

2019

Women Leaders in Law and Business: Trailblazers, Innovators, and Disrupters in the Law

Women, Law & Leadership
Seminar and Ideas Lab



Women Trailblazers in Law and Business: Profiles in Leadership

This database on profiles on transformative leadership is the first of its kind on women's leadership stories developed in the law school classroom.

Penn Law's Women, Law & Leadership seminar examined the underrepresentation of women in leadership in law and business and the policy and strategic imperatives that could equalize the playing field for all women and reconceptualize the workplace for both women and men. The research on the barriers to leadership were conducted through interviews with women leaders who have helped to dismantle structural barriers and blazed a trail for other women in law, business and public life. Through this research on the lived experiences of women in law and business, the seminar advanced a transformative theory of leadership based on a model of gender equality, fairness, and macroeconomics. The narratives of women's leadership can serve as a powerful charge to the next generation of leaders, transform the political economy of our time and create a new theory of justice.

Seminar taught by:

Dr. Rangita de Silva de Alwis

Seminar Students:

May Alajlan
Lauren Altus
Saba Bajwa
Emily Brody-Bizar
Farah Chalisa
Elysa Desa
Meghan Downey
Alexandra Eaton
Chukwufumnanya Ekhaton
Kathryn Gardner
Sophia Gaulkin
Sharon George
Katherine Godar
Ravina Gogna
Allie Gottlieb
Sarah Heberlig
Lindsay Holcomb
Brendan Holman
Heng-Jui Hsing
Amanda Jonas

Kunal Kanodia
Kimberly Kelly
Damini Kunwar
Eduarda Lague
Astrid Lindfelt
Michael Machado
Raisa Masud
Ghaida Meaigel
Emi Mitani
Michelle Mlacker
Agnese Nadalini
Chrissy Pak
Marie-Sophie Revault
Samuel Romm
Claire Samuelson
Jessie Sarkis
Katherine Schroeder
Amal Sethi
Sara Shayanian
Jessica Shieh

Trinny Terrazas
Paola Valderrama Ortiz
Molly Wolfe
Amy Woodward
Shiyuan Yin

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

Martha Minow
300th Anniversary University Professor, Harvard University

and

Deborah Rhode
Ernest W. McFarland Professor of Law
Stanford Law School

Two of the greatest legal scholars of our time, but more importantly,
two of the great moral voices on equality in the 21st century.

Introduction

“Even when the path is nominally open –where there is nothing to prevent women from becoming a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant – there are many phantoms and obstacles as I believe looming in her way...To discuss and define them is I think of great value and importance. For only then can the labor be shared, and difficulties solved.”

-Virginia Woolf

“*Cessante ratione legis, cessat ipsa lex.* If the reason for a law ceases, the law itself must cease. I hope the women in your class will seek out laws and unwritten rules that no longer serve a purpose and help lead us to new rules that will better serve everyone.”

-Amy Weaver, General Counsel, Salesforce

Western civilization’s vision of a leader grew out of heroic epics: The Iliad and The Odyssey- a brave warrior leading by example in the Trojan War. The warrior-leader model is still part of our public conscience, but the idea that leadership is a divine or masculine trait has long been debunked. At a time of global public reckoning, more must be done to develop a woman lawyer-statesman vision of leadership, to elevate the study of women’s leadership to a higher intellectual plane, and help shape a more inclusive research agenda for the next generation of leaders, leadership scholars, and practitioners.

“Despite the primary focus on women’s leadership in law and business, we explored gender as only one axis of difference and expanded our analysis to cover the shape-shifting nature of leadership across political economies and across different periods of socio-economic change.”

These interviews by the members of the class on Women, Law, and Leadership offer analysis and insights into some of the most significant changes in leadership from a gender perspective. Despite the primary focus on women’s leadership in law and business, we explored gender as only one axis of difference and expanded our analysis to cover the shape-shifting nature of leadership across political economies and across different periods of socio-economic change. Nonetheless, the overarching theme remains that global and transnational transformations impact women’s work in law and business in the US. By interviewing women from different generations both in terms of age and political shifts, the narratives attempt to capture the richness of different gender perspectives across geography, race, ethnicity, religious, cultural, and political diversity in women’s leadership, its underlying tensions, intersectionalities, and commonalities. The generational themes are mined further in interviews that are conducted between mother and daughter and in an especially poignant interview between student Emily Brody-Bizar and her grandmother, Judge Anita Brody.

