

2000 Colorado Gender & Justice Annual Report

Introduction

It was 10 years ago that the first Gender & Justice in the Colorado Courts Report was published which made recommendations on specific areas for the courts to address based on an assessment of the current conditions. In 1994, Chief Justice Luis D. Rovira established the Gender & Justice Committee to consider and implement the recommendations offered in the 1990 report. Four of the seven original committee members are still part of the Judicial Branch and actively work towards furthering the charge of this committee.

The work of the committee in the year 2000 focused on organizing an event to review the original charge established 10 years ago, celebrate accomplishments and to renew and recommit our efforts toward meeting the challenges of ensuring fairness and justice in all aspects of our courts. All subcommittees worked to make this event a success.

Members of the 2000 Gender & Justice Executive Committee

Chief Justice Mary J. Mullarkey
Colorado Supreme Court

James G. Benway
Director, Human Resources

Joseph B. Dischinger
Attorney

Catherine A. Lemon
Attorney

Judge T. Peter Craven
District Judge, 9th Judicial District

Terri Morrison
Attorney, SCAO Legal Counsel

Lisa Hamilton-Fieldman
Magistrate, 20th Judicial District

Rep. Jennifer Veiga
Colorado State Legislator

Staff Liaison

Merrill T. Linton
Judicial Education Administrator

Review, Renew & Recommit

On December 8, 2000 approximately 175 people, with varying perspectives on gender and fairness issues in the Colorado courts, gathered at the Houston Fine Arts Center on the DU campus. The purpose was to review accomplishments made in the past ten years to address gender bias in the Colorado courts, to share ideas about what more we should be doing, and to renew and recommit efforts to achieve gender justice. The event was open to anyone that wanted to share his or her views. The agenda is located in Appendix A.

Highlights included the report titled "Taking Stock: Gender & Justice." A consultant, Andrea Williams, was asked to interview selected individual people whose work and experience interacted with the Colorado Judicial System. The focus of the interviews was twofold: (1) to document the improvements that have occurred relating to gender issues in the Colorado Judicial System in the past decade and (2) to identify areas in which the Committee might focus its interest and future work. This report is located in Appendix B.

There were a number of general conclusions from this process. The interviews were informative and, without exception, portrayed issues of gender in a better and more hopeful light than the 1990 study. There has been significant improvement in the areas examined, as a result of a change in societal values, the Supreme Court's initiatives, and the inventive programs of a number of non-governmental organizations. In addition, those involved are able to articulate clearly what remains to be done.

The report summarizes the improvements and remaining issues noted by the interviewees in the following areas:

Domestic Relations

Domestic Violence

Courtroom Environment

Court Administration

- General
- Women as Probation Officers
- Women Offenders
- Judicial Nominating and Performance Review Commissions

Another highlight at this event was a video presentation titled "It's a Long Way from 'Firsts' to Finished: A History of Women in the Law in Colorado." The video, narrated by University of Colorado Professor Patricia Limerick, outlined accomplishments over the last ten years. The Judicial Selection and Evaluation Subcommittee members selected photos, did historical research, helped write and proof text, reviewed video clip selection, and critiqued drafts of the project, which ultimately resulted in the 24 minute video and narrative. The video has since been presented at the Colorado Women's Bar Association convention and will be presented again at the Colorado Bar Association convention in September 2001.

Finally, all participants were encouraged to participate in a session titled “Speak Out” on the future focus of the Gender & Justice Committee for the Colorado courts. Members of the Gender & Justice Executive Committee served as panel members answering questions. The Branch wanted to know what the court stakeholders thought should be the priorities and areas of focus for the coming years. The majority of the comments could be categorized into Domestic Relations, Domestic Violence, Courtroom Environment and Court Administration. These areas were consistent with the areas noted by the consultant in the interview process previously mentioned. The full report of public comment is located in Appendix C.

