

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*As we near the end of my term as President of Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Inc. (BWL), I want to thank you for bestowing upon me the honor of leading this illustrious organization over the course of the last year. I truly enjoyed my time as President and hope I was able to continue the legacy of exceptional leadership.....STOP! I have decided not to continue copying last year's President's Message. She might notice. #girlgon'doyou, #HowYOUdoin'?*

On September 20, 2013, I took the oath of office as the 39th President of BWL and I was terrified. How was a little girl from the West Dallas Housing Projects, going to lead this prestigious and dynamic organization? After much deliberation and prayer, I decided the only way I would survive, would be if I remained true to my authentic self; by saying what I mean, looking people straight in the eye, and treating each person I meet, with the utmost respect, no matter who they are. And guess what? It worked! I not only survived, but BWL has thrived! This year's theme was "Igniting the Spirit of Activism: Unleashing its Power Through Advocacy and Service." BWL has a history of being leaders in the struggle to further the presence of Black Attorneys in the legal field and advocating for diversity on the Bench. In



**Tami L. Warren**  
2013-2014 President

addition to BWL's annual community service projects, we were able to join forces with Great Beginnings for Black Babies (GBBB) in their "Coats for All" coat drive. We were able to collect and donate winter coats for men, women and children, which the organization was able to donate to anyone who needed them, free of charge. GBBB has continuously provided services for families since 1990.

My goal for the year was to reach out to the law students in Orange County. I have always felt they were being left with no mentors or sisterhood. We have managed to build strong relationships with both Western State College of Law and Trinity Law School. The students were so eager to connect with professionals in

the field and we are now able to extend our outreach even further. I am told by a lot of people that the reason they are not active with BWL is because of their children's busy schedules. This year's Parents' Group planned two amazing events, attending the Eighteenth Annual Butterfly Release at the Kidspace Museum and the Noah's Ark Exhibit at the Skirball Center. The reviews were phenomenal and so many members returned to BWL and raved about the focus on family.

One of our most well-attended general meetings was our joint meeting with Association of Black Women Physicians, entitled "From Stress to Success: Help for Heroes in Heels." The event was held in the beautiful Parisian Room at the Culver Hotel. Doctors and Lawyers are notoriously reluctant to take care

of themselves and as result, we suffer from a tremendous amount of stress. We were able to discuss ways to combat stress, discuss how stress negatively impacts our health and the need for removing the stigma of asking for help. We are already preparing for part two! BWL member Pamela Samuels Young, acclaimed author, won an NAACP Literary Award for her book, "Anybody's Daughter." The book brought to the forefront one of the most heinous crimes in our country, human trafficking. The attention from the novel helped jumpstart the March and Rally Against Child Sex Trafficking with Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Mayor Eric Garcetti, which BWL was proud to co-sponsor. The March started at historic MLK Blvd. and the message

was heard loud and clear, **OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT FOR SALE!**

Since its inception in 1975, BWL has held as one of its primary goals, to achieve diversity on the Bench. To that end, we were proud to partner with the Superior Court of California Diversity Committee and the John M. Langston Bar Association to participate in their History in the First Person program. We invited 100 students to the courthouse for a special screening of the documentary, "Soul of Justice - Thelton Henderson's American Journey." Judge Henderson has an incredible story of how he rose from humble rural beginnings to the Federal Bench. The story was inspirational and we were able to bring in the filmmaker, Abby Ginzburg, to lead a panel discussion and Q & A with the students. Judge Henderson is the reason we all enjoy "dolphin safe" tuna! Google it. I was honored to share the stage with Judge Kelvin Filer and Langston President, John Anthony. We have had an amazing year. From the Red Carpet Affair, Cocktail Sip, Co-Sponsoring the Battle for Sheriff Community Forum and Debate to the Public Counsel 5K Run/Walk, BWL has been put on the minds and hearts of man and we are not about to slow down.

Lastly, I have to acknowledge the 2013-2014 Board and Committee Members. This phenomenal group of women rose to every challenge presented without a moment's hesitation. I am in awe of the talent, depth of knowledge and respect exuded by them at every turn. It has humbled me to no end to be in your company and to learn by your example. Thank you all so much.

