

Profiles of the 1999 Winners of the WLAM Foundation Outstanding Woman Law Student Award

Nancy A. Costello

Howard & Howard Award at University of Detroit Mercy Law School

Ms. Costello's academic excellence is reflected by her current service as Managing Editor of the University of Detroit Mercy Law Review, a position she holds while a full-time student. She is President of the Women's Law Caucus, where she has organized clothing drives for battered women's shelters, as well as programs for women law students. Last November, the Caucus presented a panel discussion among women lawyers from different practice areas, all discussing why they chose a particular career path, balance of career and family, glass ceiling issues, salary, maternity leave and sexism on the job. Ms. Costello's leadership skills revealed themselves during her previous career; she spent fifteen years as a journalist, working at several small and large newspapers. Those years included not only reporting on a wide variety of women's issues (teenage pregnancy, abortion rights, women's self-defense, and Russian feminism, to name a few), but also the responsibilities of conducting diversity workshops for employees and serving as a supervising editor for the Associated Press. As a volunteer, Ms. Costello has been a counselor at a rape crisis center, executive board member for a battered women's shelter, teacher of English to women refugees, and camerawoman and scriptwriter for a video collective which produced videos on a women's peace encampment and an international women's conference in Nairobi. Most recently, she has been a board member handling fundraising and media relations for a women-owned theatre company in Ann Arbor which produces shows focusing on gender identity issues, race, ethnicity and disability. This year, Ms. Costello is participating in her school's Urban Law Clinic, serving as a public defender, while also serving as a student attorney for indigent senior citizen women.

Karin Klapper

University of Michigan Law School

Ms. Klapper's leadership skills have been recognized throughout her academic career, starting with her election as a student member of the Cornell University Board of Trustees; she organized a town meeting with the university's new president, surveyed incoming freshmen on housing selections and advocated on behalf of students who were confronted with religious or academic conflicts. That position led to her receipt of Cornell's Senior Service Award (service to the college) and John F. Kennedy Award (senior with more ability and potential to pursue a public service career). Ms. Klapper was one of ten Americans selected as a Raoul Wallenberg Scholar, after her graduation, and she attended the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, studying leadership and human rights in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Joining the Public Interest Group (PIG) when she started at University of Michigan Law School, Ms. Klapper soon rose to its presidency and has done much to energize and increase a membership consisting of students who hope to use their law degrees for the public good. In the summer of 1998, she received a Kellogg Child Welfare Law Fellowship which allowed her to work on child abuse and neglect cases at the Legal Aid Society in New York City. Describing the experience as one which revealed "the unfortunate intersection of law and bureaucracy," Ms. Klapper compiled a training manual for staff, wrote research memos, and investigated cases during this fellowship. Ms. Klapper is an Associate Editor of the

Michigan Law Review, will graduate in May of 2000, and looks forward to a career in public service.

Kathy A. Martin

Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Ms. Martin brings a strong science background to her interest in a career in pharmaceutical and biotech patents, or immunological drug approval. She spent almost four years investigating the Immune mechanisms of Depression in Women while a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh. A research specialist working with a medical school professor, Ms. Martin directed investigation and lab experimentation on the subject, and analyzed other investigator's data and research. That research led her to conclude that "women have a higher incidence of cancer if they have been clinically depressed at one point in their lives." At Cooley Law School, she has been a Graduation Marshall for six of her seven terms there, and currently serves as Secretary of the Executive Board of the Student Bar Association. Ms. Martin also works as a legislative assistant to Michigan Representative William Byl, helping constituents with problems, performing research and drafting bills. She expects to graduate in September, 1999, and would like to work with the Food and Drug Administration.

Miriam H. Marton

Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University

A long-term commitment to working with women in need best summarizes Miriam Marton's qualifications for the WLAM award, starting in 1984 with graduate school work on domestic violence, with an internship at HAVEN, Oakland County's domestic violence shelter. At HAVEN, she developed prevention and awareness programs for sexual assault and domestic violence, taking them into the schools for hands-on work with teachers and students. In 1992, Ms. Marton started her own private therapy practice, working with women on issues such as recovering from sexual assault and domestic violence situations, eating disorders, parenting, and more. She explains that this work emphasizes not only the victim/survival aspect of these issues, but the next steps, which include "finding one's place in the community as an active, contributory, conscious citizen, choosing healthy partners, and breaking long-term family victimization patterns." She has organized and taught numerous classes and workshops on these issues. In December of 1996, Ms. Marton added her PhD to a Masters Degree in Social Work, and she will obtain her JD in 2001. Her doctoral work focused on the impact of Western religion and culture on the modern psyche and contemporary relationships. She hopes that her educational background, her thirteen years in social work, and her experience as a mother of three will help her to be an advocate for advancing women in society.

Susan West

Wayne State University Law School

Ms. West's experience demonstrates a strong commitment to work on women's health issues, beginning with her work as a health educator at a family planning clinic, through several years with Planned Parenthood, where as Program Manager she developed and coordinated a long-range educational and clinical project on socio-cultural barriers in family planning. She states that she has "witnessed first-hand the inequities that exist in medical services and the difficulties women encounter in

accessing the health care system." Discovering when she entered law school that there was no organization for law students interested in health law, she and another classmate formed the "Health Law Initiative." She is active in that group, as well as the Women's Law Caucus and Black Law Student Association. While a law student at Wayne, Ms. West has worked as a legal intern for the American Civil Liberties Union, a research assistant for a professor developing a Center for Law and Medicine, and a legal intern at the Karmanos Cancer Institute. She has served on the boards of the Midwest AIDS Prevention Project, the National Black Women's Health Project (Detroit Chapter), and the Women's Justice Center/My Sister's Place. Following her graduation from law school in July, 1999, Ms. West plans to continue her dedication to matters impacting women.