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## Law firm honors its mentors

About 65 lawyers attend recent luncheon to recognize giving back to colleagues

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When Julie A. Bauer started as an associate at Winston & Strawn LLP, the firm did not offer a structured mentoring program.

So, when asked to join the firm's formal mentoring program last year, Bauer agreed.

Bauer acted as a mentor to Robine K. Morrison, then a first-year associate. They teamed up as part of the firm's participation in the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism's Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program.

Earlier this month, Winston & Strawn presented Bauer, a partner, with its "Mentor of the Year Award" for her work with Morrison. About 65 of the firm's lawyers attended a luncheon that recognized their involvement in mentoring programs.

"I got to know Robine much better than I would have otherwise," Bauer said. "I got an insight into the issues facing new lawyers today."

Those issues include the challenges of meeting day-to-day billable hour responsibilities and achieving long-term career goals, she said.

As part of the mentoring program, Bauer took Morrison to a Chicago Inn of Court meeting.

They attended the "Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award" event earlier this year. The American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession established that award in 1991.

Bauer and Morrison also met



Winston & Strawn LLP Associate Cristina Covarrubias (left) and Partner Bryna J. Dahlin got recognized on Dec. 12 at the firm's luncheon for their participation in the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism's Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program. About 65 Winston & Strawn lawyers participated in the program during its initial year. *Michael R. Schmidt*

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor at a Chicago event in September.

"We were both exposed to a lot of high-profile women attorneys and judges and I think that was good for both of us," Bauer said, adding that those women talked about how they achieved larger career goals.

Both Bauer and Morrison work in Winston & Strawn's liti-

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gation department.

Bauer's "guidance certainly helped me to understand what partners are looking for in your work," Morrison said. "She also helped me in terms of being part of the larger legal community" at networking events.

Morrison called her involvement in the program "one of the most valuable things that I have done as far as developing who I am as an attorney."

Paula Hudson Holderman, Winston & Strawn's chief attorney development officer, said she "can see Robine's confidence has grown throughout this last year."

As for meeting prominent female lawyers and judges, Morrison "never would have had access to those people without

Julie Bauer," Holderman said.

The firm engaged in various other mentoring programs for at least a decade and wanted to participate in the Commission on Professionalism's more structured program and use its resources, she said.

All 33 of Winston & Strawn's first-year associates in the Chicago office participated in the program, along with an equal number of more experienced lawyers as mentors within the past year.

When the Supreme Court announced last year that lawyers could earn Continuing Legal Education credits by participating in mentoring programs, Winston & Strawn became the first large Chicago law firm to volunteer as a participant in the

Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program, said Jayne Rizzo Reardon, executive director of the Commission on Professionalism.

Sixty-one law firms, bar groups and law schools and about 850 lawyers participate in the mentoring program, Reardon said.

Each mentor who meets requirements, including eight face-to-face meetings with the mentee within a year, earns six hours of professional responsibility CLE credits. The mentees can earn the same amount of professional responsibility CLE credits toward their basic skills requirement.

The commission's plan provides that mentors and mentees complete at least one specific action related to professionalism, legal ethics, civility, diversity and inclusion, along with wellness, mental health and addiction.

At the recent luncheon, Kathryn Wendel, a Winston & Strawn associate since 2008, received a "Mentor of the Year Award" as part of the firm's second- and third-year mentoring program for associates. Wendel acted as a mentor to associate Elizabeth J. Thompson.

They met regularly for lunch or after work and attended networking events, Wendel said.

The relationship also allowed Thompson to seek



**Kathryn Wendel, a Winston & Strawn LLP associate, received a "Mentor of the Year Award" for participating in the firm's second- and third-year mentoring program for newer associates. Her mentee, Associate Elizabeth J. Thompson, looked on during the firm's luncheon, which recognized the mentoring program participants.** *Michael R. Schmidt*

advice from Wendel.

"It's really important to have someone you can go to and ask questions of," Wendel said, "someone you can have an open conversation with as you try to find your way."

Both Wendel and Thompson, who joined the firm two years ago, also work in its litigation department

"I was very well matched with Kathryn and as a result we were able to develop a friendship,

which fostered open lines of communication and as a result allowed me to learn a lot," Thompson said, including about what court motions look like and determining the next stages in litigation.