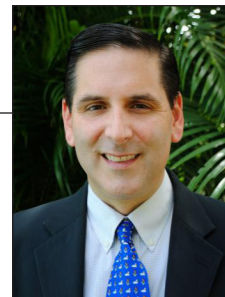


## President's Message

by Hon. Gustavo A. Gelpí Jr.



# First Hispanic Woman Chief Judge

**On July 11, the Federal Bar Association will hold its** first Women in the Law Conference in Washington, D.C. This event, I'm very proud to say, is the first of its kind in the nation. It is also a tribute to women pioneers in the law such as Arabella Mansfield, the first woman lawyer in the United States admitted to practice in Iowa in 1869, and Charlotte E. Ray, the first African-American woman to receive a law degree and be admitted to the D.C. Bar in 1872. Thousands of woman have up to the present followed their footsteps, facing numerous obstacles and challenges, such as being stereotyped and discriminated, simply because of their gender.

In 1950, Burnita Shelton Matthews became the first female U.S. district judge in D.C. Three decades later, Sandra Day O'Connor became the first female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Her path to the Court is an amazing one—despite her academic achievement at Stanford University Law School, Justice O'Connor was unable to find employment at a law firm, only being offered a secretarial job in the same era Judge Shelton Matthews became a federal judge. My esteemed colleague in the District of Puerto Rico, Carmen Consuelo Cerezo, also paved the way as the first Hispanic woman to join the nation's federal bench in 1980 and in 1993 as the first Hispanic woman chief judge.

Presently, the percentage of women law students across the United States is higher than that of men. Women in all fields of the law, and both in the private and public sectors, have achieved great success. In our nation's courtrooms on a daily basis, we see many women on the bench, as prosecutors and defense attorneys, as well as representing private and government litigants. These women are also uniquely diverse among themselves. Their important contributions to the rule of law are countless.

This issue of *The Federal Lawyer* coincides with the Women in the Law Conference. It features extraordinary articles about how women have impacted the law, as well as several profiles of female judges. The conference will in turn feature vibrant and dynamic discussions of the unique challenges and successes of women in the law and leadership from a number of perspectives. The speakers include judges, academics, and thought leaders from corporate, nonprofit, government, and law firm backgrounds. The two keynote speakers will be the Hon. Patricia A. Millett, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, and the Hon. Beverly McLachlin, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.

I hope that you truly enjoy this very special issue! ☺

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Gelpí Jr.', written in a cursive style.



## Foundation of the FBA Memorials and Remembrances Gift Program

With a tax-deductible gift to the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association (FBA), members of the legal profession, the public, business organizations, charitable trusts, or other foundations may create a memorial to a deceased person. Gifts may also be made in honor of someone, an anniversary, birthday, or any other occasion. Your gift helps fund educational and charitable programs that promote public understanding of the law and enhance the cause of justice. Learn more and donate at [www.fedbar.org/Foundation/Help-Support-the-Foundation.aspx](http://www.fedbar.org/Foundation/Help-Support-the-Foundation.aspx).