

Jennifer Robbins Fund Established To Benefit Charitable And Educational Projects

With recent changes in tax law limiting the availability of deductions for business expenses, the Colorado Women's Bar Association has developed a new strategy to maximize the benefit of contributions for its charitable and educational purposes. In 1987-1988 fundraising for legal services projects was done under the auspices of the Jennifer Robbins Fund, the charitable arm of the CWBA. Over \$5,000 was raised for legal services projects, including publication of a pamphlet on obtaining credit which is near completion under the guidance of Diane (Myndie) Brown. This pamphlet will be available for distribution by the Courts around the state.

In 1988 the Board authorized the establishment of a new Colorado non-profit corporation, The Colorado Women's Bar Association Jennifer Robbins Fund, to obtain 501(c) (3) certification as a charitable organization. The Fund's charge will be to provide funds and other assistance to implement the charitable and educational purposes of the CWBA as set forth in its by-laws:

1. To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and legal skills, and for continuing legal education;
2. To encourage the advancement of women in the law;
3. To promote the highest standards of the legal profession;
4. To advance justice; and
5. To promote, advance, and protect the interests and welfare of women.

It is anticipated that the corporation will be established and non-profit status applied for by August 15, 1988. The founders contemplate that the Fund will emphasize fund-raising to implement the Gender Bias Study now commissioned by the Colorado Supreme Court, which currently requires an additional \$20,000 to operate effectively during its first year. The CWBA also hopes to obtain additional funding for *Esq.* magazine and for its legal services projects from the Fund.

The Board of Directors has approved a general solicitation of the membership for the Fund through the CWBA membership application. The Board target is to obtain a minimum of \$10 from each member in support of the Fund's projects. The CWBA's first golf tournament is expected to be a Fund event.

The Fund evolved from the efforts of Jeanette (Jan) Bernstein to establish a scholarship fund through the CWBA in memory of her friend, Jennifer Robbins. Jan's continuing efforts have

resulted in authorization by the CWBA Board to establish the Fund. She has personally raised the money necessary to obtain tax-exempt status for the Fund.



Jennifer Robbins with her family.

Jennifer Robbins Honored

Jennifer Robbins exemplified the values that the women attorneys of the CWBA seek to advance. A 1979 graduate of Denver University School of Law, she was bright and committed to her profession, but never lost the sensitivity that made her special. In fact, it was her sensitivity that drew her to the practice of law, which she saw as a means to promote positive changes in the circumstances of women and many others. At the same time, she adored her family and friends, and let them know, even during the hardest of times, that they were never second. She died in 1987, of cancer, less than a decade after her graduation.

Her friends who mourned the loss sought a way to perpetuate her name and her goals, and with that in mind, established a small fund in her honor to be administered by the CWBA. It was the organization that saw in the fund the opportunity to create a long-range significant and effective vehicle for instituting the changes Jennifer would have sought had her life continued.

Always an activist, Jennifer's various projects included anti-poverty programs, mental health projects, distribution of legal and medical services, and civil rights for women and minorities.

Her pre-law school employment in-

cluded working with Community Progress, Inc., an anti-poverty program funded by the Ford Foundation, the Connecticut Mental Health Planning Project, the Cooperative Health Information Center of Vermont, where she was an assistant director, and work on Harvard's Medical Planning Project to institute the first university based pre-paid health plan.

Finishing law school through with an internship with the Center for Law and Social Policy, in D.C., she then worked as a staff attorney with the Department of Civil Rights, then with the Maryland Attorney General's office. There she became chief counsel for the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where she continued until her death in 1987.

Born in New York City in 1940 to Elisabeth Wardwell and Richard Edward Lauterbach, she attended the High School of Music and Art in New York City, and then graduated magna cum laude from Smith College, in 1962. She married in 1963, when she was a graduate student in history at Columbia University.

Her husband, Anthony "Tony" Robbins, is a physician who formerly served as Director of the Colorado Department of Health. He now lives and works in the Boston area, where the Robbins sons, Jack and Richard, attend Harvard.