

Susan Hammer, 1987-88

Staff, facilities

DellAnne McGregor was Executive Director. We had one other staff person who ran a little employment agency for secretarial services. We were located in new space on 711 SW Alder, just west of Broadway.

Board members

Jerry LaBarre, Mike Haglund, Wally Sweek, Kris LaMar. Can't recall women or minorities, other than Kris and myself.



Historical events

- I was the first woman president of the MBA. I was told during the previous 80 years or so, women were allowed to be secretary of the MBA but no one progressed beyond that point.
- The ABA president came to Portland in about 1987 and held one meeting with lawyers at the then exclusively male Arlington Club in Portland. Ellen Rosenblum and I objected but neither the ABA President nor his local host (who shall remain unnamed) saw anything wrong with a meeting place that excluded women. We circulated a petition urging that the meeting be moved to a location where all members of the MBA could attend. The Oregonian picked up the story and ran it as a news article, an editorial and in Jonathan Nicholas' column. The meeting place didn't change but we felt vindicated. We also had a lot of fun with it!
- In the mid-80's, I became committed to advancing alternatives to litigation. During the time I was on the board, the MBA took up the issue. We formed a committee, chaired by Elaine Hallmark, put together a directory of ADR services and looked closely at how to integrate ADR into our practice and into the court system. As I recall, at this time, neither the OSB nor the ABA were doing anything with ADR. The MBA was out in front.
- During my term, the MBA formed a committee looking at the issues of balancing family and career. This was a first; a response to the growing number of women practicing law and dealing with part-time work issues, parental leave (before the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1992) and discrimination in law firms.

Community service

The flagship community service programs during my era were the Volunteer Lawyer Program and Community Law Week.

Proudest moment

After 80 years, the MBA finally broke the gender barrier.

Then versus now

Then, smaller operation; fewer services to lawyers