

Local Inn News

Editor's Note: The information contained in this first report was taken from an article written by Julie DeCour that appeared in the February 11, 1993 edition of *Tulsa World*. © 1993, World Publishing Co.

The silencing of victims is an ugly—and perilously effective—weapon of sexual harassment, University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill told one hundred members of the **Robert D. Hudson and W. Lee Johnson American Inns of Court** in Tulsa on February 10, 1993. Only three to five percent of those who experience sexual harassment report it, she said—primarily because they believe the system will fail them if they cry out. Yet, of the claims actually filed, Hill said only three percent prove to be frivolous—discrediting notions that many women “cry wolf.”

The Inns' topic, gender bias among lawyers, began with Hill's speech, followed by the panel discussion of five women who represented a cross-section of Tulsa lawyers. The panel's moderator was Tulsa attorney Laura Frossard.

Hill, a native Oklahoman and former Oral Roberts University Law School professor, came to the forefront in 1991 at the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. Hill complained that Thomas had sexually harassed her when they were both government attorneys in Washington, D.C.

Her experience before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Hill said, is a window into the often competing interests of power and truth. “Truth is not the key to power,” she said of women trying to prove their claims. “The key to a woman's power is the significance of her truth.” She said that perhaps her greatest hurdle with the Judiciary Committee was that it “didn't matter if you were telling the truth.” “I couldn't convince anyone of the significance of the truth. Here was a man whose career, many thought, needed to continue. Is it fair to ruin his career or detract from it because of a lapse?” was the question being mulled by

society and by the committee, she explained.

“We very often silence victims. We regard victim's reactions as senseless or unworthy of a remedy or protection,” she said. Society often only supports a truth when it happens to coincide with “other beliefs we're ready to promote.”

Panel members Kathy Borchardt and Linda Martin, Tulsa litigators; University of Tulsa Law professor Linda Lacey; Tulsa District Judges Gail Harris and Williams Cos; and senior attorney Diana Hall discussed how gender bias affects the atmosphere in which female attorneys practice law. There's a whole mythology, panel members said, that this is a problem that will die with an older generation of men.

“This problem is not generational,” Borchardt said, “it's about power.” Martin responded, “[t]here are still a lot of Bubbas out there, and we know who you are.”

Hill told her audience that lawyers are in leadership roles and that society expects “us to know what the law is and to solve problems.” “This is a heavy subject,” she said of gender bias and sexual harassment. “It's like the budget deficit. Everyone is against it, but nobody seems to know what to do about it. There's a sense of helplessness

of what to do in the face of a problem so widespread that sixty percent of working women have experienced it at least one time in their careers.”

The **Willamette Valley American Inn of Court** had its inaugural meeting in Salem, Oregon on September 17, 1992. Judge Stephen Trott of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals joined the meeting, telling members and officers Mike McClinton, Kathy Evans, Donald McCann, and Dan Ritter that the Inn program is a way to fight back against those who make unwarranted attacks on the bar.

Historian Daniel Ritter explained the English inns of court, as well as his recent trip to the inns on Great Britain. After dinner, members watched segments of a trial highlighting ethical issues. Oregon Supreme Justice Edwin Peterson led the discussion which followed.

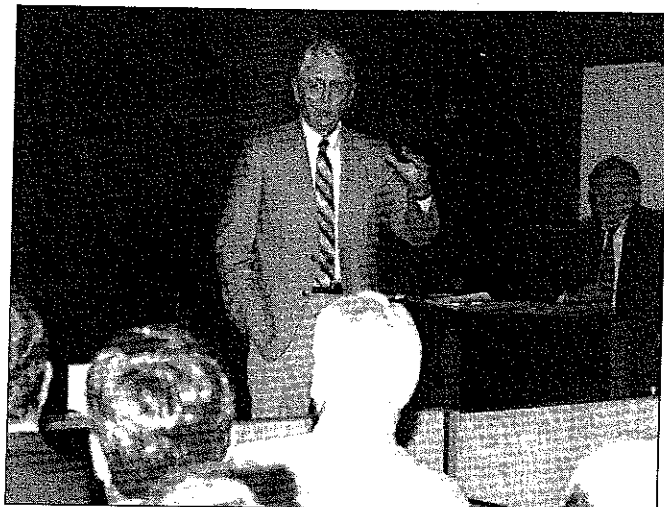
The Inn has approximately 100 members, and has enjoyed a series of outstanding presentations during the monthly meetings that have followed the Inn's “inauguration.” Members appreciate the normal benefits of the AIC program and also the ability to get to know attorneys and judges from outside their own county.



