

## BALANCED LIFE WORKPLACE AWARDS

The **North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys** has supported the entrance and retention of women into the practice of law. Increased participation of women in the profession has helped galvanize a consciousness regarding issues of work and life balance. Most women combine legal careers with significant family responsibilities and personal development goals. These responsibilities and goals are shared by a growing number of male lawyers. Moreover, attorneys are increasingly likely to have caretaking obligations for elderly family members, a trend that is expected to increase into the future. The profession needs sensible options in the workplace to meet family demands, encourage healthy activities outside of work and still perform capably in our professional capacity. The need for a better balance between a lawyer's personal and professional lives is an issue for *all of us*.



Many law firms and legal employers throughout North Carolina have adapted to the needs of their employees. These offices recognize that alternative work arrangements, such as part-time, flex-time, compressed work weeks, and job-sharing may increase employee effectiveness and job satisfaction, while decreasing turnover and absenteeism. These employers have created an environment that fosters and encourages balanced lives in an increasingly diverse and competitive legal market.

The North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys acknowledges and applauds these employers for the options they have provided to their attorneys and for the contribution that they are making to attorneys' quality of life and to the profession as a whole. The **Balanced Life Workplace Awards** are presented annually by the NCAWA to (1) small (2) medium-sized and (3) large firm employers that have distinguished themselves by establishing employment policies and practices that assist lawyers in achieving balance between their work and personal lives. Any legal employer in either the public or private sector, employing at least 2 or more individuals, is eligible for consideration by the NCAWA. We will consider, among other factors, the employer's policies and practices on work hours, office benefits or perquisites, part-time employment, flexible work schedules, leave options, effect on partnership prospects, and work-at-home or telecommuting arrangements.

Any person familiar with the employer can submit a nomination form by mail or email or send an E-mail to [info@ncawa.org](mailto:info@ncawa.org) to request the nomination form in either Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format.

The deadline to submit a nomination form is 5:00 p.m. July 12, 2006. The awards will be presented at the NCAWA annual conference in Asheville in October 2006, and announced in our quarterly newsletter and in Lawyers Weekly.

We are hopeful that everyone will take this opportunity to acknowledge those progressive employers with the foresight to implement policies and practices that encourage and foster balance between an attorney's professional obligations and need for personal and family time. We also are hopeful that other employers will realize that giving workplace options is necessary for recruitment and retention in the dynamic culture of our demanding legal field.

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