

## LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

### High Lights – 25 Year History

#### 1981

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Board of Directors votes at the June Convention in Boston, MA to for the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund as a two-year pilot program to provide moral and financial support to female plaintiffs in higher education sex discrimination cases. LAF national office staff is an extension of the Public Policy department at AAUW.

#### 1983

AAUW directs the Board of Directors to establish a permanent Legal Advocacy Fund. To date, LAF has contributed \$8,500 to the Cornell 11 ([Zahorik, et al. v. Cornell University](#)) and has granted support status to two additional cases: [Penk, et al. v. Oregon State Board of Higher Education](#) and [Haffer v. Temple University](#).

#### 1991

With a generous contribution from LAF-supported plaintiff Colleen Roberts ([Roberts v. College of the Desert](#)), the LAF Board of Directors began making grants to fund travel for LAF plaintiffs to speak at state and regional AAUW meetings. Based on the enthusiastic response, LAF continues to make a limited number of Plaintiff Travel Grants each year.

#### 1992

LAF supported its first case - [Lever v. Northwestern University, et al.](#) - to go to the Supreme Court, a case based on sex discrimination and denial of tenure in violation of [Title VII of the Civil Right Act of 1964](#).

#### 1994

[LAF Update](#) begins as a single page article in the winter issue of [AAUW Outlook](#).

#### 1997

LAF recognizes Lani Guinier as its first [Speaking Out for Justice](#) honoree at the AAUW June Convention in Los Angeles, CA. Lani Guinier's 1993 nomination as assistant attorney general for civil rights in the U.S. Department of Justice was withdrawn in a climate of intense controversy. Guinier argued that the existing legal education program in our country serves neither the needs of current students nor the legal profession. LAF continues to present this award biennially during the AAUW Convention to those who have made a significant contribution to the betterment and well-being of women and whose focus of achievement agrees with the AAUW mission and that of LAF.

#### 1997

LAF makes headlines with [Brzonkala v. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, et al.](#), a landmark rape case that went to the Supreme Court. Brzonkala sued for sexual harassment under Title IX and also for disparate treatment.

#### 2000

LAF releases [A License for Bias: Sex Discrimination, Schools and Title IX](#), a publication issued to dispel the belief that Title IX is a sports equity law and to determine the effectiveness of the current legislation.

#### 2004

[Network News](#), an online publication for LAF network attorneys and experts providing case updates and related information is launched.

#### 2004

[Tenure Denied: Cases of Sex Discrimination in Academia](#) is released, a research report published jointly with LAF and the AAUW Educational Foundation.

#### 2005

LAF supports its 100th case providing over \$1.3 million in funding for its plaintiffs.

#### 2005

LAF supports its first male case to go to the Supreme Court – [Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education](#), a case based on sex discrimination and retaliation under Title IX.

#### 2007

LAF supported plaintiff, Dr. Janet Conney is awarded \$4 million from her sex discrimination suit against the Regents of the University of California. Conney had sued the university, along with three former male colleagues, for sexual harassment, retaliation, and pay inequity.

For additional information see [www.aauw.org/Advocacy](http://www.aauw.org/Advocacy)