remember the first time I met Joanne Garvey. I loved her style. With a commanding presence, quick intelligence, dry wit, and straight-shooting manner, Joanne was a no-nonsense “broad” in the best sense of the word. It was easy for me to see why she was respected and admired by female and male attorneys alike.

Joanne’s passing in September caught many of us by surprise. With her strength of character and long-time dedication to The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF), it was hard to believe that we would not continue to be the beneficiaries of her work as a lawyer, her compassion and humor as a friend, and her tireless efforts as a leader and mentor.

Losing Joanne was a difficult blow for our legal community, indeed. But what is that old saying about bad news coming in threes? The idea seemed tragically predictive to me: within days, news of Joanne’s passing was accompanied by news of the passing of two other respected leaders of our San Francisco bar community, Judith Mc Kelvey-Shaw and Richard “Dick” Odgers.

Words of remembrance honoring each of these three legal leaders passed quietly among BASF friends and colleagues. Underscoring these remembrances was a very deep sadness—not only at the passing of cherished colleagues and friends, but also at the passing of leaders who had shaped and influenced our legal community in meaningful and lasting ways. As I read these remembrances late one evening, I realized that the passing of these three great lawyers so close in time to each other gave our legal community a rare opportunity to really stop what we were doing and remember exactly why they were so important to us.

The answer to why these three lawyers were so special was actually quite simple: Joanne, Judith, and Dick were all dedicated and committed to advancing the best of our profession. And because they all cared deeply about our profession, I cannot imagine a better way for us to honor them than to ensure that the spirit and values they represented continue on in our legal community.

So in memory of Joanne, Judith, and Dick, and the many other great lawyers who have given generously to our BASF community, I ask you each to stop for a moment. Stop reading now. Put this magazine down. Don’t open that next email yet or make that next call. Just stop for a moment and make a commitment to do something in honor of Joanne, Judith, and Dick that will help advance the best of our profession.
What can you do today to reflect the spirit and values of our past BASF leaders?

- Are you a trailblazer for women attorneys like Joanne Garvey?
- Are you a gifted teacher like Judith McKelvey-Shaw?
- Are you a champion for diversity and pro bono legal programs, like Dick Odgers?

Our BASF No Glass Ceiling Task Force can use your energy and vision. With inspiring programs like October’s “So You Want to Be a Rainmaker” program, organized by Patricia Gillette and her colleagues at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, the No Glass Ceiling Task Force is radically changing the discussion about women’s issues. Joanne would be proud.

Our BASF sections offer great opportunities to showcase your knowledge as a speaker on a continuing legal education (CLE) program or panel. October’s Bench Bar Conference, sponsored by our Litigation Section, offered a fascinating look at the science of decision making and how it affects nearly everything that happens in a case, both inside and outside the courtroom. Get involved in planning next year’s Bench Bar Conference or one of the many other cutting-edge CLE programs and conferences offered by our BASF sections every year.

You can make a difference right away by supporting our nonprofit entity, the Justice & Diversity Center (JDC). Volunteer your time in one of our life-changing diversity education programs or low-income legal services programs. Or donate online to support JDC’s important work in the Campaign for Justice and Diversity at sfbar.org/donate.
As lawyers, we have great power to change not only our own profession but also the course of our national debate. Our greatest accomplishments as a bar association have often started with one person who was willing to raise his or her voice, spend time, and dedicate his or her energies to changing our profession or our justice system for the better.

As president of BASF this year, I have had the great opportunity to meet with and get to know wonderful lawyers from all generations—from our Barristers Club leaders, who are rewriting the book on how to practice law, to our most senior past presidents, who continue to humble me with their ongoing generosity and commitment to the work of BASF. After working hand in hand with these BASF leaders throughout the year, I can say that the professional values we cherished in Joanne, Judith, and Dick are alive and well in our BASF community.

So please take a moment today to make a commitment to join me in honoring the memory of BASF leaders Joanne Garvey, Judith McKelvey-Shaw, and Dick Odgers by doing something positive for our profession. Volunteer, donate, or get active for a cause. Whatever it is you decide to do, we want to hear from you.

Thank you.

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