There is an emerging visibility of a new generation of leaders who are advancing a diversity of thought and policies that showcase that women’s rights are a signifier of social and economic progress. We examine the macro- economics of women’s leadership in the model “Diversity Index on Gender and Business” that we helped develop for the Saudi Kingdom under its Vision 2030. We also raise many new questions about employment practice through a gender perspective in our “Ideas Lab.” These questions brought up in the “Ideas Lab” are further

explored through interviews and women's narratives. How can economic and demographic changes propel new intersectional policies and laws? What difference do changes in traditional and stereotypical caregiving roles add to new lawmaking? What difference does women's mobilization in the workplace make to women's rights reforms at work and in public life?

“There is an emerging visibility of a new generation of leaders who are advancing a diversity of thought and policies that showcase that women's rights are a signifier of social and economic progress.”

These women's narratives on leadership help document the dramatic transformations in a changing demographics of work. What is the bigger story about overall changes in the global women's movements and their political impact on laws and policies in the workplace? In our attempt to identify general patterns and trends, we recognize that sometimes this comes at the cost of overlooking important particularities such as various individual and political demands that women face. However, a central claim that we can make is that one of the most important determinants of new gender-based policies adopted in the recent past in the workplace are due to women's own desire to see change. These narratives add to the small but growing literature in the subject that focuses on changes in the future of work.

“These women's narratives on leadership help document the dramatic transformations in a changing demographics of work. What is the bigger story about overall changes in the global women's movements and their political impact on laws and policies in the workplace?”

It is a personal privilege to thank a few leaders who were important to this enterprise. Dorothy Roberts, Regina Austin, Radhika Coomaraswamy, and Deborah Rhode are featured in this compendium and played a defining role in shaping my own feminist legal consciousness in the early 1990s. It was a special honor to re-read with my students, Deborah Rhode's works, *Women and Leadership* (2017) and *Character* (2019). The depth of her influence on my class can be measured by the way many students reference her work in their interviews.

Cary Coglianese's insights on leadership theory, and enthusiasm for this class and its outcomes, encouraged and sustained me, all the while reinforcing how critical male leaders can be in their support of women's empowerment, its theory, and its practice. I am grateful to Dean Theodore Ruger for letting me teach this class in the Fall of 2019. Finally, a thank you to the women leaders and friends who joined by Zoom meeting from Sweden to Zimbabwe, well past midnight, to speak to the class.

“[Students] are looking at feminist legal theory from different lenses, including, post-colonial theory and hybridity. For them, as students who are multi-cultural, these are not only important theories but relevant applications to their lives as scholars and leaders.”

Students Sharon George, Chukfumnanya Ekhtator, Eduarda Lague, Farah Chalisa, Charlotte Yin, and Michael Machado are examining feminist legal theory from different lenses, including, post-colonial theory and hybridity. For them, as multi-cultural students, these are not only important theories but relevant to their lives as scholars and leaders. Their work as leaders becomes more complicated as they interrogate gender inequality. They have asked me questions

about my own ideas in these areas and my own personal awakenings in these fields. Their questions probe deeply personal stories. Every morning from ages five to 15, my grandfather walked me to school. Although trained in the British legal system, he represented some of the ancient Buddhist and Hindu temples in his country which had lost their lands and priceless religious artifacts to colonizers. In those long walks, he instilled in me a love of looking at law through multiple lenses, and the importance of making new rules when none exist, or where they are unequal. My much-admired friend, Amy Weaver, General Counsel of Salesforce, gave my class the same advice that I had received so many years ago: “I hope your students lead us to new rules that will better serve everyone.”

“The expected outcome of the seminar was to test ideas, to create, and to experiment with new thinking on leadership to advance policy prescriptions that level the playing field. The unexpected outcome of the seminar was that it became a lab for students to question unexamined assumptions about gender, race and culture that hurt the global economy, hamper a diversity of thought, and undermine the global public good.”

