



Quarterly E-Newsletter

Volume 4

July 2006

Get to Know the Commission: Margaret Drew, Esq.



In this edition of our quarterly E-Newsletter, we learn more about Margaret Drew, who has served as Chair of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence for the past two years. Margaret's leadership of the Commission has been tremendous and we will miss her although she will stay on as a Special Advisor to the Commission in the coming year.

Margaret has been involved with the Commission since its inception in 1994. When the ABA's first female president, Roberta Cooper Ramo, established the Commission, she informed the President of the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) that the Commission would welcome a liaison from NAWL. NAWL President Myrna Raeder appointed Margaret as Liaison to the Commission. She is most grateful to both women for their leadership and their confidence in her. The first co-chairs of the Commission were Myrna Tucker and Chris Griffin, who generously welcomed Margaret as NAWL Liaison and deftly guided the Commission through those early critical years.

Currently, Margaret is Director of the Domestic Relations/Domestic Violence Clinic at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Previously, she represented survivors of domestic violence for over twenty-five years in her private practice. As those who represent victims in any capacity know, sustaining a front-line practice is difficult emotionally. When Margaret recognized that it was time for her to change her role in the field, teaching was a natural transition. Teaching provides Margaret with an opportunity to train others to represent survivors while keeping her in touch with survivors. She continues to represent survivors, but the majority of Margaret's time is spent in teaching and supervising law students. She is blessed with a supportive dean, faculty, and staff.

In addition, Margaret is engaged in research and writing, a role that she enjoys but that was more limited when she was engaged in a full litigation practice.

For most of her career, Margaret practiced as a sole practitioner. When she started practicing in the early 1980s, there were very few lawyers who practiced domestic violence law. While the numbers have increased, representing survivors in a sole practice can be quite isolating, thus Margaret states, it was such a pleasure to be involved with the Commission. It was an invaluable experience for her to learn what efforts were being made across the nation. She was often amazed to learn that what she was experiencing in her practice in suburban Massachusetts was happening all over the country. Margaret has received incredible support through the work of the Commission.

In reflecting upon the progress of the Commission, Margaret notes that when it was formed, there remained an extraordinary amount of work to be done around general awareness of domestic violence, including stalking and sexual assault. Twelve years later Margaret believes that the Commission is struggling with the same issues in more subtle forms. While most citizens would acknowledge the existence of domestic violence, few are willing to recognize survivors and violent situations in the lives of people they know. While we may have accomplished empathy and awareness in a general way, we are far from achieving those goals in individual cases. This is why Margaret believes that the work of the authors presented in this edition of the e-newsletter is so critical. Margaret stated that until we are able to educate individuals on the impact of domestic violence in their own lives, survivors' needs and those of their children may remain largely unmet.

In thinking about the Commission and its project, Margaret admires the productivity and enthusiasm of the Commission and the Commission staff. She finds their ongoing commitment to support practicing domestic violence lawyers heartening. Sustaining the hope of the lawyers in this field cannot be measured adequately in terms of effectiveness. The listserv, e-newsletter, trainings and products not only keep lawyers current, but optimistic, as well.

Margaret's involvement with the Commission as a Liaison, then member and most recently as Chair, has given her enormous access to domestic violence experts. She finds the Commission's listserv for attorneys representing victims of domestic violence to be an invaluable tool. Margaret has noticed that the same issues tend to repeat themselves all over the nation. Receiving advice and information via the listserv from those who have dealt with a variety of issues has helped her frame arguments on behalf of her clients. In teaching, Margaret tries to take the national trends/research/models and apply them to local cases and situations as she did previously in her private cases. Margaret believes that it is often helpful for judges and other players in our court system to know that what they are seeing in their cases is not an isolated occurrence. The Commission's work has made her aware of the ongoing need for education in this field, whether our audience is our clients, the courts, our colleagues or ourselves.

The thing Margaret most wants folks to know about the Commission that they may not is that the enormous amount of work produced by the Commission is in large part produced

by a very small staff. In addition, readers may not appreciate how dedicated the Commissioners and staff are to supporting the individual lawyer who practices in this field. We all appreciate the difference that one individual can make. This is no less true of the individual Commission staff members as it is of those who are working on the front lines.

The ABA Commission on Domestic Violence publishes its *Quarterly e-Newsletter* four times a year in electronic format. Subscriptions are free to all interested parties, and are distributed via e-mail and by download from the Commission website. Large-print editions are available upon request. *Quarterly e-Newsletter* includes substantive articles by experts in the field, resources and tools for representing survivors of domestic violence, and caselaw updates and trends.

The ABA hereby grants permission for copies of the materials herein to be made, in whole or in part, for classroom use in an institution of higher learning or for use by not-for-profit organizations, provided that the use is for informational, non-commercial purposes only and any copy of the materials or portion thereof acknowledges original publication by the ABA including the title of the publication, the name of the author, and the legend "Reprinted by permission of the American Bar Association. All rights reserved." Requests to reproduce portions of this publication in any other manner should be sent to Copyrights & Contracts, American Bar Association.

The materials contained herein represent the opinions of the authors and should not be construed to be those of either the American Bar Association or the Commission on Domestic Violence unless adopted pursuant to the bylaws of the ABA. Nothing contained herein is to be considered as the rendering of legal advice for specific cases, and readers are responsible for obtaining such advice from their own legal counsel. These materials and any forms and agreements herein are intended for educational and informational purposes only.