

NAWJ Presents COLOR OF JUSTICE Program to San Francisco Balboa High School Law Academy Students



Attorney panel (left to right: Arturo Gonzalez of MoFo; Bobbie Wilson of Perkins Coie; Edwin Prather of Law Offices of Edwin Prather; Gene Brown of Brown Eassa and moderator Dean Drucilla Ramey of Golden Gate University School of Law).

The National Association of Women Judges, along with Hon. Charlene Padovani Kiesselbach and Hon. Suzanne Ramos Bolanos of the San Francisco Superior Court, brought the NAWJ's Color of Justice program to the Hiram Johnson State Building for over eighty Balboa High School Law Academy students in San Francisco on November 14, 2011. The event, which doubled in size this year, was co-sponsored by California Women Lawyers Foundation and Queen's Bench Bar Association.

The Color of Justice program was developed by NAWJ to encourage girls and minority high school students to consider careers in the law and judiciary. The program brings together experienced judges and lawyers to discuss law school and the requirements for admission, share their experiences including the reasons why they chose their careers, and answer questions in small groups. Students, judges and lawyers laud the project, and it has been presented successfully around the country.

Judges Kiesselbach and Bolanos, along with Michael Yuen, Chief Executive Officer of the San Francisco Superior Court, welcomed the students. Judge Kiesselbach moderated the judges' panel which included California Supreme Court Justice Goodwin Hon Liu, Justice Martin Jenkins, Court of Appeal for the First District, Hon. Brenda Harbin-Forte, Alameda County Superior Court, and Hon. Suzanne Ramos Bolanos. Addressing the students, Judge Kiesselbach said: "Decide what it is you want to be and go after it and just keep working." Judge Harbin-Forte noted that she defied the odds when she became a lawyer and a judge after having a baby when she was a teenager.

Moderator Drucilla Stender Ramey, Dean of the Golden Gate University School of Law, along with attorney panelists Bobbie Wilson of Perkins Coie LLP, Eugene Brown of Brown, Eassa & McLeod LLP, Arturo J. Gonzalez of Morrison & Foerster LLP, and Edwin Prather of Law Offices of Edwin Prather discussed why they chose a law career and shared their experiences as

By M. Prudence Hutton, CWL Governor

minority attorneys. The students were also presented with arguments on a motion to suppress evidence by Chinhayi Cadet, Assistant US Attorney for the Northern California District, and Phoenix Streets, Senior Trial Attorney at the San Francisco Public Defenders' office. The facts of the case involved a minor who lived in an apartment with his mother and older brother. Police came to the apartment to conduct a probation search related to the older brother. The mother consented to a search of the entire apartment, and when police searched the minor's room they found goods stolen from a building resident.

After the panel discussions and presentation of the motion to suppress evidence, the students were separated into six small groups for lunchand discussion which was facilitated by the Color of Justice Organizing Committee members and participants including Rachel Pusey, Gordon & Rees, LLP; recent UC Davis law school graduates Remy Goldsmith and Barbara Borkowski; Matthew Watts, Brown, Eassa & McLeod LLP; and Nora Wetzel. Balboa High School's Michael Rosenberg (Social Studies Dept. Chair and Director/Teacher in the Law Academy) worked with the organizing committee to make the program a success. At the conclusion of the day, the students were presented with NAWJ Color of Justice Award certificates. The feedback from Rosenberg and the students was extremely positive. Many of the students expressed how appreciative they were to have the opportunity to hear from judges and attorneys about their career paths.

The Color of Justice Organizing Committee included Hon. Charlene Padovani Kiesselbach, Hon. Suzanne Ramos Bolanos, Dean Drucilla Stender Ramey, Golden Gate University School of Law, Visiting Assistant Professor of Law Eleanor Lumsden, Golden Gate University School of Law, Queen's Bench Past President Ameer Mikacich, Queen's Bench CWL Affiliate Governor and Queen's Bench Past President Kelly Robbins, CWL Past President and Foundation member Carol Copsey from Gordon Rees LLP, CWL Governor Prudence Hutton and CWL President-Elect and Queen's Bench Past President Eliza Rodrigues from Sedgwick LLP. A special thanks to the program sponsors: National Association of Women Judges, Queen's Bench Bar Association, Golden Gate University School of Law, California Women Lawyers Foundation, BrownEassa & McLeod LLP, Robbins Family Law and Sedgwick LLP.

Judge Kiesselbach commented after the event that the "students were very engaged and the teachers were enthusiastic. . . . The attorney and judges panels were dynamic, and the enactment of legal proceedings seemed to interest the students very much." Judge Kiesselbach attributed the success of the program to the support of California Women Lawyers.

For more information about the program, please go to www.nawj.org or contact CWL at info@cwl.org for copies of the program materials.



Hon. Suzanne Ramos Bolanos and a Color of Justice participant.



Hon. Charlene Kiesselbach, Balboa High School Teacher Michael Rosenberg and a Balboa High School Student.



Hon. Charlene Kiesselbach.