The 45 Women, Law, and Leadership students grappled with big ideas, engaged with leaders, challenging and questioning leadership paradigms in ways that will change the way we look at leadership. The expected outcome of the seminar was to test ideas, to create, and to experiment with new thinking on leadership to advance policy prescriptions that level the playing field. The unexpected outcome of the seminar was that it became a lab for students to question unexamined assumptions about gender, race and culture that hurt the global economy, hamper a diversity of thought, and undermine the global public good. The future belongs to these change-agents and innovators, and they will go on to respond to the boundary-pushing questions they asked in class and in these interviews, by developing more equal laws, policies, rules, and practices.

Rangita de Silva de Alwis
Associate Dean of International Affairs
University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School
Nonresident Leadership Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School of Government’s Women and
Public Policy Program (2019-2020)
Distinguished Advisor, Under Secretary General Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka,
Executive Director of UN Women

Methodology

The interviews set out to examine a transformative model of leadership based on women lawyers who are consciously and unconsciously playing the role of statesmen struggling to break down barriers in the world. Despite evidence-based research that women's leadership is smart macroeconomics, unequal caregiving responsibilities, conscious and unconscious gender bias, stereotypes, and exclusion from professional development networks, reinforce women's underrepresentation in leadership both in public and private. Historical narratives, too, give primacy to powerful leadership positions of male lawyers and have rendered women in the law invisible.

Students were presented with a set of guiding principles and were encouraged to delve deep into the narrative of a woman leader and develop questions based on her experiences and her role as a disrupter in questioning unexamined assumptions on gender equality, diversity, and women's leadership. Moreover, students were asked to situate these narratives within the economic and social changes of the time.

Group interviews were conducted with women leaders who visited our class in person or by Zoom meeting. In addition to class group interviews, students were asked to conduct interviews with women leaders who fit the following criteria:

1. Trailblazers in the law who have paved the way for other women, and who are committed to heterogeneity and diversity of race, ethnicity and thought.
2. Trailblazers who are developing new policies, paradigms and practices in the global and political economies and new technologies.
3. Trailblazers whose personal and professional histories resonate with the young leader's own personal narratives and aspirations.

As a class we studied McKinsey's longitudinal data on diversity in the workplace. Treating gender diversity like the business imperative it is involves setting targets, tracking indicators, and holding leaders accountable. While correlation does not equal causation, a cause and effect dynamic does indeed indicate that when companies commit themselves to diverse leadership, they are more successful. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to outperform their respective national medians. Research has now established the link between company financial performance and diversity points to a growth strategy based on greater inclusion. While the data is clear, the most powerful model of change is that of women's own voices and narratives of women's lived experiences as trailblazers and leaders. Through women's stories, these interviews bring to the surface gender-sensitive structural changes that are needed to address biases, barriers and boundaries that hold women and their economies back.

Class Visits with Women Leaders:

- Lubna Olayan, CEO, Olayan Investments and the first woman to head a publicly traded bank in the Middle East
- Dina Powell, Partner, Goldman Sachs and former Deputy National Security Adviser to the President of the United States
- Silda Spitzer, Former First Lady of New York and Chair of the Metropolitan Fund - a women-owned private equity fund

The following leaders visited class in person or by Zoom meeting

- Crystal Nix-Hines, President Obama's Ambassador to UNESCO and Partner, Quinn Emanuel
- Radhika Coomaraswamy - Under Secretary General and Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict
- Justice Sisi Khampepe - Acting Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and formerly of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Sandie Okoro - General Counsel of the World Bank
- Dr. Kamakshi Sivaramakrishnan - Founder CEO of Drawbridge (sold to LinkedIn/Microsoft)
- Natalie Jabangwe - CEO of EcoCash, Africa's second largest fintech/mobile money venture
- Linda Addison - Immediate Past Managing Partner of Norton Rose & Fulbright; Director of the Board of KPMG
- Amy Weaver - General Counsel of Salesforce
- Jodi Schwartz - Partner Wachtel Lipton
- Maura Pally - Executive Vice President of Clinton Foundation
- Maria-Pia Hope - CEO of Vinge, the leading law firm in Sweden
- Wilma Wallace - General Counsel of REI
- Megha Parekh - General Counsel of the Jacksonville Jaguars - the only woman of color General Counsel in the NFL
- Marissa Wesley - Partner Simpson Thacher; Co-Founder of Win-Win Strategies
- Salome Cissal - One of the top ten businesswomen/lawyers in Brussels (Politico)
- Rachel Vogelstein - Director of Women and Foreign Policy Program at the Council on Foreign Relations; Advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
- Carolyn Edgar - General Counsel BNY Mellon
- Ophelia Dahl - Founder of Partners in Health
- Karen King - Managing Director and Chief Legal Officer, Silver Lake, largest VC fund for technology
- Vanessa Liu - Co-Founder Trigger Media
- Judge Yvonne Campos, Superior Court of California, County of San Diego
- Fatima AlQabaisi - UAE lawyer/entrepreneur
- Indira Jaising - Senior Counsel and first woman to argue a case before the Indian Supreme Court
- Farahnaz Ispahani - Woodrow Wilson Public Policy Fellow and Former Human Rights Advisor to the President of Pakistan
- Meenakshi Gopinath - First woman on India's National Security Council

