



Laurel G. Bellows

“We believe that Laurel measures up to the standards represented by Margaret Brent herself and the award created in her name, and that Ms. Brent herself would be proud to welcome Laurel to the ranks of former awards recipients.”

— *Karen J. Dimond, President, Women’s Bar Association of Illinois*



Dedication. It is present in all of Laurel Bellows’ accomplishments. She has shown steadfast dedication to her family, community, and her clients at Bellows & Bellows, where she has practiced law for over 25 years. Her dedication to the advancement of women, both in the law and in general, has earned her the respected title of “one of the most influential leaders in both local and national legal communities.”

While in law school at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Bellows displayed a remarkable ability to confront and conquer challenges. She accepted a position as the first female intern in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the

Northern District of Illinois. Soon after beginning the practice of law, Bellows achieved local and national recognition for her work in the field of commodity law.

As a pioneer for women in the legal profession, Bellows became only the second woman ever to be President of the Chicago Bar Association (CBA). She further distinguished herself as CBA President by initiating a massive project to improve Cook County’s Juvenile Court System.

In 1992, she founded the Alliance for Women, now the CBA’s largest standing committee, with a membership of more than 600 of Chicago’s leading women lawyers. When she was appointed Chair of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession in 1994, Bellows continued to spearhead the movement for women, breaking down barriers to success and building bridges between generations of women lawyers.

As the Chair of the Commission, she championed gender equality for women in the legal profession and was responsible for developing several well-known publications. Under her leadership, the Commission developed its Fair Measure Initiative, an initiative to combat gender bias in performance evaluations. Under her watch, the Commission also spearheaded efforts to encourage law schools to evaluate their institutional atmospheres for women.

In addition to her experience with the Commission on Women, Bellows has demonstrated what a dynamic force she is within the American Bar Association by serving in several leadership positions. She has also been active with the Metropolitan Bar Caucus and the National Conference of Bar Presidents. Currently, as the President of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, Bellows serves tirelessly and with conviction.

As a mentor and role model to countless women in the legal profession, Bellows continues to contribute her time, skills and her endless passion to improving the status of women. She personifies the greatness of being a lawyer and has helped to improve the legal profession for women who will follow in her footsteps.