Other Accomplishments in 2000

Employee Fairness Issues

During the past year, the Gender & Justice Employee Branch Issues Subcommittee changed its name to the Fairness Committee. The name change reflects the broader charge of this committee. The Fairness Subcommittee will deal with issues of fairness related to all kinds of discrimination, expanding its past role that focused on gender issues within the Judicial Branch. To accomplish this mission, new members were added to the committee.

The Fairness Committee has been working on several projects: Creation of a new EEO/Diversity Program for the Judicial Branch, incorporating legal requirements for fairness in hiring, promotion, and all other aspects of employment, as well as building a diverse workforce that values the varied backgrounds of our employees, and uses the strengths of those backgrounds within our organization. The Committee has also be working on modifications to the Sexual Harassment Policy of the Branch to make it a more inclusive Anti-Harassment Policy that covers all types of racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination. The Policy will be reviewed by the Colorado Supreme Court and considered for adoption.

Service to the Public Committee

The Service to the Public Committee has embarked on a new effort to secure state funding for staffed court childcare centers. It has also spun off a new committee, the Research Committee.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The Gender & Justice Executive Committee met several times to review the comments from the Review, Renew & Recommit event and incorporate them into the priorities for the future.

Employee Fairness Issues

The committee is researching options for training that more accurately reflects the change to the new Harassment policy. Current research shows that there is not a lot of “good” material prepared on this broader area.

An EEO/Diversity survey will be sent to employees. The purpose of the survey is to get the pulse of the employees on how we are currently doing in this area and to provide feedback on what more we should be doing in the area of diversity in the Branch.

Judicial Selection & Retention

The committee will develop a questionnaire to survey potential women applicants to help ascertain why they may not be applying for or what barriers may exist when applying for judicial officer openings. This will be as widely distributed as possible. [Ex. CWBA, CBA and minority Bar Associations] Members will also review the pool of applicants from 2000-2001 openings and are considering contacting them for feedback.

Another goal will be to form stronger relationships with the groups like the CWBA that offer programs such as “Getting Benched,” by providing judges and materials that can more accurately reflect the day to day job of judge.

Service to the Public

The committee will work with the CBA Judiciary Section on developing ideas for statewide funding for childcare staff. The goal is to draft legislation that will create a state supported funding source for childcare staff.

Research

This new committee ‘s purpose is not only to assist other subcommittees, but to also be proactive in locating Gender & Justice initiatives and ideas. The goal is to create and find resources that will further the cause of the Colorado Gender & Justice efforts.

Probation

This committee will focus on the issues generated from the Review, Renew & Recommit event and establish priorities for the year.

Appendix A: Agenda

Gender & Justice in the Colorado Courts Review, Renew & Recommit

Friday, December 8, 2000

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Houston Fine Arts Center

7111 Montview Boulevard, Denver, CO

Welcome and Introductions: State Senator Michael F. Feeley

Opening Remarks: Chief Justice Jean Hofer Toal
Supreme Court of South Carolina

How It All Began: Justice Rebecca Love Kourlis

"Taking Stock": Reports from

- Probation Issues Subcommittee
- Service to the Public Subcommittee

Historical Highlights: A Video Presentation

Featuring Professor Patricia Limerick, University of Colorado

"Taking Stock": Reports from

- Judicial Selection & Evaluation Subcommittee
- Judicial Branch Issues Subcommittee

BREAK

Looking Toward the Future: Chief Justice Mary J. Mullarkey

"Speak Out!" on the Future Focus of Gender & Justice
Moderated by State Senator Michael F. Feeley

Closing: Chief Justice Mary J. Mullarkey

**Please join us for a reception in the Lobby
immediately following the program.**

Appendix B: “Taking Stock: Gender & Justice.”

Taking Stock: Gender & Justice

Prepared for the Colorado Supreme Court’s Gender & Justice Committee

By Andrea Williams
November 2000

Introduction

In 1990, under the leadership of then Chief Justice Joseph R. Quinn, a Gender & Justice Task Force undertook an extensive study of issues relating to gender bias in the Colorado Judicial System. With the completion of 10 years of work on these initiatives, the Committee has decided to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments relating to gender and justice in the Colorado Judicial System, in particular the achievements directly related to its efforts.

