

# Deborah Platt Majoras Honored with the 2013 OWBA Founders' Award



L-R: Sherri Dahl, Deborah Platt Majoras and Michelle Proia Roe enjoy the evening at 21c Museum Hotel.

By Sherri Dahl

On March 7, Deborah Platt Majoras, chief legal officer and secretary for Procter & Gamble, was honored during the Ohio Women's Bar Association Founders' Gala at 21c Museum Hotel in Cincinnati. Attendees traveled from all over Ohio, including Cleveland and Columbus, to participate in this tradition of women honoring women. A VIP reception preceded the Founders' Award program which was followed by networking, food and drinks. OWBA President-Elect, Magistrate Judge Stephanie Bowman, began the presentation ceremony and Denise Platfoot-Lacey, University of Dayton School of Law professor and president of the Ohio Women's Bar Foundation, explained the focus of the Leadership Institute and the goals of the OWBA Foundation. OWBA President Michelle Proia Roe, Mettler-Toledo LLC's general counsel for the Americas,

provided heartfelt comments on the importance of the OWBA and introduced Majoras as the Founders' Award winner, saying "we emphatically thank you for always reaching to touch the stars and, in doing so, making them seem that much closer to the rest of us."

The Founders' Award recognizes an outstanding woman attorney who has contributed significantly to the legal profession. Named for the OWBA's founders, which include Ohio Supreme Court Justice Alice Robie Resnick, the Honorable Patricia Hemann, Pamela Hagle Hultin, the first class of founding OWBA members and 26 women who attended the first OWBA meeting on Sept. 23, 1991, the Founders' Award is presented biennially. This year, Majoras joined a list of 13 other award winners as the first in-house counsel recipient since the award's inception.

Majoras exemplifies how far women in

the legal profession have come in a single generation. In 1952, Sandra Day O'Connor (who later became the first woman on the U.S. Supreme Court) was rejected by 40 law firms and eventually accepted a non-paying first job as an attorney. In contrast, after Majoras graduated from Westminster College (where she studied social work and Spanish) and the University of Virginia School of Law in 1989, she clerked for a federal judge and accepted a position at Jones Day, where she achieved partner status. She worked for the Justice Department for approximately three years. Then, after returning to Jones Day, during her first week in the office, Majoras received a call from White House staff and at 40 became the head of the Federal Trade Commission. Today, Majoras has reached the pinnacle of legal success in a corporate environment by leading P&G's global legal department of approximately 580. Despite all of her obvious success, during her remarks, Majoras suggested that climbing the career "ladder" is more of a zig zag than a straight line.

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## President's Message



Michelle Proia Roe

I want to avoid one of those cliché articles about the last year of my presidency and how we continued to move the OWBA forward. Certainly it is important to remind your audience about such progress, but we have an event calendar for the past twelve months to refresh us.

I prefer instead to focus on what my personal takeaways will be 10, 20, or God-willing, 30 years from now about this experience. Valoria Hoover, a recent past president of both the OWBA and the OWBF, asked me in February 2011 on behalf of the OWBA Nominating Committee to accept the presidency this past year. If you know Valoria, you know why I said yes. She is quite persuasive. Later that very same evening, and amusingly coincidental in hindsight, my now-husband asked me for my hand in marriage.

I took this OWBA office in May 2012 and married the love of my life three months later. On the day after I returned from my honeymoon, I learned I was promoted to the top legal spot for my company for North and South America. I would serve as the sole attorney in the legal department of the Americas for a multi-billion dollar global manufacturing company traded on the New York Stock Exchange. I had this role without another attorney's help for the five-month period immediately following my nuptials, until we could hire a junior attorney. Then, less than a week before the new attorney came on board, 2013 greeted me with very serious health issues facing both of my parents within just a few weeks of each other requiring me to travel out of state on both occasions.

Somewhere around these January and February 2013 family emergencies, I had to squeeze in work travel to India, half a world away when I wanted to be nowhere else but by my parents' side. Because of very sound medical treatment, my parents are now doing well. My dad's 70th birth-

day is a week away from the night I am sitting down to write this last president's message, and I am so grateful to have the chance to share birthday cake with him again this year.

