

The Armonica Law Student Grant Program

Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation

About Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation

The Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation (OWLF) was created in 1996 in recognition of the obstacles women and minorities face in accessing and participating in the justice system.

The Armonica Law Student Grant Program is one of several grants the OWLF provides to organizations and individuals in support of its mission. OWLF goals include:

- c Increasing diversity in the legal profession through grants and scholarships
- c Promoting pro bono legal work
- c Encouraging child care in Oregon's courthouses
- c Promoting access to justice for low-income Oregonians
- c Providing education about domestic violence and abuse

About Armonica

This grant program honors Armonica Gilford, who was the Oregon Department of Justice's first African-American female assistant attorney general. Armonica died in October 2005, of complications following surgery for an injury she received in an automobile accident. She was 54.

Armonica was born and grew up in Alaska. She graduated from Pepperdine University and earned her law degree at the University of Denver College of Law in 1981. After law school Armonica worked for Mobil Oil Corp. and Mobil Coal Resources, Inc. in Denver before returning to Alaska to work for Alaska Legal Services. She went on to work for that state's consumer protection section in Juneau as an investigator until 1989, when she moved to Oregon.

She began her Oregon legal career in 1989 when she was hired by the Oregon Department of Justice. Armonica served on the board of Oregon Women Lawyers and the Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation. During the mid-1990s, she was president of the Oregon Association of Black Lawyers, now the Oregon chapter of the National Bar Association, and is credited with reviving the association's Ivory and Ebony Scholarship Benefit for minority law students.

Armonica received the Oregon Women Lawyers Judge Mercedes Deiz Award in 1997 and a Meritorious Award from the attorney general's office in 1994. She was known for serving as a mentor to numerous law students and lawyers, and often housed law students from out of town in order to make their career transitions a bit easier.

She was a member of the Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Pennsylvania bars, and authored several articles and chapters for Oregon State Bar publications. In addition, she served on the state licensing board for architects. Armonica also was a highly respected jazz singer, performing regularly at Steen's Coffee House, and a competitive racer with Oregon's only all-woman ski club, Skiente.

Description of the Armonica Grant Program

The Armonica Grant Program is available to 3rd year students attending the three Oregon law schools who can demonstrate a commitment to OWLF goals through their personal, volunteer, or educational experience. Ethnic minorities and women are especially encouraged to apply. One recipient will be selected from each of the Oregon law schools to receive a text book grant in the amount of \$500. In addition to the monetary grant, each recipient will be matched with an ethnic minority female judge or attorney, who will serve as the student's mentor for the year.

Application Process

To apply, students must complete the on-line application, which can found on the Grants page at www.owlsfoundation.org, by 5:00 pm Wednesday, September 9, 2009.