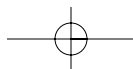
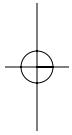


Introduction **1**

By Abbe F. Fletman



4 THE WOMAN ADVOCATE

MORE THAN 130 years ago, the United States Supreme Court admitted the first woman lawyer, Belva A. Lockwood, to practice before it. Her admission did not come without a fight. She had to petition President Grant, who also served as president of her law school, even to obtain her law diploma. The Supreme Court initially turned her away until she successfully lobbied Congress to pass special legislation allowing the admission of women. Her success “virtually opened the doors of all Federal courts in the country to the women of the land. . . .” Belva A. Lockwood, “My Efforts to Become a Lawyer,” *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, February 1888, pp. 215–30.

Much, of course, has changed for the better since Lockwood first opened the federal court system to her sister lawyers. As of October 2009, women comprised 48 percent of the first- and second-year associates at law firms throughout the nation. Women now hold 26.3 percent of the judgeships on state courts of last resort, 19.2 percent of federal district court seats, 20.1 percent of federal appellate judgeships, and 22.2 percent of the United States Supreme Court.

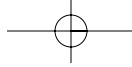
But after at least two decades of near gender parity in law school classes, fewer than 16 percent of the equity partners at law firms are women. Only six percent of law firm managing partners are women. And women lawyers earn less than men at every stage of their careers. What starts as a \$2,000 annual gap between male and female associates accelerates to a \$66,000 annual gap between male and female equity partners.

QU: Should it be “near-gender”?

Women trial lawyers still confront the dilemma of whether judges, juries, clients and colleagues will perceive them as strong and confident or overly aggressive. The debate over women’s courtroom attire recently has exploded anew, with judges complaining about short skirts and plunging necklines.

Sixteen years ago, the American Bar Association published the first edition of the *Woman Advocate*. Many of the topics of discussion among women litigators remain the same, and so, as before, you will find chapters on succeeding in a variety of settings, from academia to the bench to law firms big and small. As topical as ever is how juries view women lawyers and how to thrive in the profession as a woman of color or a lesbian. Yet much has changed since the last edition of this book in 1994. New in this edition, for example, are chapters on emotional intelligence, bridging the generational divide, using the Internet and winding down a law career. We even have a chapter on having fun.

All of the authors of this book and all of the chapters are entirely new. What they provide, most of all, are unique and individual voices addressing the timeliest and most pressing issues for women advocates. We hope they



provide sound advice, provoke your thinking and inspire your continued development and contributions to our profession and nation.

We unfortunately cannot escape that we have yet to reach parity with our male counterparts. But we are on the front lines of changing social attitudes about women. And, to paraphrase Justice O'Connor, "Each and every one of us has an important role to play" to complete the work of creating a society—and a profession—in which "all persons, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to earn respect, responsibility, advancement, and remuneration based on ability." Let us celebrate the steps we have taken and rededicate ourselves to finish the task.