This reporter was asked to interview selected individuals people whose work and experience interacted with the Colorado Judicial System. The focus of the interviews was twofold: (1) to document the improvements that have occurred relating to gender issues in the Colorado Judicial System in the past decade and (2) to identify areas in which the Committee might focus its interest and future work.

General Conclusion

These interviews were informative and, without exception, portrayed issues of gender in a better and more hopeful light than the 1990 study. There has been significant improvement in the areas examined, as a result of a change in societal values, the Supreme Court’s initiatives, and the inventive programs of a number of non-governmental organizations. In addition, those involved are able to articulate clearly what remains to be done.

This report summarizes the improvements and remaining issues noted by the interviewees in the following areas:

Domestic Relations

Domestic Violence

Courtroom Environment

Court Administration

- General
- Women as Probation Officers
- Women Offenders
- Judicial Nominating and Performance Review Commissions

Domestic Relations

Improvements

- The Colorado Legislature amended the domestic relations statutes to substitute "parental responsibility" for child custody and "parenting time" for visitation, both to emphasize that children are not possessions and that both parents are more responsible for parenting their offspring.
- The child’s interest is more clearly central in domestic relations proceedings.
- In mediation, the child issues are usually mediated first.
- Child support is based on a formula.
- Some courts, notably Judge Randi Polidori in Jefferson County, have instituted programs for children of divorce. Others provide information and education to support the parents. For example, in Denver District Court, there is a mandatory program called Parenting After Divorce for parents. Similar programs exist in Arapahoe County and the Sixth Judicial District.
- More information is available to enable fairer property settlement decisions.
- The family law bar has become highly sophisticated in issues relating to property division.
- A Supreme Court Committee has been working with the practicing bar to revise the financial affidavit.

- Child care centers in some courthouses have enabled parents, but especially women, to focus on their court hearings while knowing that their children are being appropriately cared for.
- Fast-track programs to expedite divorce proceedings and make them less adversarial are being piloted in three courtrooms in Denver District Court, one in El Paso County District Court, and one is being initiated in Arapahoe County District Court.
- The purpose is to make the resolution of family law disputes less adversarial, have people take responsibility for their divorces, and avoid contested final orders hearings.
- The pilots make third party resources available early in the court process to diffuse disputes.
- The Denver and Arapahoe pilots follow this model:
 - An initial informal status conference is held with the Judge within 30 days after filing where the issues are focused and deadlines set
 - No motions may be filed without court permission
 - No discovery is allowed without court permission
 - One expert testifies per issue, e.g., the parties must agree on an expert on business valuation, or the court appoints an expert
 - Follow up conferences are scheduled with the Judge or with a case manager
 - If a problem arises, attorneys or litigants contact the court and have a conference, often within 24 hours
- The El Paso model, named Divorce with Dignity, is similar in concept but allows litigants to opt out.
- Arapahoe County mandates mediation in all domestic relations proceedings.
- Mediators are stationed at the courthouse.
- Mediation services are offered on a sliding fee scale.
- Mediation gives people communication skills to use in resolving the current dispute and for use in the longer term if there are children.
- Judges are now accepting that a large percent of the divorce cases are pro se, or parties have part-time representation and adjusting to this difference. Their decisions are generally viewed as fair.

Remaining Issues

- Awarding of maintenance remains uncertain and, in some cases, unfair.
- There is no formula for awarding maintenance, as there is in child support, and the results are unpredictable.
- Assisting women in the practical evaluation of assets is needed.
- In many settlements, women receive the house in the property division, but have no income generating property (or the ability to generate sufficient income) to maintain the house payments, etc. and have to sell the house.
- Pro se litigants don't know how to calculate asset value and need resources to assist them in deciding how to deal with the assets, particularly their house.
- A large portion of litigants in divorce proceedings are not represented by counsel.
- Some want an amicable resolution and believe eliminating lawyers will enable them to do so and others cannot afford a lawyer.
- Handling pro se divorce proceedings requires a certain judicial temperament and personality.
- Where litigants are unrepresented, they are less likely to have the option of mediation or sophisticated financial analysis and planning or the other recent advances in the system.
- A program is needed on the financial aspects of divorce, not just for women who are unrepresented, although they would benefit greatly from it.
- The child support guidelines encourage bargaining about the arrangements relating to children of the marriage.
- Child support is tied to overnights.
- If the parent with the non-primary parenting responsibility takes the child for more nights, s/he reduces her/his financial child support obligation.
- Consequently, for example, a mother will refuse the father's request for additional parenting time so her child support payment will not be reduced.
- Men often balk at the payment suggested by the child support guidelines, and women often acquiesce to a lower payment.

