



**2½**  
minutes

NICHOLAS GRIMER | STAFF

with **CYNTHIA LEPPERT**  
principal  
Neuberger Quinn

**C**ynthia Leppert became a lawyer because she saw it as a field where the opportunities were endless. Now, she's working to make sure that other women find new opportunities of their own in the profession. Leppert, a principal at Neuberger Quinn Gielen Rubin & Gibber in Baltimore, was named president of the Women's Bar Association of Maryland in May. When she's not assisting clients with business disputes, trademark and copyright issues or bankruptcy litigation, she is helping to coordinate WBA efforts. In 2005, she chaired a WBA awards dinner that honored Sandra Day O'Connor as she ended her term as the Supreme Court's first female justice.

**How do you think the legal profession is doing on recruiting and promoting women?**

Certainly, there has been tremendous improvement in the 25 years since I've been practicing. I'm sure you know that women are graduating from law school in fairly high numbers — now over 50 percent (of law school graduates). But nationally, I believe only 17 percent of equity partners in law firms are women. We're seeing those numbers increase.

**What was your experience with the Sandra Day O'Connor event like?**

We had a sponsorship program that permitted 30 local law students to be able

to attend free of charge. The students wrote us the most touching letters afterward about how meaningful this night had been to them. Justice O'Connor spoke of challenges she had in every period of her career, including the fact that she had difficulty when she got out of law school being able to get a job as anything other than a legal secretary.

**How did you come to be a member of the federal bar in Puerto Rico?**

I had been representing a client down in Puerto Rico for several years. I actually took the bar exam in Puerto Rico so he would not have to essentially keep having two sets of lawyers. I flew down to Puerto Rico and took the bar exam with the No. 2 pencils, and I got a letter saying I had gotten the highest grade in the commonwealth.

**What do you like to do when you're not working?**

In summertime, gardening is the big thing. I live very close to Loch Raven Reservoir. The challenge is maintaining the garden despite the deer. We look out in the backyard and we will see seven or eight deer there. We have these motion detector sprinklers, and when deer appear in the garden in the middle of the night, the movement sets off the garden sprinkler and sprays them.

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