Improve Productivity” – Meditation Session Wells Fargo Building, Ground Floor Auditorium
February 12, 2018 – 5:30 pm	Judicial Endorsement Meeting for Primary Elections Gardere office, 20 <sup>th</sup> Floor
February 28, 2018 6:00 p.m.	Cocktail Reception for Premier Women in Law Luncheon Honorees Home of Anna Rotman, 3108 Ella Lee Lane, Houston, Texas 77019

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## Judicial Endorsement Meeting Information

February 12, 2018

The AWA Judicial Screening Committee has been interviewing the candidates who have contested primaries in March. This endorsement meeting is open to current members only. Per the AWA Bylaws, only members in good standing for 30 days prior to the endorsement meeting may vote. If you are unsure about your membership status, you may contact the Membership Chair. This meeting is confidential, which means that members who attend are prohibited from discussing with anyone outside of the meeting what was discussed in confidence in the meeting. To be effective and to ensure that the AWA continues to serve in this important endorsement process, the committee members and AWA members who attend the meeting must be able to rely on the confidence pledge by each member at the meeting, so that there may be an open dialogue on candidates in a protected setting.

### AWA Judicial Screening Committee

The Judicial Screening Committee for the judicial candidates who have a contested March 2018 primary is composed of the following AWA members:

Calli Balwin-Chair	<i>Holmes, Diggs, &amp; Sadler</i>
Brandi Barron	<i>Gardere</i>
Kristy Blurton	<i>Holmes, Diggs, &amp; Sadler</i>
Nicole Deborde	<i>Deborde Law</i>
Lacy Johnson	<i>Harris County District Attorney's Office</i>
Vivian King	<i>Harris County District Attorney's Office</i>
Victoria Mery	<i>Berg &amp; Androphy</i>
Kate Skagerberg	<i>Beck Redden</i>

Over the next few weeks, the Screening Committee will interview the candidates who have contested primaries. The Screening Committee puts an enormous amount of time and work into the interview and screening process. Thank you to the AWA Judicial Screening Committee for your service. This is such an important project, and we couldn't do it without this dedicated committee!

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## Endorsement Meeting Procedure

AWA members in good standing as of the 30th day prior to the meeting are eligible to attend and vote on the endorsements. The Screening Committee will present its recommendation in each race to the membership, which will then vote to accept the recommendation, or refuse it. Refusal of the recommendation triggers a discussion period not to exceed five minutes. At the conclusion of the discussion period, a motion to vote will trigger a vote on which candidate to endorse. A member may also move for a vote to issue no endorsement in particular race, though "no endorsement" votes are discouraged and permissible in a limited set of circumstances which will be further detailed at the meeting.

No judicial candidate shall be allowed to attend the meeting during which recommended judicial candidates are presented, discussed and voted upon. No spouse, child or parent of a judicial candidate, nor employee or staff of a judicial candidate shall be allowed to attend the portion of the meeting during which the race including that particular recommended judicial candidate is presented, discussed and voted upon.

The content of the Endorsement Meeting is highly confidential. Attendees may not disclose anything which takes place at the meeting to outside parties, *except* that an attendee may disclose to a member whose proxy she is voting the result of a particular vote. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the results of the endorsement meeting will be

published to the candidates and to the public within 24 hours of the meeting.

The proxy form for eligible members who cannot attend the meeting will be sent to members prior to meeting. Please note that per the bylaws, proxy forms must be submitted to the President of the AWA, Lauren Waddell, or President-Elect Julia Cook, not less than 2 hours before the start of the meeting. Proxies submitted per the instructions on the Proxy Form will be presented in accordance with the bylaws.

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## AWA Foundation

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### Premier Women in Law Luncheon March 28, 2018

Come celebrate Women's History Month in March with the AWA Foundation on Wednesday, March 28, 2018, at our annual luncheon honoring Premier Women in Law. The luncheon will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel located at 1200 Louisiana Street from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



Debra Tsuchiyama Baker



Linda Broocks



Phyllis Randolph Frye



Cristina Rodriguez

You are cordially invited to

## THE ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN ATTORNEYS FOUNDATION'S 7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PREMIER WOMEN IN LAW LUNCHEON

Honoring Lawyers with a Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Debra Tsuchiyama Baker  
Partner at Baker Wotring and Night Court star  
*Artist and activist of gender and minority inclusion and equality*

Linda Broocks  
Partner at Kean Miller  
*Early pioneer of organized mentorship programs for women in BigLaw and award-winning filmmaker*

Phyllis Randolph Frye  
Partner at Frye, Oaks, Benavidez and O'Neil  
*Noted advocate for LGBT issues and the nation's first openly transgender judge*

Cristina Rodriguez  
Partner at Hogan Lovells  
*Champion for BigLaw diversity and mentor to the next generation of Latina lawyers*

March 28, 2018  
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Hyatt Regency Hotel – 1200 Louisiana Street

Money raised from the event will fund scholarships for female Houston-area law students, who will also be honored at the luncheon. We hope that you and your colleagues will join us. For your convenience, we have enclosed table sponsorship information for the luncheon. Each table will seat ten guests, including a female law student from one of our Houston-based law schools.