- Continue and expand the educational programs for litigants, lawyers, and judges.
- Where the parties present an agreed property settlement, women often give up more than is equitable.
- Many women are not empowered to stand up for what they are entitled to and what is appropriate given their contribution to the marriage.
- Although judges recognize that women seem willing to take less than a fair share, they rarely challenge these settlements, taking the approach "they know better than I do."
- Family issues are placing a tremendous burden on the resources of the courts. The courts are now helping families through a multitude of issues. More support is needed from the legislature.
- More child care centers are needed.

Domestic Violence

Improvements

- In 1997, Project Safeguard, which provides pro bono representation of abused women and offers annual training about issues relating to domestic violence, started a Courtwatch program in Denver.
- The judges have been receptive to Courtwatch's feedback which addresses both general trends and specific closed cases. Courtwatch presents "behind the scenes" information often demonstrating that the victim's situation had not been fully disclosed in court.
- Some districts have fast-track programs for criminal cases involving domestic violence in which the DA will bring a complainant with a charge of domestic abuse into the office within a day of filing for advice about community resources and explain the court process.
- Victim advocates are available in the major metropolitan courts and victim service coordinators are assigned to all probation departments.
- Judicial training has helped alert judges to the unique issues which arise in cases of domestic abuse, e.g., judges understand why a witness may be antagonistic or recant her testimony.
- Prosecutors continue to prosecute charges of domestic violence even if the victim does not wish to prosecute, so long as there is sufficient evidence to present in court.
- Adams County and Weld County are each experimenting with a combined family court.
- A dependency and neglect case triggers a background check.
- If there are other pending cases involving that family, e.g., criminal or divorce, they will be consolidated under one judge
- This concept is effective for families, as the issues and problems are interrelated and this creates a plan to address them.

Remaining Issues

- More judicial training is needed.
- Mandatory training is recommended as the same judges attend the training on domestic violence, while others are not being apprised of critical issues.
- Judicial conduct that is acceptable or appropriate in routine cases can have serious consequences in cases involving domestic violence.
- A tendency to blame victims continues. The acts of violence may be minimized in their importance and impact by judges or juries. Abusers need to be held accountable.
- Victims, like defendants, have rights. Some judges are not familiar with the rights of the victim.
- Actions taken by victims of abuse in divorce proceedings are misunderstood.
- Partnerships with the Colorado Bar Association Family Violence Program could be expanded to offer this training.
- The change in nomenclature has proved confusing for law enforcement purposes.
- A dissolution decree may award primary responsibility to the mother and parenting time to the father.
- When the police are asked to enforce the court order, e.g., return the children to the mother, they have to parse through a nine-page order trying to determine who has the right to the child.
- More resources are need for women seeking representation and advice.
- Judges want the women to have legal representation, but there is little pro bono representation and the women often cannot afford to hire an attorney. If anyone is represented, it is usually the alleged perpetrator.

- Fast-track programs in criminal cases involving domestic violence may not be as common in Southern and Western Colorado.
- Training for Guardians ad litem is needed. Judges rely on their recommendations and they often are not familiar with the underlying dynamics of domestic violence.
- Training for civil attorneys is needed. Criminal attorneys generally understand the issues arising from a family violence situation, but civil attorneys are less aware of these instances, don't recognize the signs, and don't know how to handle the situations. Mandatory training as part of the CLE requirement was suggested.
- Case management systems, such as the combined family court now being implemented Adams and Weld Counties are needed to coordinate the treatment of families in trouble.
- The various educational efforts relating to domestic violence can be better coordinated.
- Information about domestic violence, including the many community resources to address it, could be circulated in newsletters and placed on Web sites.

