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Trailblazing Women Honored By Barnes & Thornburg During Shirley's Legacy Event

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INDIANAPOLIS – Barnes & Thornburg honored Gary, Indiana, Mayor Karen M. Freeman-Wilson and Barnes & Thornburg partner Julia Spoor Gard during its Fourth Annual Shirley's Legacy networking and awards reception on Sept. 20 at its Indianapolis office.



The Shirley's Legacy awards are presented to trailblazing women who typify the life and work of firm partner Shirley Shideler. Shideler, a partner at Barnes & Thornburg who died in 2013, was the first female associate at any major Indiana law firm in 1963. She then became the first female partner at a large Indiana law firm in 1971 and later served as the first woman president of the Indiana Bar Foundation.

This year marks the fourth year since Nicholas Kile, a partner with Barnes & Thornburg, organized the first event to celebrate the many contributions Shideler made to the firm and legal community and highlight other women

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following in her footsteps.



“Barnes & Thornburg endeavors to honor Shirley’s legacy in ways that resonate with our colleagues, clients and friends,” said Dawn Rosemond, partner and director of diversity, professional development and inclusion at Barnes & Thornburg. “This year’s honorees have demonstrated in their own way a commitment to carry on the ideals that Shirley possessed and shared through her mentoring and values-driven leadership.”

Freeman-Wilson has quite the resume as a trailblazer. She is Gary’s first female mayor (and Indiana’s first African-American female to hold the title) after being elected for two consecutive terms. A former law partner at Freeman-Wilson & Lewis-Shannon, LLC, Freeman-Wilson previously served as Indiana Attorney General. Prior to that, she was presiding judge of Gary City Court, where she started the first drug treatment court in Indiana. She also was CEO of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

Gard is also a transformative leader in her own right. She is chair of the Intellectual Property Department, which is one of the largest in the firm. She focuses her practice on searching and clearing trademarks, prosecuting domestic and international trademark applications, intellectual property licensing, and litigation before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board.

Likewise, Gard is a proud and deliberate mentor to younger attorneys in the intellectual property field, as well as throughout the firm. She regularly has served as a champion for working mothers who have had to navigate a demanding profession, helping them succeed in a large-firm environment.

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