In recent weeks, I have run across this story that probably first showed up somewhere on someone's Facebook page. It is a story about a woman who is telling her mother of her struggles in life and how on some days she just wants to give up. The mother asked her daughter to follow her in the kitchen, where she filled three pots with water. In one, she placed carrots. In the second, eggs. And in the third, she placed ground coffee beans. They all boiled, and then the mother placed them each in a bowl. She asked her daughter to tell what she observed.

The carrots softened, the eggs hardened, and the coffee beans turned into a delicious aromatic blend. The mother asked her daughter which of the three objects the daughter resembled when adversity hit. Did she soften and fall apart like the carrots? Did she harden like the eggs when she once had enjoyed a much softer spirit? Or was she instead like the coffee beans, which actually changed their environment (the hot water), turning everything into quite a pleasant result?

The parable concludes by asking, "When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level or do you let your environment change you?" How do you handle adversity? My takeaway after this OWBA year is that the fight is worth fighting. As leaders, we can never give external circumstances the permission to alter who we are. Like the coffee beans in the parable, OWBA members are changing the legal environment very much for the better both for themselves and for those not able to do it alone. Please join me in so graciously thanking all of the members of our Women's Bar for answering this most magnificent call. ■

*Michelle Proia Roe is General Counsel—Americas and Secretary of Mettler-Toledo, LLC.*



(continued from front page )

Anyone who has met Majoras feels her warmth immediately (she is a hugger). Accepting the Founders' Award, Majoras reminded the room of more than 80 of the importance of treating everyone well, doing good work and being a team player. Perhaps this view stems from her upbringing in Meadville, Penn., or from her time before law school as a secretary and paralegal at Porter Wright. She also models the importance of giving back to the profession by generously volunteering her free time to speak at the OWBA's Leadership Institute and continuing legal education programs. Despite all of the strains on Majoras' time, she prioritizes sharing her experience with other women.

Special events like the Founders' Gala could not take place without the careful organization of the OWBA's Executive Director Elizabeth Krile and generous supporters. The OWBA thanks the following sponsors: Squire Sanders (US) LLP; Faruki Ireland & Cox P.L.L.; Dinsmore & Shohl LLP; McDonald Hopkins LLC; Jones Day; Bricker & Eckler LLP; Thacker Martinsek LPA; Mary Sullivan at Peck Shaffer & Williams, LLP; MacMurray Petersen & Shuster LLP; Calfee Halter & Griswold LLP; and Reminger Co, LPA.

Often, we are reminded by surveys and statistics that women lawyers' advancement has remained stagnate during much of the last 20 years. Debate ensues on where to place blame for the lack of women in top legal positions. Majoras serves as a welcome reminder that women are ascending to the highest levels of the legal profession. On March 7, we raised our glasses to Deborah Platt Majoras, the 2013 Founders' Award Honoree. Cheers to her and to all of the members of the OWBA who are achieving success and paying it forward. ■

*Sherri Dahl is a principal at Squire Sanders (US) LLP in the corporate restructuring group. Dahl will also be joining the OWBA Board of Trustees in May.*



Clockwise from top left: John Majoras, Founders' Award recipient Deborah Platt Majoras and Anne Owings Ford; President-Elect Magistrate Judge Stephanie Bowman welcomes the crowd at the Founders' Gala; Susan Schultz, Erin Rosen and Amber Reams; Elizabeth Zak, OWBA Trustee Grace Royalty and Andrea Backscheider; Celebrating the achievement of the OWBA Founders and Deborah Platt Majoras are OWBF President Denise Platfoot Lacey, OWBA Vice President Laura Sanom and OWBA Trustee Emily Wilcheck; Founding member Priscilla O'Donnell attends the Founders' Gala. Twenty-two years ago O'Donnell joined the OWBA; Active OWBA member Mary Sullivan and OWBA Executive Director Elizabeth Krile

# Effective Leadership—the last session of the Leadership Institute

By Nita Hanson

On March 15, 2013, the Ohio Women's Bar Foundation's Leadership Institute was privileged to be addressed on the topic of "Effective Leadership" by 10 of Ohio's finest women leaders. Beginning the day was Jennifer Brunner, Ohio's first woman Secretary of State. Brunner's soon-to-be released memoir about women, politics, and Ohio is entitled *Cupcakes and Courage*. She offered two especially poignant pieces of advice: Control the narrative; and institutionalize changes so they are not dependent on you.

