



Tea Tips

(The inside scoop on the Tea and why you should plan to be there!)

Background (or “A Tea? What’s a Tea?”): The Women in Law Tea was launched in 2000 as a way of recognizing the pioneering women who attended Mitchell Hamline (then the St. Paul College of Law) when there were very few of them enrolled and as a way of celebrating the progress and promise of women in law. In the 1950s, the women attending law school gathered periodically for tea (complete with hats and gloves) to get to know each other, support each other, and commiserate over the difficulties they faced in breaking into what was still a very male-dominated field. In 2010 the Tea was renamed in honor of its founder and is now known as The Justice Esther M. Tomljanovich ’55 Tea for Women in Law.

Over the years, the Tea has grown into the largest networking event Mitchell Hamline hosts each year, with more than 200 students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends attending annually. While a few brave men attend each year, the event is predominantly attended by women.

Tip #1: You don’t really have to wear a hat (or gloves).

Really. Plenty of folks don’t like to wear hats, or don’t have one. No problem. If you’d like to join in the fun, however, and don’t have your own hat, hats belonging to Justice Tomljanovich will be available to wear for pictures. If you’re not interested, don’t worry about it. You won’t be the only one without a hat.

Tip #2: There is tea at the Tea.

You don’t have to drink it, of course, but each year we feature different teas to try. There is no charge for the Tea, and students may also attend the preceding CLE at no charge. But, we do need to know if you’re coming, so please be courteous and RSVP. (That’s actually Tip 2A.)

Tip #3: Plan to go with a friend. Or ask WLSA for help. Or stop by the Welcome table. Just don’t talk yourself into not going because you won’t know anyone or will be walking in the door alone.

We get it. It can be intimidating to walk into a huge roomful of people you don’t know where it seems like everyone already knows everyone else (even if they don’t really). So here are a few ideas for making it more comfortable to think about attending the Tea. The easiest thing to do—whether you’re a student or an alum—is to recruit a friend to go with you. If you’re a 1L, your Lawyering group is a great place to find someone to go with you; your Mitchell Hamline Mentors team is another.

But if you're coming up empty, you still have a few options. Students can ask WLSA to get them connected with some other students who will be attending. Or you can be brave and go by yourself and head directly to the Welcome Table (which will be conveniently located close to the front door). There you'll find others who came by themselves, and some friendly students and alumni whose sole purpose is to introduce you to some other people and help you feel comfortable.

Tip #4: Meet new people (at least three)

Yes, it's fun to catch up with your friends, but the Tea is the biggest networking event of the year, and you really don't want to miss out on the chance to meet and talk with our amazing alumni. Remember, not every conversation needs to be about where someone works or what they're doing or hope to do with their law degree. Pledge to yourself that you'll meet at least three new people during the event, and then make it happen. Don't be afraid to ask for someone's card and follow up to see if you can meet them for coffee or lunch. You'd be surprised how few people do this.

Tip #5: Dress professionally

You want to make a nice impression. The majority of our attendees will be coming straight from work, so plan to dress professionally. That doesn't have to mean a suit and heels, but give some thought to what you wear.

Tip #6: Stop by even if you have to leave early or arrive late

There's no rule that says you have to stay for the entire event. If you have class or need to pick up your child or have other obligations that will prevent you from staying for 2 hours, then attend during the time you do have available. You can still make some great connections in a short amount of time. Be aware that there is a short program from about 6-6:15, which we highly recommend, as it's worth your while to hear what Justice Tomljanovich has to say.

Tip #7: Get your (free) photo taken with your friends at the photo booth

The photo booth is just a fun way to memorialize the occasion with a photograph taken by a professional photographer. It's absolutely free and we'll send out a link later when we post the photos to Flickr so you can download your photo (again, at no cost). You can also borrow any of Justice Tomljanovich's hats for your photo. So be sure to stop by the photo booth for a solo or group shot.

We hope we've answered all your questions and you're excited to attend the Tea! Don't forget to RSVP!

****Still have questions? Contact allison.burke@mitchellhamline.edu*****