

State Bar of Wisconsin: Women lawyers make history during 100th anniversary year of 19th Amendment

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Madison, WI - Attorney Kathleen A. Brost of Neenah was sworn in as the [State Bar of Wisconsin's](#) 65th president on Sept. 16, marking the first time in the organization's history that not only two, but three successive women have led the organization - 100 years after women gained the right to vote.

In becoming president, Brost succeeds Past President Jill Kastner of Milwaukee. Madison lawyer Cheryl Daniels, State Bar president-elect, will follow Brost as president on July 1, 2021.

Brost is a trust and financial advisor at Legacy Private Trust Company in Neenah. A former solo practitioner for 12 years, she plans to support attorneys and firms throughout the state, with a special focus on solo practices and small firms.

"Lawyers in solo or small firms - five or fewer lawyers - comprise 92 percent of the lawyers practicing in Wisconsin," she said.

Racial Equality, Access to Justice Top State Bar Priorities

During her year as president, which officially began July 1, Brost is moving quickly. Among many initiatives, she is championing the issues of racial equity in the justice system, diversity and inclusion within the legal community, and increasing public access to the legal system. Brost appointed Kastner to serve as the chair of the organization's new Racial Justice Leadership Group, which is examining ways to combat racial injustices and improve diversity and inclusion in Wisconsin's legal community.

“When I took the oath of office, I promised to aid the Wisconsin Supreme Court in improving the administration of justice. The U.S. has a racial equality problem when it comes to justice, and how you are treated may depend on the color of your skin or what your background is. Therefore, while diversity and inclusion cuts across all aspects, race, gender, etc., the focus this year is on racial equality and justice.”

Brost also wants the State Bar to continue working with local communities and other professions to find solutions that will help lawyers practice in rural and low-population areas. She says that northern and western counties in Wisconsin are experiencing a lawyer shortage, with fewer and fewer practicing attorneys.

“The average age for a rural attorney in some counties is over 60, and there are few new attorneys taking their place. This is an access to justice issue,” Brost said. “This issue is large and multifaceted, and stems from many causes,” including lack of internet service and high student loan debt.”