Former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown encouraged the institute class to be open to saying, "Yes!" She challenged the class to overcome the negative voice within (which turned out to be a common theme among speakers). Justice Brown reminded the class to save room in the daily schedule so that when really good things come along, you are not too busy to do them.

Ohio Supreme Court Justice Judith French encouraged those present to be brave and persistent with bad actors; but admonished the importance of keeping one's ego in check. She recommended watching other leaders, but being a good lawyer first.

Rounding out the morning session were words of wisdom from Ohio's first woman Auditor of State, first woman Attorney General, first woman State Senator in District 2 (among other "firsts"), Betty Montgomery. Montgomery challenged the class to be persistent, but be polite, and reminded the attendees not to accept all invitations to fight. Sometimes you make the best impression when you just leave it alone. She encouraged that the side door is still an opening, so look for opportunities in unique places.

JoAnn Davidson capped a public service career that spanned more than 30 years



L-R Standing: Melinda Burton, Laurie Avery, Program Chair Angela Courtwright, Nita Hanson and Marilyn McClure-Demers. L-R Sitting: Katie Giumentti and Clare Krumlauf.

by serving as Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives. Due to time constraints, she was unable to make her presentation but she showed up in support of the OWBF.

The afternoon session began with words of wisdom from Rhonda Comer, general counsel and senior vice president of Nationwide Children's Hospital. Advice that she personifies, Comer reminded the class that, "The more power you wield, the softer your voice needs to become." Take every opportunity that is presented, and do not show fear or lack of confidence.

Kathy Ransier is a retired partner with the Columbus office of Vorys. She reminded the institute class to "take off your legal hat" and watch for opportunities to lead. You must be a leader in your family first. To be a good leader, you need to be one of a very few. Ransier challenged the attendees not to be shy about making friends and making contacts.

Sandra Anderson is the associate vice president and deputy general counsel for The Ohio State University Office of Legal Affairs. Also a retired partner with the Columbus Office of Vorys, Sandy reminded the class that one has a choice about how to respond to negative stimuli.

It can be a bad influence, or an opportunity for growth. Whatever the reason you are in the game, you have to swing the bat.

Cindy Lazarus, former Columbus city council president, and CEO and president of the YWCA (among other achievements) reminded the class to be authentic. Lazarus challenged the class to be initializing—lead instead of respond. She encouraged the class to recognize the breadth of their individual talents.

Former U.S. Representative Deborah Pryce ended the day by challenging the class to step out bravely. One might plan differently if they were not afraid to take chances. She reminded the class to network with women leaders, and always support each other.

If you would like the privilege of being included in the next Leadership Institute, the application deadline is April 15, 2013. Applications can be found at [www.owba.org/leadershipinstitute](http://www.owba.org/leadershipinstitute) application. ■

*Nita L. Hanson is a commercial litigator in the Columbus Office of Dinsmore & Shohl. She is the class representative for the 2012-2013 Leadership Institute, and the OWBA District 5 Representative to the Board.*





Clockwise from top left: Speakers Cindy Lazarus and Deborah Pryce; Effective Leadership speakers Rhonda Comer and Kathy Ransier; Sandra Anderson and Program Chair Leah Sellers each talked about her leadership journey; Former Justice Yvette McGee Brown shared advice on being a leader; Jennifer Brunner talks to class members about her path to becoming a leader; Justice Judith French and Betty Montgomery shared tips on being an effective leader.





Congratulations to **Justice Judith French** on her recent appointment to the Supreme Court of Ohio. Justice Judith L. French became the 155th justice of the Ohio Supreme Court on Jan. 1, 2013.

Prior to her appointment, Justice French served at the Tenth District Court of Appeals, which hears appeals from Franklin County courts and state administrative agencies. She was elected to the appellate court in November 2004 and served until her appointment. Justice French is an avid supporter of the OWBA and she served on the OWBA Board as a trustee during the 2011-12 year.