**Blessings,  
Tami**





*Ms. Angela Reddock-Wright is the Founding & Managing Partner of the Reddock Law Group, a boutique employment and labor law firm serving California employers. She is a published author, speaker and recently started her own blog at [your-workmatters.com](http://your-workmatters.com).*

# The NBA vs. Donald Sterling: Employment Law Issues Raised By the Donald Sterling, NBA, Los Angeles Clippers Matter

by Angela J. Reddock-Wright, Esq.

Indeed the remarks of current Los Angeles Clippers basketball team owner Donald Sterling sent our nation into a tail spin this week, reminding us that racism still is alive and well and that we have a lot of work to do to rid our country of this ugly head. Beyond the moral and social implications, Sterling's comments have raised many legal questions, including in the area of workplace and employment law.

## **An Employer's Duty to Investigate Claims of Discrimination & Harassment**

As the owner of the Los Angeles Clippers, Sterling is deemed an employer under the law. Both federal and state law prohibit employers from discriminating against their employees on the basis of race, sex, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation and other factors. In an instance such as this where an employer is alleged to have engaged in conduct of a discriminatory nature against an employee or is alleged to have created a hostile work environment, the employer has a duty to conduct an immediate, good faith and thorough investigation of the alleged misconduct and to take remedial action against the alleged perpetrator, depending on the outcome of the investigation.

In this instance, because Sterling is the alleged perpetrator and his ownership of the Los Angeles Clippers is licensed through the NBA organization, upon receiving notice of Sterling's alleged misconduct and racist remarks, the NBA had a duty to conduct an immediate investigation of his conduct and if it found a violation of any of its policies or practices, to take appropriate remedial action.

The NBA conducted perhaps one of the swiftest investigations in history – conducting the investigation in just 3 days. Presumably, although short, the investigation was thorough and was conducted in good faith. Based on its belief that Sterling violated NBA policies and practices against discrimination, the NBA took what it deemed to be appropriate remedial

action by banning Sterling from the NBA and any interaction with the Los Angeles Clippers for life; fining him \$2.5 Million, the largest fine in NBA history; and beginning the process of forcing him to sell the team.

## **What if the NBA Later Learns That its Investigation Was Faulty?**

Let's say the NBA later learns that for some reason, its investigation was faulty or that it did not base its decisions related to Sterling on proper information or evidence? The law states that as long as the organization conducted the investigation in "good faith" – meaning based on a reasonable belief that the information alleged is true or has reason to be true based on the facts and evidence gathered – that the NBA's actions in conducting the investigation are protected under the law.

**What Makes A Good Workplace Investigation?** In most instances, a good workplace investigation requires the following:

- Impartiality and confidentiality
- A neutral investigator
- An interview with the victim
- An interview with the alleged perpetrator or accused
- An interview with any witnesses to the alleged incident
- The gathering and review of all documentary and other evidence that provides information and insights to the allegations
- A review of the relevant and underlying policies and practices of the employer or organization
- The weighing and assessment of all facts, evidence and information gathered as a part of the investigation, including making credibility assessments of the victim, the alleged perpetrator and all witnesses, to determine if there has been a violation of employment law policies or practice
- If it is determined that any policy or practice has been violated, the employer or organization must determine what type of disciplinary or remedial action to take, if any
- Notification to the victim and the alleged perpetrator/accused of the outcome of the investigation

Certainly, the NBA took the matter with Sterling seriously because of its high profile nature and the potential impact their failure to act may have had on the organization as a whole (as evidenced by the withdrawal of several well-known corporate advertisers). However, the NBA also responded based on its duty to investigate under both federal and state law. Had the NBA failed to take swift and immediate action, the consequences to the League may have been greater, not only from moral, social and business perspectives, but also from a legal perspective.

# Loving Windsor: How the Changes in Marriage Laws Have Impacted Two Black Women Lawyers (Who Happen to be Married to Each Other)

by Courtney and Kimberly Morgan-Greene, Esqs.

(written at the dining room table from Courtney's perspective with Kimberly shouting additions and redactions from the kitchen)

Newly engaged, Kimberly and I attended a screening of The Loving Story at the Museum of Tolerance here in Los Angeles. Kimberly suggested it as something I might like. It wasn't high on my list, but ... why not?

