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# Women and the Law

## Women and the Law Seventh National Conference

by Jane E. Swanson

The seventh National Conference on Women and the Law, the third in which the University of Baltimore women have participated, was held in Philadelphia, March, 12-14, 1976. Billed as, "A forum for the examination of women's current status in the American legal, political, and economic system...an opportunity for law students, lawyers and other feminists to share expertise on substantive legal issues and to develop strategies for litigation and political action," the conference lived up to its promise. The SBA/ESBA and THE FORUM contributed support to permit seventeen women law students to attend. The nearby location permitted carpooling and minimal travel expense, in contrast to the two years preceeding when this conference was held in Texas and in California. Representing the University of Baltimore's Women's Law Caucus were Judith Billage, Laurie Bortz, Linda Boyd, Virginia Camella, Marianne Davis, Jana Guy, Meg Holland, Kathy Howard, Shelly Mintz, Harriet Neusbaum, Natalie Rees, Joanne Robertson, Susan Scholdt, Janet Stilwell, Anita Stuppler, Sally Swann, and Jane Swanson.

This year's conference was hosted by Temple University; registration and workshops on Friday and Saturday were located on the Temple campus and headquartered in the Law Center. Saturday evening the conference

moved to the Bellevue Stratford Hotel, where most of the attendees were registered, and the evening's events and Sunday workshops were held in the hotel.

The Saturday night festivities began with a banquet, followed by the keynote address by Eleanor Holmes Norton, Chairperson of the New York Commission on Human Rights, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, and Assistant Professor of Law at New York University. Ms. Norton is familiar to this assembly, having delivered the keynote speech at the Fifth National Conference of Women and the Law in 1974. The highlight of Saturday night was the one-woman show put on by Ivy Bottini. She calls her show "The Many Faces of Woman," a form of "visual consciousness raising." Her handmade jewelry, printed sweat-shirts, and other artifacts, all stamped with her "WOMEN POWER" logo sold like the proverbial hotcakes on Sunday. Ms. Bottini has a long history in feminism and was a founding member of the first N.O.W. chapter, as well as having held both New York and national offices in the organization.

Two years ago Anita Stuppler and Jane Swanson reported having felt somewhat frantic and frustrated by the array of some nineteen workshop topics and having only seven time slots in which to cover them. That was a simple thing, compared to what confronted the attendees of this year's conference, offering as it did eight sessions and seventy topics. These included three on various aspects of the E.R.A. and nine on Title VII litigation and strategy. All of the workshops of major general interest were scheduled at least twice during the three days. Even so, there was such a feast available that it was virtually impossible for anyone to do more than nibble at the edges. We will describe some of the workshops attended by our representatives, but cannot begin to do justice to a conference of this scope. The good news about all this, however, is that all work-

shops and speeches are available on cassettes from a women's firm who taped the entire conference. Obtaining some or all of these may provide a near-term project for our Women's Law Caucus. They would provide a valuable reference library and a source of practical know-how for future projects.



## The Equal Rights Amendment

by Janet Stilwell

Workshops on the Federal Equal Rights Amendment at the 7th National conference of Women and the Law concentrated on three general areas: the status of ratification, political and educational action, and rescission.

Thirty-four<sup>1</sup> of the required thirty-eight states have already ratified the ERA and organized campaigns are being developed in the remaining sixteen states. Deadline for approval by at least three-fourths of the states was set at March 22, 1979 when the amendment was first introduced. Two states<sup>2</sup> have attempted to rescind their original ratification and several other state legislatures (including Maryland) have discussed such action either formally or informally. Ratification of the ERA is not anticipated in 1976, although action is still pending in Arizona,