**Pat Gajda** was recently elected to the Brouse McDowell Executive Committee and became the first female partner to be elected to Brouse McDowell's Executive Committee. Pat is chair of the Business, Corporate & Securities practice group. She focuses her practice on corporate transactions, joint ventures, general corporate counseling and securities. Pat has negotiated complex, multi-entity joint ventures and acquisitions, and also advises clients on a variety of general corporate issues and agreements. She has advised and consulted with both privately held and publicly traded clients. In addition to chairing the Business, Corporate & Securities practice group, Pat also led the Associate and Paralegal Review Committee of the firm until 2013. Pat is a member of the Class of 2011-2012 Ohio Women's Bar Foundation Leadership Institute, and is currently slated to be Vice President of the OWBF for the upcoming year. ■

## Women in History (April, May, June and July)

**April 13, 1933:** Ruth Bryan Owens is the first woman to represent the United States as a foreign minister when she is appointed as envoy to Denmark.

**April 19, 1977:** Fifteen women in the House of Representatives form the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

**May 21, 1973:** Lynn Genesko, a swimmer, receives the first athletic scholarship awarded to a woman (University of Miami).

**June 9, 1949:** Georgia Neese Clark confirmed as the first woman treasurer of the United States.

**June 10, 1963:** Equal Pay Act enacted, "To prohibit discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages by employers engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce."



**June 18, 1983:** Dr. Sally Ride becomes the first American woman in space.

**June 23, 1972:** President Nixon signs the Education Amendments of 1972, which includes Title IX. This legislation prohibits sex discrimination in education.

**July 2, 1964:** President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act; Title VII prohibits sex discrimination in employment.



**July 7, 1981:** President Ronald Reagan nominates Sandra Day O'Connor as the first woman Supreme Court Justice.



**July 12, 1984:** Representative Geraldine Ferraro (D-New York) is chosen as the first female to run for vice president of the United States on the Democratic Party

ticket with Walter Mondale (D-Minnesota). ■

Learn more about the  
**Ohio Women's Bar  
Association**



[www.owba.org](http://www.owba.org)

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7th District Court of Appeals

**Judge Nancy Fuerst**

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# Welcome New Members!

(As of March 18, 2013)

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**Michele Simonelli**

Village of Washingtonville, Ohio

**Erin Woods ■**

# What I Want To Be When I Grow Up... Wait, I'm Already Grown Up

By Suzana Koch

Maybe it happened for you the way it happened for me. Or maybe it has yet to happen to you. Maybe you had a completely different experience. For me, there were a series of moments when the realization began washing over me. Yup, I was a grown-up.

When did that happen? How did it sneak up on me? I was very busy working on my plan to becoming an adult, and then I realized I was a wife, a mother, a law partner, a member of several boards, even a Sunday School teacher and occasional 5k participant with crazy triathlon aspirations. I even learned to knit, and I like knitting. I am a grown-up.

My next realization was, "What now?"

I have no idea. That's what.

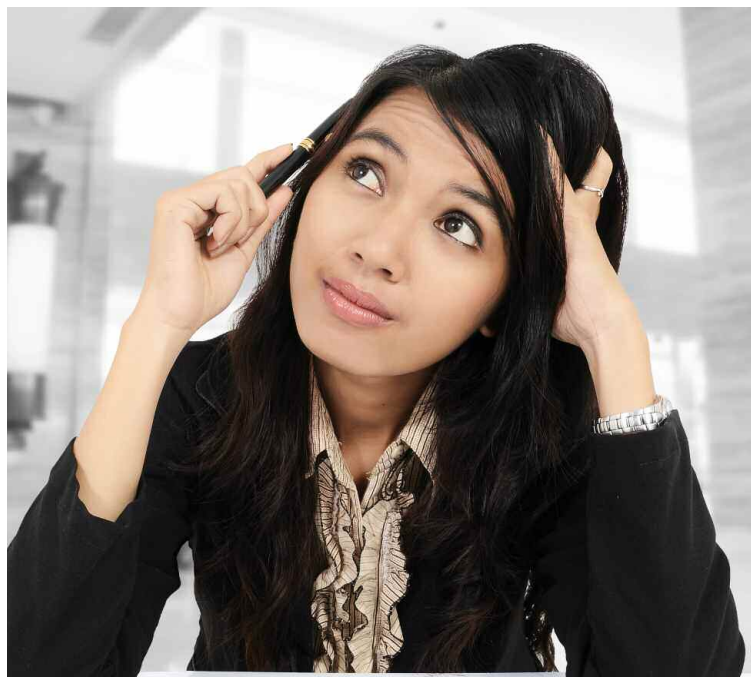
I was very busy doing the things I was supposed to be doing to become a grown-up that I am not nearly so sure what I'm supposed to be doing now that I am one. I'm still a work in progress, still figuring it all out, still don't have it all. I don't think I know what "having it all" even means, despite being asked to speak on panels about "having it all" as though I'm some sort of expert. But here I am, with my fellow Generation Xers (those of us born between 1963 and 1981), as we make lifestyle choices in an effort to balance all that.