If my law school memory served, Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 (1967), is the case of a white man and a black woman who got married in Washington D.C. (where marriage was legal) and drove home to Virginia (where interracial marriage was illegal). They were arrested, jailed and banished from the Commonwealth of Virginia for violating Virginia law. The couple, with the help of two young attorneys, took their case all the way to the Supreme Court. The Court declared the law unconstitutional, ruling that while states have the authority to define marriage as they see fit, they cannot define marriage in a way that violates the constitution. The Court held that the Virginia law violated both due process and equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

During the film, I was reminded of my parents, a white man and a black woman who married in 1971, four years after the Supreme Court's decision in Loving v. Virginia. I was reminded of me and Kimberly, because no matter what is said about the differences between the Civil Rights Movement and the Gay Rights Movement, we were fighting the same fight. We could legally marry in Washington D.C. and drive to Virginia and no longer be married. I was also amazed, watching footage from 1967, how similar the arguments for and against marriage equality were in 2012.

As usual, Kim knew what she was doing when she shared with me this deeply personal, love letter of a film. We left the theater with renewed purpose and dove back to the all-consuming task of planning our September 2, 2012 wedding. At the time, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), signed into law by Bill Clinton, defined marriage as between a man and a woman for Federal purposes. Meanwhile, in our home state of California, Proposition 8 was the law of the land. Proposition 8 was a state constitutional amendment that barred California from recognizing or sanctioning marriages that were not between a man and a woman. The initiative was voted into law by the people of California on the same 2008 night that President Obama was elected. A District Court decision striking down Proposition 8 was stayed pending review by the Supreme Court. As a result, our Malibu wedding would not be legally recognized.

When people asked how I felt about Domestic Partnerships and Civil Unions, I replied, "Domestic Partnership' cake is bland and a 'Civil Union' dress just sounds tacky. If there really is no difference between Civil Unions and Marriages, then why are people fighting it so hard? They are obviously fighting for something." Soon enough it was September 2, 2012. Our fathers walked us down the aisle and explained that because the state and federal governments did not recognize our marriage, we would be marrying ourselves.

After we exchanged rings, our mothers explained that the tradition of jumping the broom harkened back to a time when American slaves were prohibited from legally marrying. As we prepared to jump, I couldn't help but think about the ring my mother slipped on to my finger that morning as my something borrowed. The ring belonged to her grandmother who was born a slave. Our Moms led the guests in a resounding count to three, and Kim and I jumped the broom.

On a Wednesday morning the following June, the Supreme Court issued its landmark decision in United States v. Windsor, 133 S.Ct. 2675 (2013), the case that challenged DOMA, as well as its decision in Hollingsworth v. Perry, 133 S.Ct. 2652 (2013), the case regarding Proposition 8. We were elated as the news came over the wire that the Supreme Court struck down section three of DOMA, defining marriage as solely between a man

and a woman as unconstitutional. The court held that it violated the due process guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. As a result of the decision, all married couples would become eligible for Federal benefits. I joked that the sudden prospect of filing joint taxes made our marriage very real. In seriousness, I was flooded with calls all morning in my immigration practice from United States Citizens who could now file for immigrations benefits for their spouses.

A few weeks later, I was honored to receive the first same-sex marriage approval in the State of California and, perhaps, the second in the nation. It was the highlight of my career, assisting clients (after decades of their being denied benefits and living under a legitimate fear of separation) in gaining immigration benefits that not only gave them peace of mind but let them know they really could be together until "death do us part."



*Ms. Courtney Morgan-Greene is an Immigration attorney in Los Angeles specializing in entertainment, business and family immigration. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of California at Berkeley. Ms. Kimberly Morgan-Greene is a Los Angeles County Public Defender. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Miami. Both ladies completed their legal studies at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.*



# Loving Windsor: How the Changes in Marriage Laws Have Impacted Two Black Women Lawyers (Who Happen to be Married to Each Other) [continued]

On the same morning that the Supreme Court issued the landmark decision in Windsor, it declined to hear the Prop 8 case, Hollingsworth v. Perry. The procedural posture was as follows: U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker issued a decision striking down Proposition 8. Perry v. Schwarzenegger, 704 F. Supp. 2d 921 (N.D. Cal., 2010). The then California State Attorney General Jerry Brown and then Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger refused to appeal the decision. After state elections, the California State Attorney General Kamala Harris and Governor Jerry Brown also refused to appeal. Therefore, the appeal was brought by proponents of Proposition 8, and the Supreme Court held that they did not have standing, leaving Walker’s decision intact.

