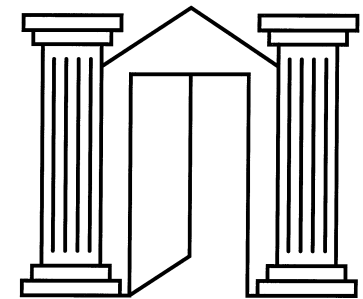


THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
OF MARYLAND, INC

Annual Report 2007



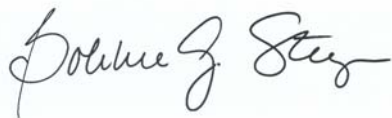
Dear Women's Law Center Supporter:

Thirty five years ago, a group of law students at the University of Maryland School of Law and young lawyers at the Legal Aid Bureau began meeting to discuss women's issues. The Equal Rights Amendment loomed in Congress, women were entering the workplace in larger numbers, and the battle for gender equality was fought in legislatures and in courtrooms.

These young, idealistic and passionate attorneys formed the Women's Law Center. Through litigation and advocacy, they fought to advance women's rights in Maryland. They advocated for a pregnant woman's right to work, identified and condemned sex discrimination in the workplace, and continually endeavored to improve laws that affected women and their families.

The Women's Law Center's first logo, a fist in the air holding the scales of justice, was a sign of the times and reflected the purpose of the group—fighting for equality. Today, the Women's Law Center remains true to its original mission: promoting justice and fairness for women. Still idealistic and passionate, the means by which we achieve our mission have evolved to reflect the issues women face today. We continue to address women's legal needs, advocate for legal reforms and promote fair outcomes for women through the addition of programs such as the Employment Law Hotline and the alimony guidelines project. We embrace the fresh perspectives of young women who are involved through the Students Supporting the Women's Law Center groups at the law schools while benefiting from the wisdom and experience of our long-time supporters.

This year, as we observe 35 years of protecting women's rights, we celebrate our role in promoting access and advocacy for Maryland's women. We realize that we could not have done it without our supporters, both those who have been with us for the 35 year journey and those who have joined us more recently. We are deeply grateful for your efforts, contributions and unwavering commitment to justice for women.



Bobbie Steyer
President



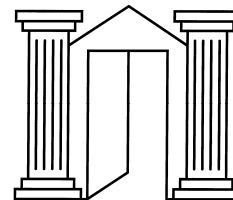
L. Tracy Brown
Executive Director



1972



1983



1996

Mission

To serve as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women by advocating for the rights of women through policy analysis, advocacy, litigation, education, research, judicial selection, legislative advocacy and direct services. The Women's Law Center is a membership organization that offers opportunities for its members to support and participate in advocacy on behalf of women and families.

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*"Justice is not
something we
find, but
something we
create."*



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A victim of domestic violence was arrested after an episode of violence. During a hearing for a Protective Order, the POARP attorney elicited testimony to show that the client acted in self defense. The presiding judge believed the victim and granted the Order. The POARP attorney provided a transcript of the proceeding to the prosecutor who, based on the evidence presented at the Protective Order hearing, dismissed the criminal charges.

1

Direct Legal Services

The Women's Law Center's family law projects address legal issues that have a profound and direct impact on women and families. Our legal services programs help clients gain access to justice by providing legal representation that is critical to achieving a successful outcome. Attorneys help clients gain safety, maintain custody of their children and establish independence from an abusive partner. All of the projects are administered through the Women's Law Center's Bruce A. Kaufman Center for Family Law.

Our accomplishments in 2007 include:

- Through its Protective Order and Representation Project (POARP), **the Women's Law Center provided free, courthouse-based attorneys to victims of domestic violence seeking protective orders through the civil circuit courts in Baltimore City and Baltimore County and the Circuit Court and District Court in Carroll County.** The POARP attorneys and advocates helped 552 victims of intimate partner abuse. Clearly the services had a successful impact and filled a need — 98% of POARP clients felt safer after going to court with POARP attorneys and 94% would not have had representation without the Women's Law Center. This project, which is funded through the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Altria Doors of Hope Program is conducted in partnership with the House of Ruth.
- **Increased funding of the Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence (MEDOVI) Project, which serves foreign-born domestic violence victims, will allow the Women's Law Center to provide additional services to Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence.** MEDOVI provided information, referrals and legal representation in immigration hearings to 189 people this year. A multi-lingual hotline and funding for interpreters allow non-English speakers to access services. New grants from the United Way of Central Maryland and the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention fund a second staff person to provide services to assist the Hispanic community. Funding also is provided by a Victims of Crime Assistance Project grant from the Department of Human Resources Office of Victim Services, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Altria Doors of Hope Program.
- **The Reduced Fee Child Custody Project placed 43 contested custody cases in Baltimore County with 27 attorneys.** Funded by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, this project provides low-income citizens with access to an attorney. The Women's Law Center screens cases and identifies experienced attorneys, who agree to represent the client at a significantly reduced fee and to continue the representation even after they exceed the payment cap. The services are free to the clients.

