

As a judge on the District Court of Maryland, I write to express dismay at reading “Girl Power on the Bench,” which appeared on the On the Record blog on July 17. The subject is interesting, for sure: the number of female judges continues to rise in the United States and in Maryland, in particular. It is, indeed, promising to know that women make up 34.4 percent of the Judiciary in Maryland, but it also shows that we still have work to do.

It certainly does not help the cause of equality to illustrate this subject with an early ‘90s photograph featuring the then-popular singing group, The Spice Girls, dressed in scanty outfits and striking “girl power” poses. Presumably the photo accompanies the author’s statement regarding the rise of female appointments to the bench: “That is some girl power, as the Spice Girls would say, though this situation may call more for black robes than leather pants and platform heels.”

One would imagine that in 2012 this would go without saying, but here it goes. Female judges are not “girls” and we did not get appointed to the bench by “girl power.” As women, we overcame obstacles in the legal profession, worked diligently and excelled in our areas of practice, and distinguished ourselves intellectually and professionally. Most of us also cared for children, family, and households at the same time we were studying, working, and serving our communities.

The Spice Girls photograph and reference in the context of the rise of female judicial appointments is plainly obnoxious and demeaning. The late in the day removal of the photograph and headline, with the comment that they were meant to “draw readers to the study's very interesting results” shows that The Daily Record does not get it. But, as a judge, I strive to be patient.

So, do you want to know what I really (really) want? An apology. A sincere apology to all the judges (male and female) who were offended by the post.

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