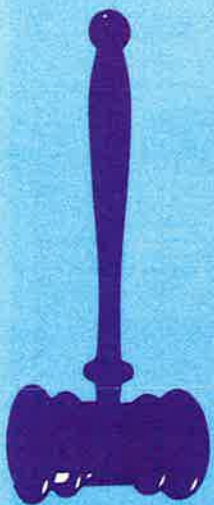


LEADING WOMEN LAWYERS IN NYC

LEGAL LIST



2018

Meet some of the New York Bar's most talented lawyers, who just happen to be women

The 100 New Yorkers named to the inaugural list of Leading Women Lawyers in New York City, powered by *Crain's* Custom, are trailblazers who found multiple paths to excellence. Some are partners and practice leaders at the city's big law firms, others corporate counsel at Manhattan companies. Some unabashedly champion their fellow minority female attorneys, while others feed their passions for public service by donating their time generously to pro bono causes. These are women who juggle both distinguished careers and exceptional civic and philanthropic activities.

In acknowledging the talents of these 100 women, *Crain's* is merely tapping into New York's rich history of female lawyers who refused to be defined by their gender.

Since the 1800s, the state has been home to "amazing trailblazing women attorneys who broke through barriers and blatant discrimination to make major contributions in the legal profession," the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Women in the Law recently noted. "Their stories are ones of fierce determination, passion for the law, keen intelligence, and inspiring achievement."

In an age when women grace the Supreme Court of the United States, it may seem out of date to celebrate the achievements of one particular gender. Yet as far as female attorneys have come, let's not forget what has dominated the news headlines: high-profile cases of sexual harassment against women.

"It's a mixed sense of it's about time, but also, we've been through this before," said Myra Freed, president of the New York Women's Bar Association.

She is referring, of course, to law professor Anita Hill's testimony and allegations of sexual harassment made during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings in 1991.

That history is important to note. Some 130 years after Kate Stoneman became the first woman, in 1886, to be admitted to the New York bar, these 100 women celebrated by *Crain's* have climbed

to the heights of their careers against a background of sometimes blatant, sometimes unconscious bias. Only a very foolish man, though, would try to objectify or demean these gifted attorneys.

"When someone said obnoxious things or made a stupid comment, I was so incredulous I'd laugh and say, 'Are you kidding me?' because it was so ridiculous," said Terri Adler, who chairs the real estate practice at Duval & Stachenfeld. "I'm not afraid to confront people openly."

Adler reminds young lawyers to present themselves as "being as good or better than anyone in the room, because you are."

Although statistics document a historic lack of gender parity, in a November report, the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance announced that the percentage of women promoted to partnership in 2017 in many of the country's largest and top-grossing law firms was at a six-year high: 38.1%, up five percentage points since 2012. Another welcome statistic: 32.3% of law firms had a new partner class consisting of at least 50% females.

The numbers are moving in the right direction, but they should be moving along faster.

"The reason we track them is the importance of documenting the partnership pipeline," said Manar Morales, the alliance's president and chief executive. "Firms have to dig behind the partnership numbers, and look where they went wrong or did well."

Morales advises law firms to keep close watch on who they elevate to partner. If there are too few women, they must reassess whether females have access to power in the firm structure, and guard against unconscious bias and blind spots. Law firms must also lean on specific tools that cultivate the careers of younger female attorneys and give them access to training, client development, mentoring and management opportunities. Law firms also should track why associates leave, and set goals to address problems that can include a lack of flexible work policies that improve retention.

Many partners on the *Crain's* 100 list are in a position to boost that pipeline of female talent. There are more than 15 practice area chairs, at least five law firm managing partners, and a few firm founders. With such exceptional talent among our inaugural class of Leading Women Lawyers, no doubt the future ratio of female partners will rise at New York law firms as these exceptional women mentor a new generation of legal superstars. ■

The profiles in this report are drawn from submitted nomination materials as well as from Crain's Custom research. No lawyer paid to be featured. There is an exceptional pool of talented female attorneys in New York. We recognize that this year's inaugural list is not comprehensive, and look forward to a future of exceptional potential honoree nominations as the Leading Women Lawyers in New York City becomes a new tradition for the city's legal community. Please join Crain's Custom in congratulating a truly impressive inaugural class.



JAIMEE L. NARDIELLO

Partner

ZETLIN & DE CHIARA

Jaimee Nardiello focuses on disputes involving construction, contracts and environmental/energy laws on behalf of her clients in the design industry. In her role, she negotiates contracts in transactions for high-profile construction projects, represents clients in commercial litigation, and works on intellectual property disputes. She is the current president-elect of Commercial Real Estate Women of New York.

Legal power: 100 female attorneys define success

Female lawyers are well aware of the slow improvement in statistics on gender equality for equity partners at the country's big law firms. About 50% of law school graduates and new associate hires are women, but women hold only 19% of equity partner and other leadership positions in law firms. That figure is up slightly from 16% a decade earlier, according to the 2017 annual report by the National Association of Women Lawyers on retention and promotion, which says that women are more likely to hold positions that are "either non-partner track and/or lower status than the ownership position of equity partner."