The decision paved the way for marriage in the state of California. Attorney General Harris resumed marriages the Friday after the Court’s Wednesday decision. Kimberly and I were honored to witness Ms. Harris’ first order of business which was to personally officiate the wedding of the named plaintiffs in the Proposition 8 case at San Francisco City Hall. While legal marriage in California was a victory, the Court’s Prop 8 decision was bitter sweet. The Court’s failure to hear the merits and set a

national precedent by declaring that the state law violated the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, as it had done 45 years earlier in the Loving case, left in its wake an evolving state-by-state patchwork of marriage laws. As we write, 17 states and the District of Columbia have marriage equality but that could change by morning. Other states still allow the “marriage light” sub-class of Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships. However, most agree that marriage equality will soon be a nationwide reality. In the meantime, my wife and I have postponed any trips to the Grand Canyon and the Alamo. Heaven forbid one of us is injured hiking; the other would not be allowed in the hospital room as family because our marriage is not recognized in Arizona or Texas.

You might be thinking, “But your marriage isn’t legal anywhere.” So this is where we confess that just before our big, dynastic to-do in Malibu, Kimberly and I flew off to New York and had a civil ceremony on a cool August morning in Central Park. We may have let on like we did not care about whether our marriage is legal, but we fully understand the importance and power of the law. And that our state and our country now recognize our marriage... Well, it sure feels nice.

Mrs. Loving, less than a year before her death, said it better than we ever could: *“I am still not a political person, but I am proud that Richard’s and my name is on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That’s what Loving, and loving, are all about.”* - Mildred Loving, June 12, 2007

# The Benefits of Being Intentional

by Nicole Hancock Husband, Esq., Certified Professional Co-Active Coach



Ms. Nicole Hancock Husband is a Vice President & Senior Employment Counsel at Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. where she has served since April 2004, and a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach (since 2012). [www.nicolehusband.com](http://www.nicolehusband.com)

How often do you think about how you are spending your time and with whom you are spending it? Are you intentional about your life? Often we notice people in our lives who act intentionally in certain ways and not in others. For example, you may know someone who is very intentional about his or her career but not in other areas. It certainly is tempting to let things happen in your life. And it is easier. You can find genuine support for a “let it flow” lifestyle in self-help books, friends, family, and even certain interpretations of the Bible (e.g., surrender, God is in control, “let go and let God”). A

lthough I agree with some of these methods, there is great value in being intentional about your life, living on purpose as some refer to it. By intentional, I mean taking deliberate, purposeful, planned actions with regard to your overall life. Being intentional is about CHOICE. Choosing to live a certain way, act a certain way, think a certain way, BE a certain way. Here are some of the reasons why I believe we should strive to live on purpose, be intentional and make choices that manifest such intention on a daily basis.

**1. Being intentional about a particular goal can help you achieve it faster.**

To be intentional about a goal includes defining it, setting up a plan on how you will do it, seeking help if necessary, and moving forward with the steps in your plan. If you are not willing to engage in these acts of intention, how important is this goal to you? Sitting back and waiting for it to happen probably will take a while. Think back to a goal you had in the past and achieved – did this occur by happenstance? Even if you did not have a written plan of action, most likely you took several steps toward the accomplishment of the goal. If you have a goal in mind that you are not having success in reaching, perhaps it is time to look at your plan (if you have one) and your work on the goal. Are you being intentional about the plan, the steps, and reaching the goal? If not, maybe it is time to reevaluate that goal. That evaluation of a previous goal is an intentional act, by the way!

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# The Benefits of Being Intentional [continued]

**2. Being intentional about how you spend your time and with whom you spend it will make you happier.**

A few years ago, I did a little experiment where I was very intentional with regard to how I spent my time and with whom for a 30-day period. It was all about me and what I wanted to do. I remember some people laughed when I told them about it. They asked me - isn’t that what you usually do? Actually, back then, the answer was no. So for my activities outside of work hours, I was very intentional about making sure I was doing exactly as I pleased at the time. It helped me to honor myself, my desires and goals. It helped me to really focus on what I love and enjoy instead of going through the motions doing things just because others are or want you to do them. And I was happier spending my non-work time doing what I wanted to do. Being intentional gave me the freedom to live the life I really wanted to live. It may seem selfish, but the happier you are, the more your light shines and helps others to be happy, too.