The AWA Foundation instituted the Fellowship Program last year, and set out to raise enough money to fund two, fully-paid, one-year fellowships to be filled by AWA Foundation scholarship applicants. Through the generosity of the Houston legal community and its unwavering commitment to pro bono service, the AWA Foundation succeeded, and our inaugural fellowships commenced in September! Excited by the impact the Fellowship Program could have, this year we set our sights even higher and the legal community stepped up again! We have successfully raised funds for a third one-year fellowship benefiting Kids in Need of Defense. In addition, this year we are partnering with the Harris County District Attorney's Office, who has graciously named an AWA Foundation Internship position in its Sex Crimes Division. We hope you can join us at the luncheon to celebrate these accomplishments and the fantastic people who made them possible.

To sponsor or purchase tickets to the event, please go to:

<https://awahouston.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/2018-luncheon-honoring-premier-women-in-law-sponsorship-form1.pdf>

**The AWA Foundation (AWAF) thanks its 2018-19 Pro Bono Fellowship Charter Sponsors for supporting female law students in Houston!**

- The Andrews Kurth Kenyon LLP AWA Foundation Pro Bono Fellowship benefiting Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
- The Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP AWA Foundation Pro Bono Fellowship benefiting Tahirih Justice Center
- The Vinson & Elkins LLP AWA Foundation Pro Bono Fellowship benefiting the Houston Volunteer Lawyers

With special thanks to Kim Ogg for establishing an AWA Foundation Internship with the Harris County District Attorney's Office Sex Crimes Division

[Click here to learn more about AWA Foundation sponsorship opportunities.](#)

The AWA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to providing scholarships and fellowships to outstanding second and third year female law students in Houston, Texas.

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### Fellowship and AWA Foundation Mentorship Update

The AWA and AWA Foundation organizations paired members of their board with each of the AWA Foundation 3L scholarship winners for mentoring. This program kicked off last September and is now in full swing. Here is an update on each of the scholarship winners:

**Jordyn Emmert-** Jordyn accepted 2017-2018 AWA Foundation Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP Pro

Bono Fellowship benefitting the Tahirih Justice Center. After graduating from Thurgood Marshall School of Law in May 2017, she started with Tahirih in late August. Jordyn has already greatly contributed to the organization by working on matters such as gender-based asylum, violence against Women's Act Petitions, T Visas (for survivors of trafficking), U Visas (for survivors of certain types of crimes on U.S. soil), and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (for abused, abandoned, or neglected children). Jordyn also passed in the bar in November!!

**Mya Johnson**-Mya passed the bar in November and is a newly licensed attorney. Mya is clerking for a judge in Houston and is seeking a law firm job beginning in the Fall.

**Taneska Jones**-Taneska passed the bar in November and is a newly licensed attorney. Taneska accepted a position with a litigation boutique and is enjoying the array of different cases she gets to work on.

**Cynthia Milan**-Cynthia is interested in immigration law.

**Kristen Pounds**- Kristen passed the bar in November and is a newly licensed attorney.

**Neeharika Tumati**- Neeharika accepted the 2017-2018 AWA Vinson & Elkins LLP Pro Bono Fellowship benefitting the Houston Volunteer Lawyers. After graduating from the University of Houston Law Center in May 2017, she started with HVL in September. Neeharika has already begun working on legal matters involving family law, guardianship, estate planning, tax disputes with the IRS, landlord/tenant disputes, homeownership, consumer law and bankruptcy. Neeharika passed the bar in November and has been able to take on some cases herself, including landlord-tenant disputes and family law matters. She is continuing to weigh her options for a permanent position in the Fall.

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### Nominate AWA Members for the 2018 Pro Bono Excellent Awards

Consider nominations for the State Bar of Texas 2018 Pro Bono Excellence Awards. There are many AWA members who give countless hours to pro bono service. We would love to see our AWA members recognized for their hard work. The award nominations must be received by Friday, March 2, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. You may make nominations at:

<https://www.texasbar.com/Content/NavigationMenu/LawyersGivingBack/ProBonoAwards/default.htm>

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### MEMBERSHIP

Our membership year ends March 31, 2018, please renew your membership for the upcoming year by going to: [www.awahouston.org/membership](http://www.awahouston.org/membership).

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