

Meet OWLS Board Member Alejandra Torres

By Marisa Moneyhun

Inspired by her parents, who left Mexico City when she was three years old to start a new life in San Jose, California, Alejandra Torres has lived her life by the motto “Just try it.” Family is very important to Alejandra, and she treasures the strong family bond that she has with her parents and siblings. One of her earliest memories is the excitement she felt when boarding the plane from Mexico City to the United States to be reunited with her parents after living with her grandma for six months, while her parents became established in California.

Embracing the spirit of “Just try it,” Alejandra moved to Portland to attend the University of Portland. As the first in her family to graduate from college, Alejandra earned a BA in environmental ethics and policy, another BA in Spanish, and minored in philosophy. After graduation, Alejandra moved back to California, where she worked at a law firm. Again embracing the spirit of “Just try it,” she moved back to Portland to attend Lewis & Clark Law School.

Alejandra began law school as a day student but then switched to the night program so she could work full time. In the night program, working students are expected to graduate in five years, but Alejandra finished the program in three. As a law student, she also participated in a study abroad program in Geneva, where she studied human rights law.

Alejandra has served on the OWLS board since May 2019, and she co-chaired the Roberts & Deiz Award Committee for three of her four years on that committee. She is proud that she was able to be part of the team that worked to include interviews in the nominating process for the Roberts & Deiz Award.

When Alejandra is not working and volunteering, she spends time with her family. Over the years, her two siblings also moved to Portland, and then her parents made the move, reuniting the family of five. Now that Alejandra’s family is once again close by, they enjoy weekly dinners and spending time together as a family.



Alejandra Torres

Alejandra currently works at Lewis Brisbois, where she focuses her practice on employment litigation, representing employers of all sizes, from mom-and-pop companies to large corporations.

Marisa Moneyhun is a partner at Kehoe Moneyhun Law and an OWLS board member.

Remembering Ann Bartsch (1950–2021)

By Diane Rynerson

We were saddened to learn of the death on June 11 of Ann Bartsch, the Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation’s first president. A Salem native and South Salem High School graduate, Ann received her undergraduate degree in English from Stanford in 1973 and her law degree from the University of Chicago in 1977. It was there that she met her husband, fellow law student Doug Blomgren.

Their legal careers began in St. Paul, Minnesota. Ann was determined to work in the nonprofit law sector, so while waiting for funding to arrive for a position with Minneapolis Legal Aid, she took several temporary jobs, including one in a third-floor pattern-cutting plant. When funding for the Legal Aid position came through, she became a housing lawyer. Later, Ann went to work for the Minnesota State Bar, where she was asked to take on the task of establishing a mandatory Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program for Minnesota. In July 1983, the Minnesota Supreme Court adopted the rule that made Minnesota the first state in the country with a mandatory IOLTA program.



Ann Bartsch circa 1984

Eventually Ann’s desire to return to Oregon, combined with long Minnesota winters and humid summers, was enough to prompt the couple to look for jobs in Oregon, where Doug was hired by the U.S. Department of Justice to work on the Washington Public Power Supply System municipal bond default litigation. His job began in July 1984. Ann remained in St. Paul until that fall to wrap up her work and sell the house, and then she drove west. On the very last day of her trip, she narrowly avoided eating lunch at a salad

bar in The Dalles that had been poisoned by the Rajneeshees.

Ann was hired by the Oregon State Bar, serving as member services director. She later worked with the Oregon State Bar Foundation to make mandatory the voluntary IOLTA program that had been adopted in Oregon in 1983. That goal was realized in 1989. Through her work as a member, and later chair, of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Legal Services for the Poor, she advocated nationally for programs addressing unmet legal needs.

Serving on the steering committee that established the Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation was a natural fit for Ann, and in 1998, she became the Foundation’s first president. In the words of Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, “Ann set the stage for the great work the Foundation does on behalf of our most vulnerable. May her memory be a blessing.” To learn more about Ann Bartsch’s life and legacy, click [here](#).

Diane Rynerson is a board member of the OWLS Foundation and worked with Ann on the Foundation’s steering committee and first board.

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