**3. Being intentional about your thoughts and your disposition will change your mood for the better and give you peace.**

One of my favorite quotes is: “The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our disposition and not on our circumstances.” (Martha Washington) Being intentional about your thoughts means making a conscious choice to direct your thoughts. The realization that we can choose our attitude, demeanor, and reaction is a freeing realization! Mind control is truly an amazing concept. You control your thoughts and your emotions. I will say it again - you control your thoughts and emotions. All of them. Try to recognize when you find yourself heading down the road of a particular default thought pattern. For example, someone asks you how your day is going. Do you say it is going well? Do you say you are too busy? Tired? Could you change that feeling simply by telling yourself you are feeling a different way, something more pleasing and fulfilling to you? What would it be? Not long ago I found myself constantly telling people about how busy I

am at work whenever anyone asked how I was doing. I heard myself complaining about it. And I realized how tiring and de-motivating it sounded. I decided to stop thinking that and to stop saying that. And it is amazing how my mood shifted regarding my work volume. Yes, it is high and I cannot control that fact. But I can control what I think about it and make my thoughts my reality. So I choose to focus on being grateful that I have a job, especially in this market. Viewing it from a gratefulness perspective and being intentional about having that view is what made me feel better about it and gave me some peace. Let’s be clear - my thoughts will go to that default of “I am too busy, this is overwhelming,” especially when I hear it from co-workers regularly. But I am deliberate about not buying into it, not being imprisoned by it, not letting it get me down. So I do a redirect of that thought. Redirecting to gratefulness ALWAYS works for me.

What do you want from your life? Imagine yourself sitting down to write a synopsis of your life achievements. How would you want that synopsis to read? Sit down, write it, and get to work on making it real - this is your blueprint for being intentional about your life and living on purpose!

For more on being intentional and other topics, visit [www.nicolehusband.com](http://www.nicolehusband.com).

# So You Want to be a TV Judge ...

by Lauren Lake, Presiding Judge, “Paternity Court”

American audiences have been fascinated by court shows since they began on the radio back in the 1930s – but the past dozen years have seen the popularity of these programs skyrocket, surpassing soap operas in the daytime television ratings. Whether you watch to see the litigants go head-to-head arguing their sides of the story or to see how the judge keeps order in the courtroom, there’s never a dull moment.

I became presiding judge of the syndicated hit show “Paternity Court” when its creator, David Armour, approached me with an idea: He wanted to do a family law-based court program involving DNA evidence, and to treat paternity issues with more respect and responsibility than television had done before. He said he also wanted to empower families, and believed I would be the perfect judge to lead the proceedings. David knew that over the past 10 years I had been a TV legal analyst, relationship expert and life coach, appearing on countless daytime talk shows and legal news programs to help families overcome difficulties and comment on the latest legal hot topics. He also knew I had been a sole legal practitioner for nearly two decades, licensed to practice in New York, New Jersey, and Michigan, specializing in family, criminal and entertainment law.

As a life coach and motivational speaker, I am passionate about helping people overcome obstacles in their relationships and giving them inspiration and tools to move forward and begin again – so I accepted the opportunity. Since then I have been honored and humbled by the families who come into my courtroom each day and trust me with their secrets, knowing that I will give them answers to both their scientific and spiritual questions. [article continues on next page]



Ms. Lauren Lake enjoys a diverse career as a licensed attorney, television host, relationship expert, life coach and motivational speaker. She is the judge on Paternity Court, which premiered in Fall 2013. Ms. Lake helps litigants resolve legal issues involving paternity by rendering incisive judgments using DNA evidence.



So You Want to be a TV Judge ... [continued]

On “Paternity Court,” DNA evidence decides the outcome of the cases, but it is my job as judge to advise litigants on their legal rights and responsibilities, and on the ramifications of the results. That is where my legal knowledge comes into play. It is also my job to help people in my courtroom understand that this legal resolution is an opportunity to start fresh or right a past wrong – that is where my experience as a life coach and motivational speaker comes in. Most importantly, I make sure that litigants never lose sight of the child at the center of their legal dispute. Regardless of the outcome, as the adults they must be responsible for their actions and how they affect that child.

