

EVENT FOCUSES ON LACK OF GENDER DIVERSITY IN IOWA LAW AND POLITICS

Written by Jacqueline Langland
Monday, 27 February 2012 14:21

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March 1 event features experts and ground-breaking women in the legal and political fields who will open up a dialogue about the lack of gender diversity in all levels of Iowa's government and examine the implications of the problem.

IOWA CITY – When it comes to gender diversity in the halls of power, Iowa has mixed traditions. Although slow to grant women full rights to vote, Iowa was the first state to admit women to the bar. The Iowa Supreme Court has furthered progressive goals, as in *Varnum v. Brien*, yet only two women have ever presided on the Court. Iowa and Mississippi are the only two states in the country never to have elected a woman as governor or to national Congress.

On March 1, 2012, female judges, lawyers, politicians, and experts will speak at the Boyd Law Building's Levitt Auditorium, 130 Byington Road, Iowa City, I.A., at The University of Iowa. The event runs from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. with a reception to follow at Hotel Vetro, Plaza Towers #1106, 201 South Linn Street, Iowa City, I.A.

"The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice has historically hosted annual symposia that focus on national legal issues related to our mission.

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This year, we thought that it was important to host a conference that would focus on an issue specific to Iowa--the lack of gender diversity throughout all levels of Iowa's government," said Rachael Jensen, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and third-year law student. "The possibility for dialogue on this issue is far-reaching, and we expect a wide audience that will include the legal community, student groups, and citizens. This discussion is important because as it stands now, when branches of the government are making important decisions, critical voices and perspectives are missing. In addition to critiquing the status quo, we also hope to provide a positive message by highlighting the achievements of women who have succeeded and giving them a forum to share their experiences."

Speakers include:

- Dianne Bystrom, Director of Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University
- Judge Marsha Beckelman, District Court Judge, Iowa's Sixth Judicial District
- Judge Celeste Bremer, Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa
- Judge Lucy Gamon, District Court Judge, Iowa's Eighth Judicial District
- Judge Mary Tabor, Iowa Court of Appeals
- Roxanne Conlin, Attorney, Roxanne Conlin & Associates, P.C.
- Maggie Tinsman, Maggie Tinsman, LLC, 50-50 in 2020
- Brenna Findley, Legal Counsel to Governor Brandstad
- Tracy L. Osborn, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Iowa

The conference is sponsored by The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice, a student-run law journal at The University of Iowa College of Law. More information about the event and the Journal can be found at <http://blogs.law.uiowa.edu/jgrj>.

The conference is free and open to the public. People in need of accommodations are asked to contact the Journal in advance at jgrj@uiowa.edu.
