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MAKING CONNECTIONS
Nancy Newman '83



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Nancy J. Newman '83, founder and president of the International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law (IANGEL), was 12 years old when she learned how law can support activism.

The daughter of politically active parents, she worked on many campaigns in her home town of Santa Cruz, California. One day, she was gathering signatures at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk to stop the harp seal hunt in Newfoundland

when security guards escorted her off, saying this wasn't allowed on private property. When she told her father, an attorney, they researched First Amendment rights on private property. The next day she returned to the boardwalk with a copy of *Diamond v. Bland*, the California Supreme Court opinion protecting the right to gather signatures on private property in the state. When guards again asked her to leave, she told them she had a legal right to remain. They took her to a boardwalk executive, and

Newman presented him with the opinion, which had been folded six ways to fit in her jeans pocket.

"He looked at the case, and he looked at me, and he chuckled," Newman recalled. "He reached into his desk, pulled out tickets for the boardwalk and tossed them over to me, saying, 'Well, have a good time while you're here.' And I thought, 'I love the law!'"

After earning her undergraduate degree at UC Santa Cruz, Newman attended UC Davis School of Law, and has since enjoyed a successful career for more than 30 years, specializing in commercial and real estate litigation, and is a partner with Hanson Bridgett in San Francisco. She has also been a tireless advocate for women's rights as a past president of Queen's Bench Bar Association and of the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations. After those experiences, as she sought to become more directly involved in working for women's rights around the world, she found that many organizations she supported were always in need of more legal assistance, but were not able to tap the resource of pro bono counsel.

"These organizations had a huge, cavernous need, and there were lawyers who were willing to help, but there wasn't an easy way to connect the two together," Newman said. "I thought, 'We need an organization that connects volunteer attorneys with those on the front lines of the struggle.' After looking for such an organization for years without success, I felt compelled to form it. The cause is too important to let such valuable resources – so many talented people who want to do this work – remain on the sidelines. If people want to volunteer their time and their talent, we will find a way to get them into the game."

The result was the International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law – IANGEL, founded by Newman in 2013. IANGEL harnesses the power of pro bono legal assistance and connects it to the organizations, communities, and activists working for gender equality locally, nationally, and around the world. IANGEL has partnered with Equal Rights Advocates, the Hague Domestic Violence Project, and the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, among others, providing volunteer lawyers and support on gender equity projects; and hosted briefings on women's rights in Uganda, Afghanistan, India, and Nigeria.

"The challenges of starting a new nonprofit are significant, but they pale when compared to the struggles so many women face, just to survive. We owe it to those women to use this amazing power that we have, as lawyers, to fight for equality and justice around the world," Newman said.

IANGEL welcomes donations and volunteers, and Newman said she would especially welcome the support and involvement of fellow King Hall graduates. For more information, visit <http://iangel.org>. ■



Nancy Newman '83 (right) poses with Dr. Bhumo Tsering (center) and Krishanti Dharmaraj (left) at Challenges in Gender Equity: Contemporary Tibetan Leadership & Conflict Societies in South Asia, an event co-hosted by IANGEL and the ACHA Himalayan Sisterhood in April 2014 in Berkeley, CA.