



OHIO WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Our purpose is to promote the leadership, advancement and interests of women attorneys through professional education, networking and the exchange of ideas between our members, local bar associations, business and the community.

Stronger by Association



Ohio Women's Bar Association (OWBA) President Jennifer Breech Rhoads being sworn-in by Justice Yvette McGee Brown at the 2011 OWBA Women's Forum and Annual Meeting, Celebrating 20 Years, Inspiring 20 More. Picture taken by Erica Hardesty of e hardesty photography

The following is an excerpt from a speech given at the 2011 OWBA's Women's Forum & Annual Meeting by incoming president Jennifer Breech Rhoads.

Today most associations are in a race for relevance. The track is fast and associations are at risk of falling seriously behind or even dropping out completely. Increased competition, shrinking revenue sources, technology, higher member expectations and changing markets are all significant and permanent changes to the fundamental association structure.

While most associations just soldier on—governing and communicating the same way, and delivering the same services—**OWBA is growing.**

Under the leadership of my predecessors, association membership has in-

creased, and increased dramatically, in a few short years. Under Valoria Hoover's leadership alone, OWBA membership has increased by nearly 60 percent—60 percent growth in membership in one year. Now that is truly remarkable. In 1991, the association's three founders, along with 26 other dynamic women lawyers, formed the Ohio Women's Bar Association. Today, the OWBA proudly serves more than 500 women lawyers across Ohio.

Visit the newly designed website www.owba.org. Let us know what you think.

Why is the OWBA growing while other professional associations struggle to survive? The answer is simple. The Ohio Women's Bar Association remains as relevant today as it was in 1991.

We all know the number of women en-

tering law school has grown so that women now account for almost half of law school graduates. Yet the line tracking women's share of leadership roles follows a straighter downward path as the potential to assume a leadership role rises.

Take for example, *The White House Project Report: Benchmarking Women's Leadership*, issued in late 2009. The White House Project surveyed the current state of women's leadership in 10 different fields—from military to journalism, to business and politics—to establish an understanding of where women are and to learn where we need to go from here.

According to The White House Project, at the very top of the legal sector, women have made no progress at all in 15 years.

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