Courtroom Environment

Improvements

- The male lawyers coming on the bench now have worked with women as peers and gender bias is no longer common in the courtroom.
- Newer judges are more at ease with women lawyers.
- Many feel female lawyers are strong and professional and do not suffer from discrimination or mistreatment.
- If a lawyer mistreats, condescends to, or shows disrespect to a woman in the courtroom, whether she is a lawyer, judicial department employee or a witness, the court quickly intervenes and stops the offending conduct.
- There is better treatment of lawyers in the court.
- One can complain and be heard.
- Mistreatment of female probation officers and of female offenders in court no longer occurs.
- Judges treat jurors with respect and patience, regardless of gender.
- There are more women judges now at the Appellate level. The three female justices on the Supreme Court have actively addressed issues relating to women.
- Women lawyers support each other, especially through the Colorado Women's Bar Association, which functions as a sounding board, especially at its annual convention.

Remaining Issues

- Women witnesses continue to be mistreated by lawyers outside of the court setting, e.g., a female doctor whose deposition date was changed three times in violation of the interprofessional code.
- Women experts are held to a higher standard or pushed more regarding their credentials. There are also more objections to their testimony as being speculative or too emotional.
- Certain members of the bar test women on the bench, e.g. by showing up late or continuing to be argumentative when asked to stop. If the judge responds firmly, this conduct ceases. Others acknowledge this behavior, but suggest that it is directed to new judges, regardless of gender.
- Women lawyers continue to need mentors.
- The original ties between the Colorado Women's Bar Association and female judges have dissipated.
- When women lawyers take the bench, some feel it inappropriate for them to continue their membership in the Colorado Women's Bar Association.

Court Administration

Improvements — General

- In 1995, the Colorado Judicial Department adopted a model hiring program.
- It examines an applicant's credentials, qualifications, and skills and evaluates them according to criteria established before soliciting any recruits.
- In the interview, the applicant answers questions about what s/he has done in past situations relevant to the open position.
- Similar modifications have been made in the promotion process.
- There are more women in positions of responsibility, such as in the positions of district administrator and division director.

- A sexual harassment policy was adopted and supported by extensive training.
- Employees describe the policy and the training as good and taken seriously.
- Sexual harassment training is presented to the judges.
- Conscious attention is being paid to the use of gender neutral language.
 - Forms are reviewed for appropriateness by the Judicial Branch subcommittee.
 - A brochure was prepared and circulated relating to gender neutral language.
 - Use of gender neutral language is part of the new judges' orientation.
- A supervisors' manual addressing issues of nonviolence in the workplace was prepared in 1999.
- The Family and Medical Leave Program affords Judicial Branch employees support and flexibility when they have a family.
- Flex time is available to employees at the appellate level.

Remaining Issues — General

- The number of female Judicial Branch employees is increasing dramatically.
 - The Judicial Branch salaries need to be more competitive or the inequity will become a gender issue.
 - Court staffs are inadequately paid.
- More managerial training is needed.
 - Training is required in communication, motivation, and delegation.
 - Training in mediation and the implementation of a mediation program is also recommended.
 - Supervisors need to develop as future leaders — able to develop a vision, enroll others in it, and plan strategically.
- Demand is rising for lifestyle-friendly work policies and workplaces – such as reduced hours, telecommuting, flexplace, and flextime.
 - A written policy is being considered but has not been promulgated.
 - There are more requests for reduced work schedules than can be accommodated in some offices. These requests come from women.
 - Requests are considered in areas where there is limited public interaction, few deadlines, and little direct interaction with the court.
- Reinforcement of work environment policies is needed.
 - There has been no training related to the nonviolent workplace policy and it is needed.
 - Reinforcing training on the sexual harassment policy would remind personnel and raise awareness.
- A peer review system is recommended.
- Career paths in the Judicial Branch are traditional and hierarchical. Various experiences can qualify a person for advancement, so the Department could begin looking at career advancement in more creative ways.

