



The range Appeal

Orange County Association of Legal Administrators

September/October 1996

If It's Violence Don't Call It 'Domestic'

by Donna H. Foust

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"Is violence that occurs in the home between family members any less damaging or devastating than that same, callous attack that occurs out of the home between strangers?" asked Judge John C. Wooley of the Orange County Superior Court. Of course not. Violence is violence and it is unacceptable under any circumstances.

"To suggest criminal conduct with a gentle term such 'domestic' reduces the seriousness of the violent conduct and, hence, society's reaction to it. To continue the characterization of spousal battery as 'domestic violence' sends the wrong message." I wholeheartedly agree. If it's violence, don't call it domestic--call it a crime.

Battering is the single greatest cause of women's injuries today. The American Medical Association has declared domestic violence against women a *national health crisis*.

- ◆ When every 15 seconds a woman is battered in the United States,
- ◆ when physical violence is a factor in 52% of middle-class divorces,
- ◆ when four million women per year are *assaulted* by their partners, and
- ◆ when five women a day are *killed* by their partners,

we must come to grips with the magnitude of this national disgrace we call "domestic violence," we must rally to develop solutions to care for victims of all ages, and we must collectively work to eliminate spousal battery.

American Bar Association President, Roberta Cooper Ramo, has urged the legal profession to become involved in stemming the tide of domestic violence. Last year President Ramo formed a Commission on Domestic Violence that brought together professionals to lend their expertise to identify the problem and develop solutions on a national level.

But what are the needs in Orange County? In an attempt to answer that question, the Orange County Bar Association expanded its pro bono activities to include a domestic violence component. After surveying shelters to determine unmet legal needs, a void was discovered! Trained attorneys were needed to respond to legal questions from hotlines.

The OCBA Domestic Violence Legal Clinic was developed to train attorneys to provide pro bono legal services to battered and abused women and their children. The OCBA is assisting by b

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Newsletter Corner

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Mission Statement & Goals

The Association of Legal Administrators' mission is to:

Promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and other members of the legal management team by providing high quality, competency-based educational programs in legal management;

Represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large; and

Improve the quality of management in legal services organizations.

Goals

Develop and deliver programs and products that will provide high quality, competency-based education to members of the legal management team.

Increase the visibility and credibility of the association and its members in the legal community through effective marketing and communications and through liaison with the bar and other law related associations at local, state and national levels.

Enhance the services and benefits available to members.

Retain and recruit members from all components of the legal management team.

Strengthen the association's economic base.

Increase sensitivity to cultural diversity within the association and in the legal management community.

Implement an organizational structure which separates the policy and operational roles and responsibilities of volunteers and staff to assure that organizational resources are used appropriately to achieve the association's goals.