Pictured here at the first meeting of the Willamette Valley American Inn of Court in Salem, Oregon are (from left to right): Kathy Evans, President of the Marion County Bar Association; Tom Elden, incoming Secretary to the Marion County Bar Association; Judge Stephen Trott of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals; Mike McClinton, President of the Willamette Valley American Inn of Court; and Dan Ritter, Inn Historian.



Oregon Supreme Court Justice Edwin Peterson headed the pupillage team that presented the evening program at the inaugural meeting of the Willamette Valley American Inn of Court in Salem, Oregon.



The venire was asked for their reactions to the procedure. The overwhelming consensus was that they took offense to the attorneys who forgot their names, did not maintain eye contact, and directed personal comments to their opponent.

The Sarasota Inn's second presentation was modeled after "The Wheel of Fortune." Gary Larsen was the presiding master, assisted by Charlie Ann Scott, as the stand-in for Vanna White. A panel of judges asked evidentiary questions of two contestants called at random by Larsen from the Inn audience. The first victim to ring the bell and answer correctly was promoted to the jury box for another round. This unusual and entertaining presentation cleverly demonstrated that, in the heat of trial, attorneys must be able to understand and respond to sometimes confusing questions rapidly and instinctively.

The Sarasota American Inn of Court just published the most recent edition of its newsletter, *The Inn Advocate*. Congratulations to its new editor, Donna-Lee Roden! In that unique periodical, the Florida Inn's executive committee conveys vital information from the Foundation to its members. (In this issue, the subject, *Tax News and Views*, was the deductibility of members' dues and the Inn's 501(c)(3) status.) The quarterly six-page newsletter reiterates the composition of the Inn's pupillage groups and its meeting schedule for the year, and always contains a message from its president, the Honorable John M. Scheb, regarding the status of its membership and the success of its programs. It also includes articles by Inn members on topics of relevance to the Inn's purpose, in this edition, *Solo Practice Pleasures and Realities*, by Cynthia S. Barry. Finally, *The Inn Advocate* invariably contains detailed reports of the preceding pupillage presentations for those members who were unable to attend. The following local news is taken from that publication.

The Inn's first presentation of the year provided a fresh approach pertaining to the selection of jurors. Each team member invited persons from the private sector to appear as the panel. Their insight and com-

ments shed new light on how jurors perceive attorneys and the question and answer session following the *voir dire* was frank and forthright.

Thomas Shults peppered his panel questioning with classic examples of how overzealous advocates tend to make personal comments, such as suggesting to the panel that Buddy Savary has a habit of "screaming" and informing the infamous Savary that he should not "scream." Although humorous to the audience, these comments proved offensive to some members of the panel. It bears remembering when confronted with one's natural instinct to issue a witticism or jibe to opposing counsel in the heat of battle.

Stephen Brannan presented his style of *voir dire*, a fine example of a die-hard defense lawyer in action, while the judge presiding was Lynette Mancuso. Mancuso accurately portrayed the judge of all trial attorneys' nightmares, repeatedly yawning and making her *ennui* evident, and cleverly illustrating the importance of the judge's role in the *voir dire* process.

In contrast, associate-pupils Donna-Lee Roden and John Moore tried to make the venire feel at ease and to ask meaningful questions without offending the prospective jurors.



Start Planning Now for the
9th Annual Meeting

June 10-13
Chicago, Illinois

WILLAMETTE VALLEY.

INNS OF COURT

September 17, 1992

JUDGE SLOPER'S COURTROOM

Marion County Courthouse

CLASH OF THE TITANS:

DR 4-101 (Preservation of Confidences & Secrets)

v.

DR 7-102 (Avoidance of Fraud on the Court)

Program Agenda

5:45 p.m.	Refreshments
6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Introductory Remarks Judge Trott, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Dan Ritter, Inns of Court Historian
7:15 p.m.	Program Presentation Justice Edwin Peterson's Team
8:15 p.m.	Adjournment