

# YLD hands out thousands of organ-donor cards

By Phoebe Moffatt  
Special to Maricopa Lawyer

Volunteers from the Maricopa County Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Donor Network of Arizona handed out more than 6,000 organ-donor cards and information packets to shoppers at Arizona Mills and Metrocenter malls on Nov. 23.

If the volunteers' efforts to recruit new organ donors resulted in saving even just one life, the event was a huge success.

The YLD's Gift of Life project hits particularly close to home for Fennemore Craig and water law expert Jim Johnson. Johnson, whose liver failed due to Hepatitis C that he contracted from a blood transfusion in 1969, received a second chance at life with a liver

transplant in October 1997.

Johnson volunteered at the Nov. 23 mall event, handing out donor cards and information packets.

"The liver that I received from the donor truly gave me a second chance at life," he said. "Signing up to be an organ donor allows others to live because of your generosity. Just one organ and tissue donor can save the lives of many other people through major organ transplants. The gift of life is the greatest of gifts to give."

Johnson is waiting for another transplant due to continuous liver failure as a result of Hepatitis C.

At the malls, tables decorated with balloons and candies were strategically set up to attract attention to the information about

organ donation. Receptive shoppers stopped to discuss their concerns and the manner in which to become an organ donor. Most shoppers who spent time with the volunteers agreed to sign an organ-donor card and to take additional information.

Especially amazing and rewarding for the young lawyer volunteers was the opportunity to meet and hear the stories from the many actual organ-donor recipients, such as Johnson, who now first hand how a donated organ saved their lives.

Thousands of people die each year as the donor shortage steadily increases. The information distributed at the shopping malls attempts to eliminate common misconceptions that keep many people from becoming donors.

With thousands of people in the United States lingering on transplant waiting lists, the need for efforts such as YLD's Gift of Life project is obvious. Just one organ and tissue donor can save the lives of many people through a major organ transplant and also can greatly improve the health of others

through tissue donations.

The YLD thanks all those who contributed their time and effort that day, and is especially grateful to the Donor Network of Arizona for guiding us through this event.

We have plenty of organ-donor cards still available. If you would like an organ-donor card or more information about organ donation, please contact me at pmoffatt@swlaw.com or Shane Clays at 602-257-4200, ext. 111. Or check out the Donor Network of Arizona website, www.dnaz.com. ■

## Write a letter!

We welcome letters to the editor. Letters generally should be no more than 300 words long.

*Maricopa Lawyer* reserves the right to edit all letters for length. Letters to the editor must be typed on your letterhead, signed and submitted to Editor, *Maricopa Lawyer*, Maricopa County Bar Association, 303 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, 85004.

# Being and becoming an Arizona lawyer: the stories of three minority women

By Nicole C. Davis  
Special to Maricopa Lawyer

In 1998, the Maricopa County Bar Association created the Task Force to Promote the Recruitment and Retention of Women and Minority Lawyers. The task force's mission is to advance the fair administration of justice and equal access to participation in the legal profession. To that end, the task force, chaired by Arizona Supreme Court Justice Michael D. Ryan, is dedicated to assisting women, people of color and other minorities in overcoming the social and institutional obstacles that in years past have thwarted their full and unfettered involvement in the legal profession.

The question: How can this be done? The answer: Equal representation!

As one of the task force's newest members, an African-American attorney and a newcomer to Arizona, the relatively small minority representation in the State Bar of Arizona became increasingly evident fairly soon into my legal practice. Appropriately then, one of my first projects for the task force was to conduct interviews to glean a minority perspective on attaining equal representation. Specifically, I interviewed three female minority attorneys, inquired about their individual backgrounds and asked why they chose to practice law in Arizona. Their stories follow.

### Patricia George

Patricia George is a Native American attorney who was born and raised in Harlingen, Texas. After earning her bachelor's degree in studio arts in 1994 from Arizona State University, she married her husband, Thomas, a native Arizonan, and found a temporary home in the design industry. Soon after, she began law school at the University of Arizona with an eye toward becoming an advocate for, and a representative of, Native Americans. Upon graduating in 2000 from the UA, she clerked for Arizona Court of Appeals Judge Cecil B. Patterson Jr. and is currently an assistant Phoenix city prosecutor.