So if you want to become a TV judge, first consider your qualifications, and then know that it boils down to this. You have to be able to:

**EDUCATE:** Use your understanding of the law to help a non-lawyer grasp the issues at hand, because most of your litigants and the audience have not graduated from law school. They must be clear on both the process and the underlying reasons for your ultimate judgment. And it is also critical to point out important take away legal information so they can avoid similar problems in the future.

**EMPOWER:** A great TV judge knows that each case brings important legal and life lessons. You need to identify those issues and drive those lessons home to the litigants, lest they spend their time making the same mistakes over and over again. Regardless of who wins or loses, both parties should walk away feeling like they have the tools to avoid repeating negative behavior patterns. The best TV judges seem to truly care about the people standing before them. You cannot fake that.

**ENTERTAIN:** No matter how important the information you are presenting or how great a lawyer you are, no one wants to listen to a bore. Being a lawyer on TV requires you to command the attention not only of your courtroom, but also of the millions of people watching at home. You may have the legal professional part down, but do you have the personality? Make sure your persona stems from an authentic place, or it will be obvious that you are just acting a part. That never fares well. Court shows are designed to be entertaining television programming, but you never want to appear fake or disingenuous. And you are still ethically obligated to uphold the appropriate legal standards.

After reading this, if you still think you have what it takes to sit on that TV bench, go for it! Figure out what issues interest you and what types of formats best suit your personality, and bring your session to order.

Interview with District Attorney Jackie Lacey  
by Janine Hancock Jones, Esq.



District Attorney Jackie Lacey has spent most of her professional life as a prosecutor, manager and executive in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. She was sworn in as Los Angeles County District Attorney on December 3, 2012.

**Q:** What is your favorite word?  
**A:** My favorite word is believe because it is powerful. You put it in all caps and perhaps your day and attitude would be different. I was first introduced to the word by a woman struggling with infertility who had it posted above her desk. We prayed every day for her and she got past it.

**Q:** What is your least favorite word?  
**A:** Loser. I cringe whenever I hear it. I know people don't mean it in a hurtful way but it is, nonetheless, a judgment on another human being. Loser means that no matter what you do, you won't be successful and I just do not believe that.

**Q:** What turns you on?  
**A:** New challenges. I relish trying something I haven't done before. I haven't gone sky diving but being in a helicopter scared me. Any experience outside of the ordinary excites me.

**Q:** What turns you off?  
**A:** Gambling. I'm not at all excited by Vegas. I don't like to lose money and throw it away. I much prefer getting something for my money.

**Q:** What sound or noise do you love?  
**A:** I like music. If I could only take one thing to an isolated island, I would take Pandora radio or iTunes music because no matter what is happening around me, I can block out anything and sleep or work. I also enjoy various genres of music. I like Gospel and Christian music. On Pandora, I like Sade and Motown Oldies (like The Temptations, The Four Tops, The Supremes). I even like musicals like Phantom of the Opera.

**Q:** What sound or noise do you hate?  
**A:** I strongly dislike the sound of a car screeching, like in an accident, because you don't know how it's going to end, and it could end pretty badly.

[interview continues on next page]

Interview with District Attorney Jackie Lacey [continued]

**Q:** What is your favorite curse word?  
**A:** I used to have a foul mouth but when I had my first child 32 years ago, I started thinking about how my children would view my language and I didn't want them to have a mom hurling off 4-letter words. I thought I wanted to change this part of my personality and consciously look for other words to replace curse words. I have gone so long without cursing that when it happens, I am really hard on myself. In law enforcement, I hear it all the time and it is not always about anger. I pride myself on being able to check people and tell people off without using a single curse word.

**Q:** What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?  
**A:** I would like to write and be an author, preferably of biographies. Every person has a story to tell that has not been organized. I have given probably 100 speeches in the past year and I personally write each one of them. Choosing the right words is so powerful. TEDTalks is my favorite website right now.

**Q:** What profession would you not like to do?  
**A:** My son is in the restaurant business right now and works so many hours. He can't take days off, sometimes has to wash dishes, and also has to deal, on occasion, with rude customers. God bless him, but it seems like such a hard business and I can't see myself being a chef and running a restaurant.