And yet behind those frustrating statistics are the stories of spectacular success. The 100 women on the inaugural list of Leading Women Lawyers in New York City serve in leadership roles, oversee mega-mergers, negotiate pre-trial settlements and are dedicated to advancing diversity. They are role models for the next generation of female lawyers. As success begets success, those stagnant statistics undoubtedly will rise, thanks to the trailblazers among *Crain's* 100 women lawyers.

"It is incredibly important for our women to see role models, and what is attainable," said corporate lawyer Valerie Radwaner, deputy chair of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. "We talk about diversity and inclusion all the time. Clients bring it up. We know we're a stronger firm because we have diverse voices in gender and race."

Between 2012 and 2018, nine of the 29 people promoted to partner at Paul, Weiss were women. Having such role models "sends a powerful message to female lawyers that this is a changing world," says Audra Soloway, co-chair of the firm's securities litigation and enforcement group.

That same message is embedded in the stories of women like Allison Yacker, a member of Katten Muchin Rosenman's board of directors. Or Lynn Neuner, recently appointed one of Simpson Thacher's two administrative partners, only the second female to hold that post in the firm's 133-year history. Or Colleen Caden, chair of Pryor Cashman's immigration group and a member of the firm's executive committee. Or Daryn Grossman, co-chair of Proskauer's

250-lawyer global corporate department and head of the life sciences group.

Research shows that the factors working against the retention of female lawyers are work/life balance, unconscious bias and the gender pay gap. The mentoring message from our pack of power lawyers is that there are strategies to achieving work/life balance that are increasingly becoming formal policies.

Laurin Blumenthal Kleiman has devoted nearly 3,000 hours over the past five years to improving the experience of women at Sidley Austin, where she is firmwide co-chair of the committee on retention and promotion of women. The result is the implementation of significant new policies, benefits, programs and practices over the last three years that dramatically lowered attrition rates among women lawyers and raised the percentage of female partners.

To pull up the next generation, our leading women lawyers are deeply committed to mentoring. At the Arab American Bar Association, President Yasmin Dwedat speaks of a "great desire to mentor" among her group, which includes among its goals introducing high school girls to law as a career to boost the ranks of female attorneys of Arab descent.

Retention and mentoring also are key issues for Jamie Wine, Latham & Watkins' global chair of the Litigation & Trial Department and a mother of two. She calls it "disheartening" when a woman prematurely makes a decision to drop out of the partnership track because of work/life balance.

"You don't know what 10 years down the road looks like. I focus my mentoring on [the idea] that it's ok if you don't know how it will all balance out. You have no idea about your future support network or husband or in-laws," said Wine. "It's ok to have that uncertainty. You will have good days and bad, but don't lose sight of the big picture."

As they mentor, these leading women lawyers stress that how success is defined is a very personal choice. Asked what advice they would give younger female attorneys, our lawyers said that success to one woman may mean chairing her practice area, while others may lean toward motherhood and a longer path to partnership.

"There's no one definition of success," said Taurie Zeitzer, a Paul, Weiss senior

M&A partner and a mother who labels herself a "Type A, 24/7 person who doesn't sleep. Someone else will prioritize differently. The choices are personal."

"There is no one single path down the road," is the advice given to young women by Terri Adler, chair of the real estate practice at Duval & Stachenfeld. In an industry where seventh-year associates leave firms because of the pull of parenthood, retention is a key issue. "I can't provide them a plan or tell them here are the rules," she added, "but since I run the group, I can help craft a solution that fits their situation."

Adler speaks from experience. She didn't marry until she found a husband who would stand "shoulder to shoulder with me as a partner," she said, supporting her passion for her job. She gave birth at 39. How she found work/life balance spells success for her, but might not for another woman, she said.

"As women, we want to do everything perfectly, to be the best lawyer, wife and mother. You get stressed out because you are trying to do something unachievable. So you make choices," she said. "Today I am putting my job first, and tomorrow it's the kids."

That Adler is a wildly successful lawyer, practice head and mother means she is a powerful role model for other women at Duval & Stachenfeld, where there are four females among 27 equity partners. Seven of 34 partners are female, three of whom are on alternative tracks with reduced hours.

Stacie Trott, a real estate partner nearing the due date of her first child when she spoke with *Crain's*, said "seeing Terri at the helm was very influential." Advice from Adler that particularly resonated: some days you are an amazing lawyer, other days an amazing mother, and that's ok. "The beauty of that is it takes the pressure off to be great at both," added Trott. "I know there will be good days and bad, and always a pull in both directions."

Such blanket permission to embrace a personal definition of success is sure to influence the retention rate of female lawyers, moving those gender parity stats in the right direction. And so to next year's crop of *Crain's* Leading Women Lawyers, take this message from the powerful women who came before you: It's ok to make a career decision that's right for you. Go ahead. They support you. ■

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