Although George once planned to return

to Texas to practice law, she elected to stay in Arizona when she found her niche. As she recounts, she has become a role model for Arizona's indigenous Native American population and takes pleasure in enlightening both Native and non-Native Americans about the nuances between the Arizona and tribal legal systems. George was persuaded to stay in Arizona's legal community when, after identifying herself as a Native American, she was still judged on her legal ability and not handicapped by her ethnicity.

Although George recognizes that a decision to practice law in Arizona is a very personal choice, she remains optimistic about changing the face of Arizona's legal community. She believes that, through a consistent stream of Native American representation in our legal community, we can bridge the distance between attorneys who merely consider legal practice in Arizona and those who choose it as a lifestyle.

### Anoma Phanthourath

Anoma Phanthourath also moved to Arizona from Texas and has truly triumphed given the challenges that life has placed before her. At age 3, Phanthourath, along with her parents, three brothers and sisters and several aunts and uncles — totaling 13 people — left her home in Vientiane, Laos, and found shelter in a refugee camp in Thailand. With the aid of sponsors, Anoma and her family settled in Clovis, N.M., where they initially lived out of a sponsor's garage while her parents earned minimal wages working in a meat-packing plant and for Levi jeans. After saving enough money to start a small Asian market, the family moved to Amarillo, Texas, where Phanthourath attended high school. She excelled, was one of the few girls in her lower-income high school class to graduate without first becoming a mother, and went on to college where she received dual bachelor's degrees, in journalism and in history, from the University of Texas.

For one year after college, Phanthourath worked in Amarillo as a freelance writer and a Laotian translator. She then began her legal

studies at the UA, where she obtained her law degree in 1998. She currently is in her fifth year of practice at Jennings, Strouss & Salmon, sits on the board of directors of the Phoenix Texas Exes, is a member of Phoenix's Pacific Rim Advisory Council and is newly admitted to practice law in Nevada.

Phanthourath notes that, though she considered returning to Texas to practice law, she has made a home for herself in Arizona for the past eight years and has been afforded certain opportunities for career growth and advancement. She likes Phoenix and the potential that this particular legal market has to offer. She credits influential people in Arizona's legal community, such as UA Professor Dan B. Dobbs, Pima County Superior Court Judge Michael J. Cruikshank and Buzz Alston, chairman of Jennings Strouss' litigation department, who took an active interest in her professional growth. Phanthourath has chosen to stay in Arizona, where her diverse background has been both recognized and appreciated.

### Monica Limón-Wynn

The task force also interviewed Monica Limón-Wynn, a Hispanic attorney born and raised in the Valley who is bound to Arizona for two notable reasons: strong familial bonds and social ties to the Hispanic community. As a native Arizonan, Limón-Wynn is committed to practicing law in Arizona, which she has done for more than four years as an associate at Snell & Wilmer. Limón-Wynn received her bachelor's degree in computer information systems in 1984 and law degree in 1998 from ASU.

When asked why she chose to stay in Arizona and practice law in this community, Limón-Wynn noted that Phoenix is a close legal community. It allows law students to develop reputations early in their careers, and affords new attorneys an opportunity to cultivate valuable relationships while maturing into well-rounded lawyers. The Hispanic community's support network is particularly important to her.

— See **Task Force** on page 20

## DOING GOOD



Beyers



Jones



Phanthourath



Roberts

■ Maureen Beyers, a partner with Osborn Maledon, has been elected to the Arizona Humane Society board of directors.

■ Kristin J. Bekkum, an attorney with Snell & Wilmer's real estate and commercial finance practice group, has been elected to the auxiliary board of directors of the Fresh Start Women's Foundation. The foundation provides programs and services for an estimated 500,000 displaced women in Arizona.

■ Brian Roberts, an attorney with Snell & Wilmer's business and finance practice, has been appointed to Waste Not's board of directors. Waste Not collects excess food from area restaurants and businesses and distributes it to agencies that assist people in need.

■ Lydia A. Jones, a partner with Jennings, Strouss & Salmon, has been named to the Strategic Planning Committee of the Desert Botanical Garden.

■ Anoma Phanthourath, an associate with Jennings, Strouss & Salmon, has been elected to the board of the Arizona Fair Housing Center, an independent, non-profit agency dedicated to promoting fair housing through testing and investigating complaints of housing discrimination. ■