Education

Access to reliable information is a powerful source of equality for women. The Women's Law Center educates women through its publications and by providing one-on-one attorney consultations to callers of its two hotlines: the Family Law Hotline and the Legal Forms Helpline. Both hotlines are administered through the Women's Law Center's Bruce A. Kaufman Center for Family Law.

Our accomplishments in 2007:

Hotlines

- The **Family Law Hotline**, now in its 17th year of operation, provided valuable information and advice to 5,944 callers, a 34% increase over the number of calls handled last year. Many of the callers had no other access to an attorney. Volunteer attorneys provided over 200 hours of meaningful and convenient pro bono service through the Hotline. Calls came from every jurisdiction in the state and covered a broad range of topics relating to divorce, custody, visitation and child support. Funded by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, the Hotline is operated in partnership with the Legal Aid Bureau.
- The **Legal Forms Helpline** assisted 2,072 Marylanders complete Domestic Relations forms and more effectively handle their family law case without an attorney. Helpline attorneys assisted callers in choosing which forms to use, how to file the forms and how to achieve service. The Helpline helps citizens gain access to the courts and improves the quality of the cases filed by pro se litigants. Many callers (42%) report they are proceeding without an attorney because they can not afford one, indicating the Helpline meets a critical need. A separate toll-free number provides Spanish-speaking pro se litigants with access to a bi-lingual attorney. The Helpline is funded through the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Publications

- The Women's Law Center distributed over 550 copies of our publications, which include: *Your Money Matters: A Guide to Financial Independence for Women*; *Legal Rights in Marriage and Divorce* (available in Spanish and English); *Legal Rights of Unmarried Cohabitants*; *Sex Discrimination in Employment* (available in Spanish and English); and *Battered – What Can I Do?* (available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Arabic and Vietnamese).

A resident of the Eastern Shore called the Family Law Hotline because her husband recently left her after two decades of marriage. She needed information about her legal rights regarding the marital home, custody and child support. While a routine call for the Hotline attorney, the situation was far from routine for the caller. At the end of the call she told the Hotline attorney "I feel better able to handle what's going on because I got the information I needed."

A single mother of four was fired when she refused to report for work on her day off. Her call to the Employment Law Hotline resulted in a referral to a lawyer who represented her, helping her maintain her unemployment benefits—her primary source of income. The lawyer's investigation revealed that the employee had an excellent work record. However, after she filed a sexual harassment complaint, she was disciplined several times and, eventually, fired.

3

Employment Law Hotline

Working women today face complex challenges. Women need to know their legal rights about the many issues that can affect their financial stability and independence—balancing family responsibilities, leave issues, discrimination and pay injustices. The Women's Law Center met this need by creating the Employment Law Hotline, a unique and accessible resource to educate Maryland workers about their labor and employment rights.

Launched in December 2006, the Employment Law Hotline has responded to 176 calls for information and advice. The Hotline is staffed by experienced employment law attorneys who volunteer their professional services. Twenty five attorneys have committed to serving on the Hotline and have already provided 105 hours of volunteer service. Currently, the Employment Law Hotline operates on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 1:00. Plans are underway to expand the Hotline to at least two evening shifts per month.

Calls cover a range of topics including pay equity, family and medical leave issues and unemployment benefits. Callers also get information on state and/or federal agencies and other employment-related organizations that can help. The one-on-one legal-education tool empowers callers to correctly identify an illegal action, prevent future violations, and respond to their situation. Callers who could benefit from additional consultation or representation are referred to the panel of Hotline volunteers who have the option of accepting a case. Over 100 cases were circulated to the panel.

Employment Law Hotline statistics confirm that it is meeting a critical need.

- 79% callers were women
- 42% of the calls pertained to discrimination complaints or harassment
- 78% of callers had an income of under \$40,000, where income information was available
- All but one jurisdiction were represented by Hotline calls
- All employment sectors were represented

The Women's Law Center also will compile statistics about labor and employment law issues and identify trends. Data from the Hotline will bring to light areas in which working women struggle, such as family responsibility discrimination and the impact of domestic violence on the workplace, giving us an opportunity to impact and inform policy in employment law. Thus, while we work to help one woman, we help policy-makers learn how we can attain **justice and fairness for all women**.