We are jumping jobs. I left the law firm I never thought I would leave because they didn't fully support the decisions I was making to spend more time with my family. As a Generation, we are becoming very good at our jobs. We have been at this game long enough now that we know what we're doing – we are competent and skilled. Our colleagues and clients are recognizing our abilities. We are

being promoted, managing files without oversight, chairing committees, running organizations. At the office, we find ourselves bumping up against the Baby Boomer's glass ceiling. Yes, Virginia, there is still that other glass ceiling, but I'm referring to the one that neither men nor women can break through until our parents' generation (typically those born between 1944

and 1962) retires, if they are even planning on retiring. Generally, Baby Boomers have a strong sense of loyalty to their employer and are not yet ready to leave the workplace. Those that are retiring from their primary career seem to be going on for Act Two. That "having it all" Boomer mentality seems to be following them into "retirement."

We are also simultaneously managing the next generation, the Millennials (with birthdays between 1982 and 2003), training them and shaking our heads at them because they don't work as hard as we do (yes, I know, this article is full of broad generalizations but it's really just an essay). I am certainly not the first to compare Generation X to the middle child in a family, but the comparison is apt because my generation is bridging the gap between the older Boomers and the younger Millennials. Millennials are in a tough spot, and I don't envy them. I worked really hard to get to where I am,



but my hard work was coupled with great opportunity. Once the Great Recession hit, the opportunities that were present for my generation are not nearly as readily available for the younger generation. The Millennials are just now joining the workforce, if they've been lucky enough to get that opportunity.

If you're a Gen-Xer like me, then you are probably also concerned about our economy coming out of the recession, our future, and what our world will look like in the next 5, 10, 25 years. Where will our work come from? How will we continue to make our law firms prosper? Will our in-house friends ever dig out of the mounds of work under which they are buried? Will there ever be enough money, time, or resources for our friends serving the underprivileged? You wonder when we will get to retire, and if we will still be trying to keep Social Security afloat. Then again, I think we have pretty much given up on the idea of Social Security for us because we are constantly



adjusting our 401(k)'s and our kids' 529's. We have seen our homes lose ridiculous amounts of value, and along with that value, our equity. We have come to accept that our homes will be worth their original purchase prices sometime in the next decade or so.

We are also parents. Working from home with sick kids to get a merger to the finish line or to put the final touches on motions by filing deadlines is not out of the ordinary. Balance is constantly elusive, but we try anyway...taking our iPhones and iPads to soccer, dance, the dinner table. We are always, always, always online. I work at night after my children are in bed. I work on weekends. I can't remember the last time I put my "out of office" notification on my email. I have a reduced billable hours target at my firm, but I am still a "full time" lawyer. Just because I'm not in the office on Thursdays doesn't mean that I am "off" that day. My clients expect me to respond to them in a timely manner, so I do. I am grateful to work in

a firm that supports me in my decision to work less than 1800 hours every year, but I also know that I must not abuse the flexibility I have been afforded.

I know that I am probably one of the very few of my generation who has not embraced social media. I don't tweet, post on Facebook, or use LinkedIn. Spare me your arguments – I've heard them all and am still not convinced I need any of it. I'll probably join some social network that has yet to be created when my kids have joined it and I need to monitor their use. Until then, you can send me an old-fashioned email if you want to reach me.

I don't know if others in my generation are wondering the same kinds of "what now" questions as me. I think I should be doing more...more at work, more with my kids, more at home. I think about what else or what more I would like to accomplish.