Editorial Team Leaders:

Lindsay Holcomb
Katherine Schroeder
Michael Machado
Sarah Heberlig
Eduarda Lague

“We have so much to learn from the younger generation. They are the ones that push us, and part of this lab on leadership is driven by our students who are developing an understanding of [...] the biases and boundaries and borders that prevent women from self-actualizing, and from reaching their full potential, and from pushing the boundaries of society, and coming up with bias and borders and boundary interrupters – and ways in which we can dismantle those biases, boundaries, and borders.”

- Associate Dean Rangita de Silva de Alwis, in conversation with seminar students

Student Reflections

Michael Machado

The primary goal of our interviews both inside and outside of the classroom was to compile the first database of women leaders in the law at a law school. We also elicited these narratives as part of a broader effort to identify women's leadership philosophies and to craft the parameters of our own proposals for barrier-breaking policy (the Ideas Lab). This methodology is emblematic of what I take to be the course's most powerful feature: the fact that it centers women unapologetically. This is significant because, as law students, we discover early on that the judges whose opinions we read are predominantly male; that the professors whose lectures we sit for are predominantly male; that the academic spheres in which these male professors operate are themselves, you guessed it, predominantly male. Now, women students at Penn are not themselves responsible for the entrenchment of these dynamics — but the fact remains that such entrenchment has the effect of repeatedly reinforcing male models of leadership. What the Women, Law and Leadership course achieves, then, by way of its centering women and their leadership narratives, is much-needed disruption to the status quo. By the same token, and as corollary to the point above, the classroom was a welcoming space for males to serve as allies.

Though outnumbered, any one of us males in the room would be remiss if we denied that our gender confers a certain privilege whereby we might likely feel entitled and well within our right to speak often in this class (as is often the case for some men in some of our other classes.) But I think, and I'll speak for myself personally, that having a women-centered class with a majority-women students made it easier for me — not harder — to yield the floor to the women around me and, when appropriate, to engage them in dialogue. This is largely a function both of the language of allyship that Associate Dean de Silva de Alwis employed when describing the men in the class and of recognition, across the board, that men need to be a part of these conversations. Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas wrote about the importance of confronting the "other" in an effort to "engage with the humanity of the people that you think are different from you" (Blackhawk). This is really an important dimension of what the class achieves. The Ideas Lab and interviews were critical components of the course, and their value transcends the classroom walls for a host of reasons. For one, the students themselves authored the concrete policy proposals while in conversation with women leaders and women-authored text. Not only do the policy proposals thus emanate from future women leaders; they emanate from the future beneficiaries of the proposals, the very students in the room who will go on to work in these companies and contexts. This alone could have a transformative impact in various corporate contexts, where we often see a top-down approach to policymaking.

Fumnanya Ekhatior

Changing the narrative seems like a broad and overly general call to action, but it is far less abstract in practice than it appears. The first requirement is a shift in perspective, from what is traditional and entrenched to that which is innovative and unfamiliar. This shift in focus will result in a change in dialogue when we center and highlight voices and experiences that are often overlooked by law schools and legal practitioners: such as women's voices, gender non-conforming voices, voices from abroad, immigrant voices, indigent voices, voices of color, and more. By consistently promoting those that the law has historically overlooked, underestimated, and even silenced, we move beyond a shift in focus to a change in the narrative.