Improvements— Women as Probation Officers

- The number of women professionals in local Probation Departments has increased.
 - More females have been hired as probation officers.
 - There are more female Chief Probation Officers, although still a minority of the 22 judicial districts.
- Women now participate fully in the Probation Officer specialty tracks.
- The Probation Departments have specialty units focused on categories of offenders, e.g., people convicted of drug offences, sex offences, and domestic violence, and female offenders.
 - These units are now as open to women and, in some districts or units, there are more women than men.
 - Thinking has shifted about what women officers can do. Previously, it was considered a safety risk to the female officers to send two women out alone at night. Now trained women teams are assigned these responsibilities.
- In at least one district, the probation department works with female officers who want flex schedules.
- The Judicial Department has adopted a training program called Probation Officers Career Training Program (POCTP)

- There are five tracks:
 - Training (learning to become a trainer)
 - Leadership
 - Advanced training
 - Apprenticeship
 - Management
- The Apprenticeship Track is the institutional embodiment of the Partnerships for Success mentoring program piloted by the Probation Subcommittee of the Gender & Justice Committee in 1997.
- The apprenticeship program is geared to officers preparing for a promotion or advancement. This program is open to men and women (as was the Probation Subcommittee's mentoring program).

Remaining Issues—Women as Probation Officers

- Women at the supervisory level may not have increased in proportion to the growth in the number of female officers and female Chief Probation Officers. Statistics should be reviewed and, if they confirm the problem at the supervisory level, action needs to be taken.
- The availability of flex schedules in many probation offices is limited. Women are given the choice of coming back full-time from maternity leave or leaving the department.
 - Statewide training is needed to demonstrate
 - Flex schedules can work
 - Having flex schedules increases morale in the department
- General support for the apprenticeship program is needed.
- Some people feel that they should not utilize work time for the apprenticeship conferences rather than viewing it as a form of training which will make better officers.
- Its implementation is wholly decentralized without collection of statewide statistics or experience.

Improvements— Women Offenders

- There are Female Offender Programs for adults in four districts.
- In each district, there are a number of officers who carry a caseload exclusively of women offenders. Generally, this caseload is smaller than the typical caseload to allow for more intensive service.
- The Female Offender Program is limited to substance-abusing female offenders.
 - Generally, the focus is more holistic, realizing that their crimes tend to be relationship-based, and that these offenders need more logistical support to succeed. Without these services, they fail at a higher rate than the male population.
- In some metro and suburban districts, female officers have created a successful female juvenile program. The officers
 - mentored themselves,
 - put a curriculum together, and
 - obtained the services of a gender consultant
- All probation departments have victims services coordinators (often funded through a Victims Law Enforcement Grant). There is a trained person to assist victims, more of whom are female than male.

Remaining Issues— Women Offenders

- The female juvenile program needs statewide funding and implementation.
- Community corrections could develop female-specific programs using some of the learnings of the female offender programs. Some community correction facilities take only men. The number of females in the correction system has been increasing and there are insufficient places for them in community correction facilities.

Improvements— Judicial Nominating and Performance Review Commissions

- Training addressing gender stereotypes is presented to the judicial nominating commissions.
- The judicial nominating process gives women "a fair shake." Nothing in the process is focused overtly on gender.
- While some of the questionnaires reviewed in the performance review process may show bias, the commission deals appropriately with those comments.
- The Colorado Women's Bar Association

- circulates notices of judicial vacancies and engages in other efforts to encourage women to apply for judicial vacancies, especially in outlying areas
- supports female nominees
- seeks to have women appointed to judicial nominating commissions
- conducts training on how to get on and be on the bench in a program called "Getting Benched."
- Women are encouraged by male colleagues and peers to apply for judgeships.

