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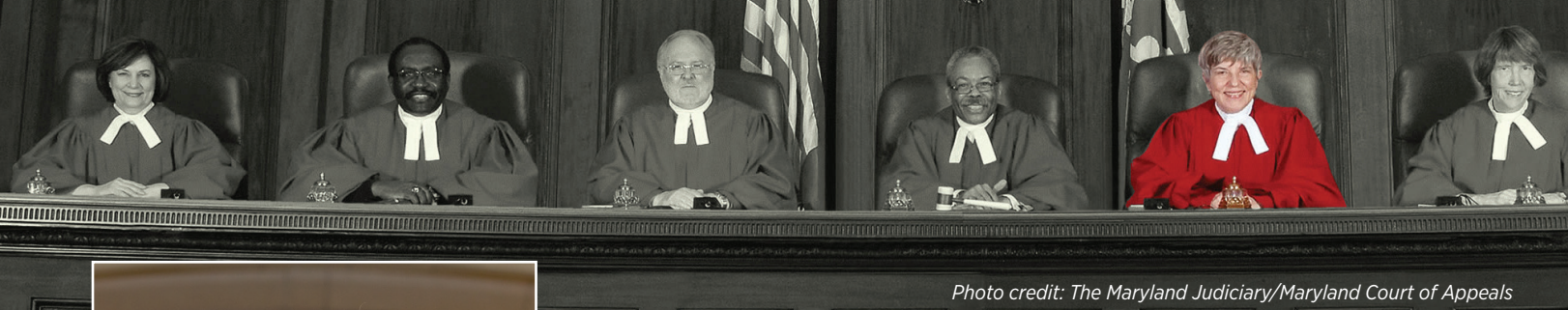


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JUDGE LYNNNE A. BATTAGLIA

By Christianna McCausland

GROWING UP NEAR BUFFALO, N.Y., LYNNNE BATTAGLIA '74 WAS RAISED TO BELIEVE SHE HAD THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS HER TWO BROTHERS. She expected to go to college and, while marriage and childrearing were valued, she anticipated a life of equal opportunity. So it was a revelation when her family moved to a small town, and everywhere she looked, the people in authority were all male. Upon closer observation, she discovered they were all lawyers.

“I was raised in a family that believed women were as capable as men, but the outside world didn’t seem to be embracing that,” she recalls. “I realized as a young woman that the way for me to even the playing field was to become a lawyer.”

Battaglia enrolled at Maryland Carey Law in 1971 and has been breaking barriers ever since, building an enviable career in public service, most recently as a judge on Maryland’s Court of Appeals, the state’s highest court, from which she has just retired. She has been a champion for professionalism and played a foundational role in the creation of the Maryland Professionalism Center, where she serves as chairperson. She’s also advocated for mentorship and supported the contributions of women to law, including as editor of and a contributor to *Finding Justice: A History of Women Lawyers in Maryland Since 1642*, a collection of essays by six female lawyers published in 2015.

Mentorship played a critical role in Battaglia’s own career. In law school, she was brought under the wing of Alice Brumbaugh, today a professor emerita at Maryland Carey Law. As a young attorney at the Baltimore firm Semmes, Bowen & Semmes, there were male attorneys who not only helped her “become the best lawyer I could be,” they broke new ground by supporting her legal contributions, even

as she went through her pregnancy and became a mother—practically unheard of at the time. A strong network of leading women has also been a constant source of support and job opportunities.

Throughout her career, Battaglia gravitated to public service. She left the firm to become an assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Maryland. Then, after a brief stint as a visiting professor at Maryland Carey Law and in private practice, she went to the U.S. Department of Justice as a senior trial attorney before becoming head of criminal investigations at the Maryland Attorney General’s office.

“Earning more money didn’t motivate me,” she explains. “What did motivate me was doing something that I felt could help my community.”

This was evident to Norman Smith ’85, a partner in the firm Nusinov Smith LLP, who first met Battaglia when he was a young assistant state’s attorney.

“Since we had a limited number of cases we could do as a white-collar

unit, [Battaglia] was very interested in choosing cases to prosecute that would have an impact,” Smith recalls. These cases included pursuing those who had fraudulently used minority business protections to their benefit. “She wanted the cases to act as a broader deterrent beyond the individual defendant.”

Smith describes Battaglia as dynamic and creative. “By the time I knew her, she had already achieved so much,” he continues. “But she was always pushing ahead. She never sat back and waited for things to come to her.”

It was not surprising then, that when the opportunity arose for Battaglia to depart from her legal comfort zone to become chief of staff to Maryland’s U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski, she took it.

“[Battaglia] was by my side every day, fighting for the day-to-day needs of Marylanders and the long-range needs of the nation,” says Mikulski. She adds that Battaglia has always served with integrity and skill, and that she has a keen legal mind.

“She’s stood against discrimination and stood up for the empowerment of women,” Mikulski continues. “Whether in Congress or in the courtroom, Judge Battaglia has spent her life protecting people’s rights, promoting equality, and improving the lives of so many in Maryland and around our country.”

Though Battaglia describes her two years as chief of staff as “a time of tremendous opportunities,” she eventually sought and gained a position as U.S. attorney

for Maryland. In 1993, Battaglia was nominated by President Clinton as the first female U.S. attorney, a post she held until 2001 when she left the federal system to accept an appointment on the Maryland Court of Appeals, the third woman to attain that position.

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“She was a great addition to the court, bringing a diverse background, a strong intellect, and a warm sense of collegiality,” says Raker.

Throughout her busy professional life, Battaglia has given back to her alma mater, serving on Maryland Carey Law’s Board of Visitors from 1993 until 2013, and often returning to teach and mentor students. In 1998 she received the school’s Distinguished Graduate Award.

“Judge Battaglia is the perfect role model for our students and a great example of the type of professional we train at Maryland Carey Law,” says Dean Donald B. Tobin. “She is passionate about professionalism, public service, and the rule of law. Maryland Carey Law is a better place because of her, and we are very lucky to have her as an alumna.”

“It was exhilarating and wonderful and daunting and challenging,” says Battaglia of her status as a pioneer. “It was exhilarating and wonderful because I got to claim my own path, I wasn’t bound by any notion of people who came before me... On the other hand, if you don’t have a lot of people before you, you have to deal with people’s unconscious notions and biases, things like ‘women shouldn’t be trying cases,’ or ‘women should be in the home.’”

Battaglia has been honored with many awards, but says she particularly values the H. Vernon Eney Award given by the Maryland Bar Foundation, which she received this June. Her colleague on the Maryland Court of Appeals, retired Judge Irma S. Raker, who presented the award, explains that Battaglia embodies the same principles that distinguished Eney’s career: excellence in the law, bar leadership, community leadership, and an enormous capacity for work.

Though retired, Battaglia is hardly slowing. She’s obtained recall status and will continue to hear cases. She’s also returning to school to pursue a degree in mental health counseling. Her long and storied career is not at an end, only entering a new chapter, but she has already written the epilogue.

“My legacy, to me, is in the generations of lawyers I’ve been able to interact with,” she states. “I’m most proud of my opportunity to be a part of their personal and professional development.”