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Dean Logan's Blog

“Women Who Lead” Series: Installment #2

Posted by David Logan on 12/16/2009 at 12:00 AM



One of the most important developments in recent decades is the tens of thousands of women who have entered the legal profession. This year, Roger Williams University School of Law is celebrating this sea change by providing a series of programs organized around the theme “Women Who Lead.” Our kickoff event was a speech by a most accomplished women lawyer, the [Honorable Margaret Marshall](#), Chief Justice of the oldest Supreme Court in the Americas, the [Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts](#).

Our second event focused on some of the challenges and impediments that have meant that despite growing numbers in law school (most entering classes are half female) and in law practice, women earn lower salaries than men, have fewer prestigious jobs, and walk away from the profession in disproportionate numbers.

We clearly need to look beyond the high-visibility success of a few--Margaret Marshall, [Sonia Sotomayor](#), and [Hillary Clinton](#)--to consider what explains the barriers that remain for the many. “Leading Lawyers: Defining Success in Work & Life” featured keynote speaker [Cynthia Thomas Calvert](#), co-director of the Center for WorkLife Law at UC Hastings College of Law. In her keynote address “Barrier Update: The Glass Ceiling and Maternal Wall in Law Firms Today” she provided a troubling picture of the disparities

that continue to exist in law firms, particularly for working mothers. The keynote was followed by panels on “women who broke through” and “balancing the scales,” which offered inspiring insight into how to overcome the obstacles confronting young women attorneys. Among the speakers were [Superior Court Justice Judith Savage](#), [Brown University General Counsel Beverly Ledbetter](#), [Edwards Angell Palmer and Dodge partner Patricia Sullivan](#), and leading trial lawyer [Miriam Weizenbaum of Deluca and Weizenbaum](#). The stories the speakers shared included important advice on making choices, finding mentors, and defining success.



Patricia Sullivan, Judge Savage, Prof. Colleen Murphy,
Martha Holt (Blue Cross), Prof. Mary Holper, Miriam Weizenbaum