

1-1-1996

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Recommended Citation

Hillary R. Clinton, *Symposium: The Comparative International Role of Women Attorneys in Land and Society, Foreword*, 12 GA. ST. U. L. REV. (1996).

Available at: <https://readingroom.law.gsu.edu/gsulr/vol12/iss2/5>

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GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 12

NUMBER 2

JANUARY 1996

THE COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF WOMEN ATTORNEYS IN LAW AND SOCIETY

FOREWORD

Hillary Rodham Clinton

This issue of the *Georgia State University Law Review* and its focus on the comparative international role of women attorneys in law and society could not be more timely. I commend the editors and faculty members for their commitment to enlarging the public dialogue of this issue.

The following articles from Albania, Australia, France, Israel, Italy, Russia, and the former Yugoslavia reflect the impact women are having in different spheres of law around the world. Hopefully, by educating each other about our experiences, we can learn from each others' successes and challenges and contribute to a wider appreciation of the unique role women play as lawyers, jurists, and teachers of law.

Never before have women been so well represented in the profession. In this country, we have seen Janet Reno become the United States Attorney General and top law enforcement officer in the land. Within the Justice Department, an unprecedented number of women are in leadership positions, and among the ninety-three United States Attorneys there are a record-breaking twenty-two women. The American Bar Association has recently elected its first female president, and young women are entering the profession in ever increasing numbers—32% more than in 1963. Today, 42% of all J.D. recipients in the United States are women.

But numbers tell only part of the story. By their mere presence, women are changing the way the profession does its

business. Because of the unique life experiences women bring to the practice of law, we offer a new perspective that has allowed for a reevaluation of the values and principles that have dominated our legal and judicial systems.

New areas of law relating to domestic violence, child support, child custody, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination have gained legitimacy. Mona Harrington, in her study *Women Lawyers: Rewriting the Rules* states: "The traditional devaluation of women in the law—they are not tough enough, they have their children on their mind, they avoid arenas of fierce competition—completely misses the value to the law of what women do know through their social training and their connections to children."

All of this speaks to the progress we have made as a gender within the profession of law. In the articles that follow, you will read of the role of women lawyers internationally, the obstacles they have faced, the gains they have achieved, and the challenges that lie ahead. Hopefully, this issue of the *Georgia State University Law Review* marks the beginning of a dialogue around the world that will spur more women to seek a greater role for themselves in law and in society.