**Q:** If heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the pearly gates?  
**A:** I would like to hear him say: "At least with some of the people in your life, you matter a great deal and cared about people almost as much as I love you."

**Q:** Is there anything you would like to share with the members of BWL?  
**A:** I love the scholarships that BWL gives out and have so much respect for everything that the organization does. BWL is one of the few organizations that is really making a difference in the lives of people seeking to go to law school. BWL is encouraging people to go to law school. I read the newsletters because I want to know what BWL is doing. I love that BWL is working with my old high school, Dorsey High School. I also love the service part of the organization ... and the Cocktail Sip! I advise you not to get too political and not to give up on the service focus of the organization.

Why I Joined BWL  
by Richard Townsend, Esq.

When someone asked me why I, as a man, decided to join Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Inc. (BWL), the question initially caught me off guard. The truth is, I attended BWL's mentoring and social gathering at the Post and Beam restaurant in Leimert Park in 2012, and I was so impressed by the camaraderie and enthusiasm that I joined BWL that very evening.

I wanted to support the positive efforts on display that night among Black women lawyers (many of whom are working mothers) and to help them achieve the success they desire in the male-dominated legal profession.

After joining, I came to see BWL as a group with a much wider focus and mission. Not only designed to accomplish what few other groups could for Black women lawyers, it also supports all Black lawyers and our entire community, as well.

The networking opportunities, family-oriented events, and support of our community make such a difference. The fact that so many of my friends were members already made it even more rewarding to attend events like the Retreat in Ojai, Cocktail Sips, and the Scholarship and Installation dinners.

I guess if I had to pinpoint it, the combination of positive efforts to support Black women lawyers' success and the professional networking for all Black lawyers and advocacy for worthwhile causes in our community led me to join.



Mr. Richard Townsend recently retired as Assistant County Counsel for the Los Angeles County Counsel's Office where he supervised the Probate Division, in addition to handling civil litigation and serving as in-house counsel for a variety of County agencies. Prior to joining the County, he worked as a lawyer for the National Labor Relations Board, Paramount Pictures Corp. and Los Angeles Municipal Courts.





*Ms. Erika Dowdell is a Deputy Public Defender for Los Angeles County where she has served since 2006.*

# At the Dawn of its 100th Anniversary Will UCLA's Racial Climate Improve?

by Erika Dowdell, Esq.

As a 2005 graduate of the UCLA School of Law, I congratulate and support the UCLA Community in its launch of the \$ 4.2 billion Centennial Campaign which will conclude in 2019 when the University celebrates its 100th Anniversary. I attended a day of Campaign festivities last month and had the honor of watching the absolutely phenomenal Reflections and Projections light show with hundreds of other alumni and members of the UCLA community. I loved the repetitive slogan for the Campaign "Let There Be" – Let there be an idea that leads the way, let there be innovative research, let there be....

However, I could not help but notice the lack of racial diversity at the event among the alumni which is a reflection of the lack of diversity among students who enroll and graduate from UCLA undergraduate and professional programs. In the 2013-2014 school-years, there were a total of 33 African Americans matriculating through the law school out of 1100 – a mere 3%.

In addition to the underrepresented minority enrollment, UCLA Law was thrust into national headlines this past February when African American law students began their own campaign to speak out against the hostile environment, the hate mail one student received, and the divisive "Team Sanders" t-shirt incident.

When I graduated from UCLA Law in 2005, African American enrollment hovered around 30; it's truly disheartening to learn that nine years later, enrollment of Black students remains low, but now the racial climate is also intolerable.

There is one immediate and concrete step that UCLA School of Law Dean Rachel Moran should take to help alleviate some of the hostility. The Black Law Students' Association, along with members of the alumni community, asked Dean Moran to afford 1L students who may be, or may soon become the subject of Professor Rick Sanders' research on "mismatch theory," the option to choose another property professor since entering students are assigned sections and courses without choice. That request was denied.

Sanders' theory purports that African American students perform poorly at highly ranked professional schools such as UCLA Law and would possibly achieve better results at lower ranked institutions. In fact, Sanders is currently seeking data (GPA, LSAT, BAR results) on African American and other underrepresented minority students and practicing members of the legal community to support his theory from UCLA Law, other universities in California, and the State Bar.

