

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Lynda A. Bennett

Herold & Haines, PA

It is hard to believe that another year has past and the NJWLA is no longer an organization in “revitalization” mode. Under the leadership of Desha Jackson, we have grown to a critical mass of 375 members and have raised our profile in the New Jersey legal community. During her tenure, Desha has continued NJWLA’s commitment to the advancement of women in all facets of the legal profession through programming, mentoring, public policy advocacy, and active involvement in the judicial and committee appointment process. Desha has tackled this aggressive agenda with enthusiasm and heart-felt commitment to making the NJWLA a better organization for its members.



Desha’s greatest contribution during the past year has been her steadfast requirement that the NJWLA meet the needs of its entire membership. Desha has accomplished that goal by demanding diverse programming, being cognizant of event-planning in the Northern, Central, and Southern corridors of the State, and ensuring that our events are inclusive of all practitioners - whether they come from big firms or small and whether they come from private practice or government. The end result of Desha’s efforts, as well as the efforts of the many Board members that assisted with the planning and presentation of the programs, was that the organization consistently enjoyed excellent attendance at all of its programs and its members were able to benefit from productive and diverse networking opportunities.

In the face of the unprecedented economic times in which we are living, it is a true testament to the NJWLA and the importance of its voice in the legal community that our organization has survived and thrived this past year. Therefore, it is with great honor and trepidation that I embark on continuing the powerful momentum that Desha Jackson and Kirsten Scheurer Branigan, our immediate past President, have established for the NJWLA.

In order to continue our successful path, the entire membership must maintain its commitment to the organization and, in fact, kick it up a notch to weather the tough times ahead. We each need to make an extra special effort next year to bring one new member to our group. We each need to make an extra special effort to attend one more program than we did this past year. We each need to make a little bit more time available to be sure that the NJWLA’s voice remains strong in the community. All of these combined extra special efforts will help to galvanize and grow our membership and allow for us to expand the many services that we currently offer to our members. Therefore, I strongly encourage each and every one of you to get involved. Let us hear your voice and benefit from your insight. I assure you along the way, you will meet interesting people who will help you become a better professional and you are likely to make a few new friends.

Finally, no letter from the President-Elect would be complete without thanking the many people and organizations that have made this evening possible. First, please join me in saluting Desha Jackson, the current Board of Trustees and all of the members who actively participated in the NJWLA this year. Second, I would like to thank our many firm and corporate sponsors who purchased tables and ad space for this year’s Platinum Gala. Without your generous support, the NJWLA would not have the ability to provide fantastic programming and services to its members. Third, I would like to extend a special thank you to Debra Sahler and Laurie Poulos for undertaking the humongous (and thankless) task of co-chairing this year’s Gala Planning Committee. The Committee came through under extremely difficult circumstances and delivered an event of which our entire organization is proud. Last, and certainly not least, I am duty bound to provide a big THANK YOU to Mary Raugh, the NJWLA’s Executive Director, who works tirelessly – and with LAWYERS – to ensure that all of our events are seamless and all hitches are hidden from public view. There are no words to express my thanks and admiration for her efforts.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you next year to continue the NJWLA’s tradition of excellence and professionalism.