Remaining Issues— Judicial Nominating and Performance Review Commissions

- There has been little improvement in the number of women on the trial bench.
 - One interviewee suggested only 27% of judicial applicants are female.
 - Some short lists are all male.
 - The traditional standard used to evaluate women judicial candidates disadvantages them if their experience is non-traditional.
- As part of the review process of the judges, staff attorneys are to be interviewed in a 360° process, but this phase has not been implemented.
- Lifestyle issues, such as job-sharing, need to be considered as they apply to judges. Requiring a standard, full-time work arrangement may be excluding qualified and interested candidates.
- Additional education is needed of performance review commissions relating to the evaluation of women. Some female judges and lawyers feel
 - gender plays a role in their evaluations by performance review commissions
 - female and male judges are evaluated differently for demeanor
 - women are negatively evaluated for behavior that would be approved or overlooked from a male judge.

Limitations of This Study

This interview process garnered valuable information about many areas of interest to the Gender & Justice Committee. In utilizing the information in this report, certain limitations of the study should be kept in mind.

- The reporter conducted a small number of interviews. Subject and expertise of the witnesses overlapped, so particularly in the areas of domestic relations, domestic violence, and probation, considerable but not exhaustive information was collected. If further investigation is to be undertaken, this reporter suggests that it particularly focus on:
 - Female judges
 - Recent female law graduates with litigation practices
 - This study touched only people who live on Colorado's Front Range – from Pueblo to metro Denver. A number of interviewees speculated that the conditions they saw and commented on might be representative of metropolitan areas, but not reflect the practices, attitudes, and programs. This reporter strongly recommends that any further data collection include a strong sampling from non-major metropolitan areas.
 - This study focused on issues regarding women. At least one interviewee strongly suggested that there be a comparable focus on minorities in the bar, that efforts should be undertaken to encourage minorities to enter and stay in the legal profession. Another raised the issue of lack of sufficient interpreters for non-English speaking litigants and witnesses.

Appendix C: “Speak Out” Comments

Comments from Gender & Justice in the Colorado Courts Review, Renew and Recommit “Speak Out” Friday, December 8, 2000

Domestic Relations

- Provide more support for Father’s rights

Domestic Violence

- The Judicial Department needs to place more emphasis on resources and support for victims of domestic violence
- Increase training for judges on the psychological aspects of Domestic Violence
- Update the current DV Benchbook and provide it to all judges, regardless if they have attended the training or not.
- Sentencing for DV offenders is not consistent. There are differences between counties and Judicial Districts. Judges are not paying attention to new legislation (C.R.S. 18-6-801(7)), which states that after a third offense, the next offense may be treated as a Class V felony.
- Communication between courts (Municipal to County, County to District) and between Judicial Districts is poor. Therefore, a DV offender may have several cases pending in different courts but each one is treated as though it is the first/only offense.

Courtroom Environment

- Ray Micklewright (303-355-2999) has mentoring opportunities and financial support available for female attorneys in a mentoring program for providing criminal defense in federal court. Anyone interested in this may call him.

Court Administration-General

- The Judicial Department needs to place more emphasis on fair and just wages for Clerks and Secretaries employed in our Judicial System

Women as Probation Officers

- Thirty percent of Chief Probation Officer’s are women. However, the number of women supervisors is down leaving less of a pool to draw from. Encourage the development of more women Probation Supervisors.

Women Offenders

- The number of females (adult and juvenile) being incarcerated is on the rise. Encourage more support statewide to provide gender specific efforts for this group.
- The Judicial Department needs to place more emphasis on statewide programs for the Juvenile female offender population

Judicial Nominating and Performance Review Commissions

- Encourage and support women through the application and appointment process for judgeships

- Encourage more women to participate on the Nominating Commissions

Miscellaneous Comments

- Take a broader look at issues by viewing them through work or societal issues, not just as women issues
- Keep in mind the importance of “canvassing” the entire state when seeking input, not just the metro Denver area
- Support statewide funding for child care issues in courthouses
- Combining the Gender and Justice Commission with the Multi-Cultural Commission is a good idea