

Talented writer gives NAWL more than words

BY PEGGY L. GOLDEN

Selma Moidel Smith not only writes about history—she makes it. A woman of many talents, her most recent accomplishment is her appointment as the first woman to chair the Editorial Board of *Experience* magazine, the publication of the ABA Senior Lawyers Division.

You will not only find her in the first (1977) and other editions of *Who's Who in American Law*, but also the *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* (1987), the first (1958) and other editions of *Who's Who of American Women*, the *Royal Blue Book* (London, 1969), and other biographical references.

She is as fluent in Spanish as she is at the keyboard of a piano. Her writing skills are not limited to legal briefs or historical research, but include published poetry and over 100 piano and instrumental pieces.

Her "Espressivo—Four Piano Pieces" received orchestral premiere in 1986 and was performed at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in 1989.

Ms. Smith is legendary in Los Angeles. At the 1998 installation and awards dinner of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA), she was awarded the first honorary life membership by the association. She has been a member of WLALA for more than 55 years, serving two terms as president (1947, 1948) of the Southern California Women Lawyers and leading the movement to unify SCWL with the

Women Lawyers Club in 1964, which created WLALA.

She was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1943, practicing law with her brothers at Moidel, Moidel & Smith. She

continued to practice law for nearly 45 years before retiring.

Now a Special Member of NAWL, she began chairing committees in 1946 and remained actively involved through 1968. In 1996 she agreed to serve as NAWL liaison to the ABA Senior Lawyers Division, as chair of the Board of Elections for 1997 and 1998, and as a member



Selma Moidel Smith

of the Centennial Committee, authoring the two-part article on NAWL's history which first appeared in *Experience* and is reprinted in this issue of *Women Lawyers Journal* as a centennial tribute and special supplement.

But WLALA, NAWL and the ABA Senior Lawyers Division are not the only beneficiaries of her prodigious talents. She has been involved in numerous civic, bar and arts organizations. For instance, in 1953 Ms. Smith became a charter member of the National Board of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania (now the Medical College of Pennsylvania), founded in 1850 to enable women to train as physicians. During 1980-82 she served as president of that board and in 1998 was honored for 45 years of service.

Selma Moidel Smith will again be honored for her service, this time in Atlanta as part of NAWL's centennial celebration, when NAWL President Susan Fox Gillis presents her with the association's Lifetime of Service Award.

Peggy L. Golden has been executive director of NAWL from July 1994 to August 1999.

A Special Tribute Section
for the

National Association of Women Lawyers



Centennial Anniversary

1899-1999

Researched and written by Selma Moidel Smith