The Employment Law Hotline is funded by grants from the Open Society Institute and the Marjorie Cook Foundation. The law firm Brown, Goldstein and Levy awarded a generous challenge grant that was matched by Women's Law Center's members and supporters.

Research, Policy Analysis and Legal Reform

The Women's Law Center takes a leading role in identifying and addressing inequities that impact women, continuing to focus our efforts this year on the effects of divorce on Maryland's women and families. Our efforts in the area of family law are made possible through the Women's Law Center's Bruce A. Kaufman Center for Family Law.

- The Women's Law Center completed the data collection and analysis of family law cases that were filed in FY 2003 and published *Families in Transition: Exploring Family Law Issues in Maryland*. This research replicated the prior analysis of FY 1999 case filings and explored how the family law landscape changed during the four years between the two studies. Based on the research findings, the report offered policy recommendations about alimony, representation in custody cases, utilization of court services and screening of domestic violence cases. This initiative continued the Women's Law Center's efforts to inform and educate advocates, policy-makers and litigants about the court process and the results in family law cases. The research was funded by the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- The Justice in Divorce Project, the Women's Law Center's initiative to address the issues raised in our first family law study, continues to focus on policy changes and reforms that support an equitable distribution of financial resources at the time of divorce. Recognizing that alimony awards are one of the least predictable elements of family law decisions, the Women's Law Center developed the Kaufman Alimony Guidelines. The Women's Law Center engaged a company that developed alimony guidelines in four other states to create a software program to generate alimony guidelines based on Maryland's family and tax law. Currently in a beta stage, the Kaufman Alimony Guidelines are not designed to replace the discretion of a judge. They will serve as a tool for attorneys and decision makers. The Kaufman Alimony Guidelines factor in the length of marriage, age of the claimant, whether there are children and the earning potential of the claimant. The software calculates child support and tax rates and offers a recommendation for an amount and term of alimony. It also presents a clear picture of the financial status of both parties based on the alimony and child support guidelines. The program is flexible and user-friendly, allowing the attorney or decision-maker to easily adjust various factors to evaluate the impact on the alimony recommendation. Once in final form, the Kaufman Alimony Guidelines will be made available free of charge to attorneys, judges and masters. The Justice in Divorce Project and development of the Kaufman Alimony Guidelines are funded through a generous challenge grant from the Lyn P. Meyerhoff Foundation, contributions to the Women's Law Center's Justice Fund and through individual contributions directed toward this project.

55% of parents shared decision making in FY 03 cases compared to 48% in FY 99 cases

30% of custody cases were contested

16% of litigants requested alimony and 6% were awarded alimony

20% of litigants requested a monetary award and 16% received an award

63% of all cases involved no financial outcome

Families in Transition, 2006

The issue in the *Baby* case “boils down to a question of how much emphasis we put on a person’s autonomy and where we draw those lines.”

-*Baltimore Sun*,
October 3, 2007

“No’ has to mean something when you say it. The idea that the only thing that matters is initial penetrationis not reflective of cultural advances.”

-*Baltimore Examiner*,
August 15, 2007

Women’s Law Center
Legal Projects
Manager, Danielle Cover
commenting on *Baby v. State*

5

Advocacy: Working for Broader Change

Legislative Advocacy

The Women’s Law Center actively participates in the legislative process by monitoring and taking positions on bills that address domestic violence, sexual assault, family law, reproductive rights, equal pay and other issues that impact women.

Last year the Women’s Law Center:

- Monitored over 60 bills and submitted written and oral testimony on 34 key bills.
- Involved members in the legislative process by sending over 35 legislative alerts to galvanize grassroots action.
- Provided administrative staff support to the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). MLAW provides an independent voice for Maryland’s women in the legislative process. Without the Women’s Law Center’s support, MLAW would not have been able to communicate as effectively with its members and other women’s advocates to develop, disseminate and support a legislative agenda for women.

Amicus Activity

The Women’s Law Center signed on to appellate briefs in several important cases that have an impact on the legal rights of women. In *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, which was argued before the United States Supreme Court, the Women’s Law Center joined women’s advocates from across the country in support of the right of women to equal pay. A brief in the United States Supreme Court cases *Gonzales v. Carhart* and *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood Federation of America* argued that the federal ban on certain late term abortions denies women access to the safest possible health care, thereby compromising women’s equality and dignity. In Maryland, women’s autonomy and bodily integrity were challenged in *Baby v. State*, which involved a woman’s right to withdraw consent to sexual relations. *Koshko v. Haining* established a new standard for grandparent visitation.