On a basic human level, no student should be forced to pay thousands of dollars to sit before a professor who may use them as research subjects without their consent. I was assigned to Sanders' property class as a 1L in 2002 and I was truly horrified once I learned of his research. I never attended his office hours or asked any questions of him once I was aware of the nature of his theory; I was cheated out of an equal education.

No African American student forced to take Sanders' 1L property class will ever feel comfortable asking him a question, or revealing that they, like everyone else in law school, need further explanation on the rule of perpetuities. Students who are the subjects, or will soon become the subjects of Sanders' research, are not receiving a fair and equitable education at UCLA Law. In recent years, some of the African American students assigned to Sanders' property class actually attended the office hours of other property professors to seek clarification for their questions. That is simply unacceptable.

If Dean Moran and UCLA Chancellor Gene Block are truly committed to justice and diversity, students who are, or may soon become the subjects of Sanders' research, should be given the option to choose another property professor. UCLA provides the great service of education, but no student should be required to pay thousands of dollars in tuition and fees to remain in a hostile classroom with a professor conducting ACTIVE research that the students may find personally invasive and offensive.

If UCLA is to become a true world class university, "let there be" true compassion, justice, and concern for the mere 3% of African American students at the Law School. Let there be open and honest discussions backed by real action regarding the hostile environment that is now the UCLA School of Law; those who are the subjects of negative research deserve the option to receive an equal educational experience during their 1L year at UCLA Law.

## BLACK WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES, INC. 2013-2014 OFFICERS



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Installation and Awards Dinner - Igniting the Spirit of Activism: Unleashing its Power through Advocacy and Service at The Sofitel**

September 20, 2013

**Throwback Thursday: BWL Brings Back the Potluck! at the home of USC Professor Jody Armour**

October 17, 2013

**November General Body Meeting: "Women and Wealth - the emotional connection" sponsored by City National Bank at Brownstone Bistro**

November 19, 2013

**2013 Annual Thanksgiving Eve Cocktail Sip and Fundraiser at Loews Hollywood Hotel**

November 27, 2013

**2013 Annual Holiday Party and Toy Drive co-sponsored with the John M. Langston Bar Association at the home of USC Professor Jody Armour**

December 13, 2013

**Parent Group at the Noah's Arc Exhibit at The Skirball**

January 11, 2014

**Leaves & More Leaves: Managing Leaves of Absence and Return to Work in the Workplace CLE at the Los Angeles Library**

January 28, 2014

**Mesereau Free Legal Clinic co-sponsored with Public Counsel at Morningside UCC Fellowship Hall**

February 8, 2014

**Moving Black Power Black Power Beyond Limitations: From Black Wall Street to Civil Rights to Now at Dorsey High Auditorium**

February 28, 2014

**BWL team in Public Counsel's Run for Justice**

March 9, 2014

**Relax & Refresh at the Ritz Carlton**

March 13, 2014

**Celebrating Women's History Month in co-sponsored with Latina Lawyers Bar Association and Women Lawyers of Los Angeles at Taix French Restaurant**

March 18, 2014

**Dress for Business Success**

March 21, 2014

**Dorsey High Mentoring Day**

April 8, 2014

**Inglewood High Career Day**

April 9, 2014

**Sheriff's Forum**

April 17, 2014

**Joint Meeting with Association of Black Women Physicians titled From Stress to Success: Help for Heroes in Heels sponsored by City National Bank at The Culver Hotel**

April 24, 2014

**Rally Against Sex Trafficking at Western Avenue**

April 26, 2014

**Parent Group at the 18th Annual Butterfly Release at Kidspace Children's Museum**

May 4, 2014

**General Body Meeting and CLE sponsored by Bergman, Dacey Goldsmith at the City Club**

May 14, 2014

**39th Annual BWL Foundation Scholarship Fundraiser at Casa Del Mar**

May 31, 2014

**California Bar Exam Live Tutorial at Loyola Law School**

June 14, 2014

**2014 Annual Retreat at Island Hotel Newport Beach**

June 20-22, 2014

## BWL Membership Dues

Members may pay dues online at  
[www.blackwomenlawyersla.org](http://www.blackwomenlawyersla.org).

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