

# KBA MEMBER PROFILE

By Tonya Foster-Bell, Editorial Assistant

## Smoky Hills attorney making a difference with music, teaching, and the law

The golden plains nestled in the Smoky Hills of central Kansas are the perfect setting for the music of songwriter, singer, teacher, and attorney Ann Zimmerman. With songs like "Rolling Home 1-70 Blues," she takes her listeners on a step-by-step journey through the middle of her home state and evokes memories for her fellow native Kansans.

On her website, [www.annzimman.com](http://www.annzimman.com), her music is described as a "blending of old and new folksongs, cabaret numbers, and her own creations." Zimmerman, who calls her music business "A to Z Music," describes her singing and songwriting not as a hobby, but as a job.

Growing up in Salina, where she continues to reside with her husband, Dexter Eggers, an attorney with the Salina Regional Public Defender's office, music was a constant in her home. She enjoyed singing while her mother accompanied her on the autoharp.

She started entertaining people of all ages with music when she was quite young. "I've been involved in music since I was a child, when we sang around the house all the time," she said. "I sang in the church choir and my brothers and I sang concerts of folk songs with my mother when we were in grade school."

Zimmerman's love of music has been a faithful companion into adulthood. She began performing professionally in her mid-twenties. While attending Harvard Law School, where she graduated with her degree in 1988, Zimmerman played several Boston coffeehouses and cafes, even getting involved in the management of one of them which was located across the street from the law school. Then she played not so much for money, but to keep her sanity. "It was enormous fun, inspiring, relaxing and full of camaraderie," she said. "I wouldn't describe my law school experience in those same terms."

Zimmerman had the honor of being selected to perform at the dedication of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and is now appearing annually at the world-renowned Land Institute near Salina. She has also appeared in New York City's Greenwich Village, Juneau's Alaskan Hotel, and at regional and national conferences. She is not only recognized for her performing ability, but also her songwriting. She is the recipient of the 2002 Flint Hills Gathering song writing contest.

"Most people think of musical performances in relation to bars and concert halls," she said. But, she plays at festivals, farmers markets, and at fancy theaters.

In 1993, Zimmerman recorded her first album, "Love and Weather" at Emerald City Recording Studios in Wichita. Her follow up album, "Canned Goods" was recorded in 1998 at Chapman Recording Studios in Kansas City, Mo.

She has shared the stage with folk musician, John McCutcheon; songwriter, Steve Gillette; Celtic singer, Connie Dover; author, Wendell Berry; and many others.

Her idols and inspirations include such musical heavy hitters as James Taylor, Simon & Garfunkle, and Karen Carpenter. Her later inspirations have been Bonnie Raitt and Nancy Griffith.

"But as far as performances go, I'd have to name Pete Seeger as my greatest inspiration," she said. "He sings songs that make a difference in the world, and he gets every audience singing along as an integral part of the show."

Zimmerman did not begin her non-musical professional career in law. She received a bachelors degree in elementary education from Kansas State University. After graduation, she began teaching inner city children in Kansas City. Although her career as a teacher was short lived, it made

What became a life altering impression on her. This impression along with her long standing interest in various causes inspired her to choose a third career in the law. "Often times the way to make changes is to change the law," she said. She began her legal career working for Kansas Legal Services. Her concentration is now on mediation with Ann Zimmerman Mediation Services. One of the aspects of mediation she likes is preserving relationships.

Zimmerman also wants to make a difference with her music. She spends a great deal of time playing at schools and conducting song writing workshops. "I love to do it, it's relaxing and the schools invite me back."

One of her personal causes is protecting the environment. She spent a year interning at the Land Institute, [www.landinstitute.org](http://www.landinstitute.org), near Salina. Zimmerman spent six years, including one year as president, on the Board of the Kansas Natural Resource Council. The mission of the organization is to make information about environmental issues available to the Kansas Legislature and citizens.

Zimmerman and her husband, Dexter Eggers, have added horses as another business in their busy lives. Eggers has a deep love for horses and in Zimmerman's words, he "grew up with (and on) horses." In 2000, the couple moved to their E Bar Z boarding stables. They offer horse boarding and riding lessons. "This has been my first experience of daily contact with horses and horse owners," she said. "It's been quite an adventure."

The blend of law, singing, songwriting, teaching, and "horses" has given Ann Zimmerman a varied and interesting life. Only time will tell if there are new careers on the horizon for her.



(above) Silhouette of Ann Zimmerman as she performs. (right) She does her part at the E Bar Z boarding stables by mucking out stalls.