But then again, when I am still and my mind is truly quiet, I know that I am

where I should be, and that I am incredibly fortunate to be where I am. I am raising my children. I'm good at my job, and I enjoy the challenges it brings. I know I sacrificed a full time career (and forewent the attending salary) to spend more time with my family, and I'm glad. Others have made different choices on their ways to becoming grown-ups, and those choices are theirs to make. I don't judge others' choices because I can't. Each of us makes the decisions we believe are best for us, whatever that may mean for each of us. I only know what my choices mean for me. A good friend of mine recently told me that if things are going easily for you, then you are probably in the right place. And so, there it is. I am in my right place; just where I'm supposed to be. I hope that you, too, when you find yourself to be a grown-up, are in your right place, just as you are supposed to be. ■

*Suzana is a partner at Brouse McDowell and was co-chair of the OWBA Golf Classic.*

## Calendar of Events

### OWBA Annual Meeting

May 2  
Columbus

### OWBF Annual Leadership Luncheon

May 30  
Columbus

### Social Media Seminar

May 31  
Cincinnati

### Leading with Style

June 20, 2013  
Cincinnati ■

(See all OWBA events at [www.OWBA.org/events](http://www.OWBA.org/events))



## 2013 OWBA Women's Forum and Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 2, 2013

Sheraton on Capitol Square,  
Columbus

Online registration available at  
[www.OWBA.org/events](http://www.OWBA.org/events)

# In the Spirit of Camaraderie

By Jennifer Fuller

Ohio's corporate counsel women took a well-deserved break to enjoy a tour of the locally owned and operated Middle West Spirits distillery on Feb. 27, 2013. Co-founder Ryan Lang led an engaging and informative discussion on the development of the OYO® brand and the building of the local distillery, which currently produces several types of vodka and whiskey, and is located in Columbus' Short North district. Middle West Spirits is committed to using locally sourced ingredients, to the extent possible, and partners with other local start-ups, including the highly acclaimed Jeni's Ice Cream. The success of these local brands energizes the city of Columbus, and contin-

ues to make it an attractive place for OWBA members and others to work and live. In addition to learning about the process of making vodka, all attendees were given the opportunity to sample the various products manufactured in the distillery, including several flavors of vodka and a whiskey.

This event was attended by corporate counsel from across the state representing many varied organizations including large public companies, privately held companies, state courts and government agencies. Kegler Brown Hill and Ritter LPA generously sponsored this event.

The mix and mingle night at Middle West Spirits was the second event hosted by the In-House Counsel Subcommittee, and

continues the mission of OWBA President Michelle Proia Roe to engage corporate counsel and government attorneys. The subcommittee is planning additional events, including a cooking event at the Franklin Park Conservatory in April in partnership with the Association of Corporate Counsel and the OWBF. If you are an in-house attorney, whether in the corporate or public sector, please let the OWBA know so that you may be included in future events. ■

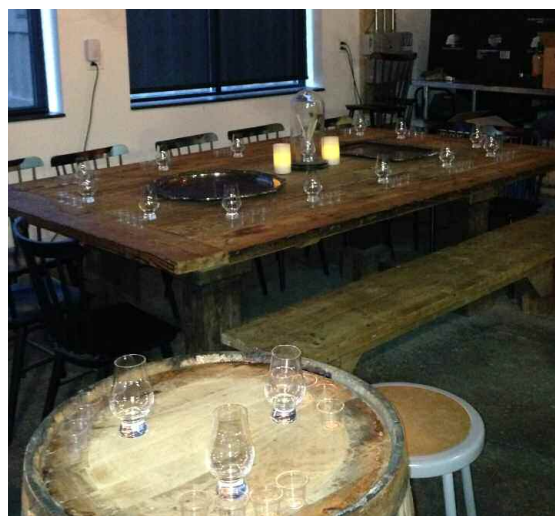
*Jennifer Fuller is in-house counsel at The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company and she spearheads the In-House Counsel Subcommittee in the Columbus area. She is a recent graduate of the OWBF Leadership Institute.*



In-house attorneys enjoy the tasting.



In-house attorneys mingle with one another before the tour and tasting.



An old fashioned table is prepared for the tasting.