Judicial Selections

The Women’s Law Center is deeply committed to insuring Maryland’s judiciary reflects integrity and professionalism, as these qualities will help insure justice and fairness for women. The Judicial Selections Committee, comprised of attorneys who are members and who have a wide range of legal experience, is one of the most active of the Women’s Law Center’s committees. The committee’s process is objective and confidential. The Judicial Selections Committee conducts rigorous interviews and ranks each candidate using specific selection criteria including judicial demeanor, integrity, experience, and commitment to a judicial system free of gender bias. The Committee communicates its ranking and observations to the Judicial Nominating Commission and the governor.

Students Supporting the Women's Law Center

In 2005, the Women's Law Center formed a partnership with students at the University of Baltimore and University of Maryland law schools. The students established Students Supporting the Women's Law Center (SSWLC) organizations at each school. The President of the group at each school serves as a Board member of the Women's Law Center. SSWLC members also participate in interviews conducted by the Judicial Selections Committee. The student groups held social and educational events throughout the year, such as a symposium on Title IX, a Clothesline Project display and a crab feast to benefit the organization. The work of the Women's Law Center has been enriched by the presence of these student leaders, through their analysis of issues, their dedication and their fundraising support.

Member Opportunities

The Women's Law Center increased its outreach to new members and enhanced member benefits by offering discounts at local businesses. In addition, we increased opportunities for our current members and supporters to come together to socialize, celebrate our progress and discuss issues important to women. The Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony recognized deserving award recipients for their contributions in the area of employment law and public service. With a champagne toast, we launched the Employment Law Hotline. A Wine and Chocolate event offered a festive and delicious networking event. At this event, a POARP client shared her experiences and described the critical legal services she received. A charity night at Petalo's restaurant was an occasion to share dinner and conversation with family and friends. In addition to social events, communications with members also were increased through email messages about topics important to members, including legislative alerts.

To receive emails about Women's Law Center news and events, contact news@wlc.md.org.

To receive legislative alerts about bills that impact women, contact legislative@wlc.md.org.

Statement of Financial Position

Income Statement

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007

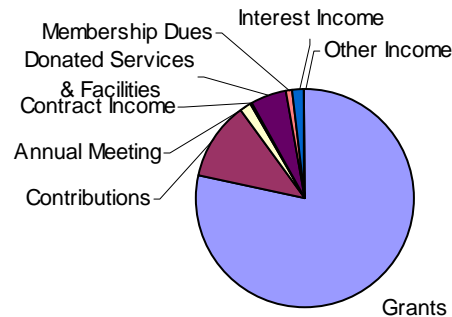
Income	
Grants	\$879,851
Contributions	\$128,689
Annual Meeting	\$18,940
Contract Income	\$5,000
Donated Services & Facilities	\$59,497
Membership Dues	\$9,945
Interest Income	\$18,966
Loss on disposal of property	\$0
Other Income	\$716
TOTAL	\$1,121,604
Expenses	
Program Services	\$848,186
Management & General	\$98,463
Fundraising	\$62,294
TOTAL	\$1,008,943
Change in Net Assets	\$112,661
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$701,347
Net Assets at End of Year	\$814,008

Balance Sheet

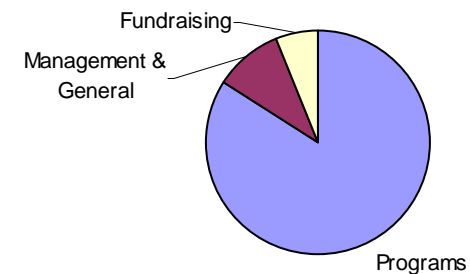
For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007

Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$609,639
Grants Receivable, current portion	\$166,003
Other Receivables	\$28,110
Prepaid Expense	\$12,652
Equipment	\$25,708
Grants Receivable, net of current portion	\$53,333
Security Deposit	\$1,157
TOTAL ASSETS	\$896,602
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$11,944
Accrued Payroll Expense	\$21,055
Refundable Advance	\$49,595
Total Current Liabilities	\$82,594
Net Assets	
Unrestricted: Undesignated	\$404,406
Unrestricted: Board Designated	\$147,620
Temporarily Restricted	\$261,982
Total Net Assets	\$814,008
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$896,602

Income



Expense



Justice Fund Donors

The Justice Fund supports the Women's Law Center's efforts in research, education, direct services and advocacy. Justice Fund contributors support our efforts to build a just and equitable society for women. Thank you for sharing our vision and supporting our cause!

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