The Lab provides a way to pursue a wide range of experiences that work together to form a cogent study in shaping and foregrounding new narratives. As globalization proceeds at an alarming pace, we as legal practitioners and scholars must rethink the ways in which the law has been allowed to persist for centuries. Western legal tradition, which its emphasis on precedent and reliance on normative intellectual processes, must expand to include the voices of the historically ignored and disenfranchised. Changing the law will require changing the voices that have traditionally shaped it, and that can only come by reframing the narrative. I have greatly valued the opportunities I have had to pursue a study that centers non-traditional experiences and perspectives in order to apply new answers to age-old questions.

Sarah Heberlig

My experience within the Women, Law, and Leadership Lab can best be characterized as that of a butterfly-effect: the variety that starts with a small, but significantly forceful change, and culminates in a resounding impact. As someone who aspires to effect large-scale, positive structural change, the Women, Law, and Leadership Lab has been an incredibly valuable experience for me as a growing woman-leader at my law school. By reading studies from McKinsey, discussing pieces from academics like Deborah Rhode and Joe Nye deconstructing leadership philosophies of leaders like Ida B. Wells and Mohandas Gandhi, we were challenged to develop our own thought paradigms, and directly propose policy solutions to address women's underrepresentation in leadership positions through a geopolitical lens.

Leadership through examples illuminated a key aspect of the course — reconceptualizing leadership for women. I have learned that strong leadership is transformative, rather than transactional; it involves leading by creating a *followership*, whereby women simultaneously invest in ourselves by investing in other women leaders — it is imperative that we let down the ladder for other emerging leaders. I was given the tools to effectively start climbing this ladder and implement my own version of these leadership philosophies. As such, my leadership philosophy has been renewed, and I have begun to harness my voice — I have learned that speaking up and speaking out is not a matter of yes or no, but rather, about bringing depth and substance.

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Wilma Wallace

General Counsel, REI, Inc.

Wilma Wallace is General Counsel, Corporate Secretary, and Vice President for retailer and outdoor recreation services company REI, Inc. As General Counsel, Wallace leads all legal and compliance matters, and as Corporate Secretary, she is responsible for Board governance. Wallace also oversees REI's enterprise information security division, responsible for cybersecurity, privacy and data security risk. Prior to joining REI, Wilma served as Interim General Counsel at Enveritas, a San Francisco Bay Area startup whose mission is to improve the lives of smallholder coffee communities in Africa and Latin America through the development of sustainable practices and technology enabled solutions. Before that, Wilma spent 22 years at Gap, Inc., joining the clothing retailer in 1994 as one of the first five members of its legal department during a period of significant growth. Prior to transitioning from Gap, she migrated over to corporate social responsibility function and led the Gap's humanrights effort.

Interview by Saba Bajwa, Emily Brody-Bizar, Elysa Desa, Michelle Mlacker, and Jessie Sarkis

“Diversity can have a lot of baggage and loaded words, but fundamentally, it's just about people feeling like they are seen and heard.”

J. Sarkis: Hi Wilma. Thank you so much for speaking with us today. To begin, how have the different organizational structures and work environments of the companies for which you've worked influenced your leadership style within those environments?

W. Wallace: I have had the privilege of being involved with two amazing organizations during very exciting times for those organizations. When I started at Gap, Inc., it was a \$4 billion company. It was the first in-house position I held – before then I was at law firms. Gap had just launched Old Navy and Baby Gap was relatively new. I credit myself with having luck to find an organization that was such a great cultural fit for me.

When I talk to students and young people coming of age in their chosen professional path, I think it is wildly important to align yourself with an organization that shares the fundamental values that you hold personally close to you. It does mean spending time thinking about what values are important to you. Certainly, as a lawyer, ethics and integrity are important. In any kind of client-facing or legal role, it makes your job so much more enriching and frankly, easier when your values align so closely with the organization.

One of the reasons why Gap was so appealing to me – in addition to the fact that it was an iconic brand, incredibly exciting, and was in retail – was its commitment to philanthropy and to human rights. Being an organization committed to human rights, it had a responsibility to the [Governance and Sustainability] Committee. It was more than just a place where you make jeans. My leadership ability honed there, and it was an environment that was focused on being inclusive. It was an environment that had a certain casualness to it, but also had a real urgency to succeed and a willingness to invest in its leaders. Leadership and management can sound really sexy but it's

really hard. Some say lawyers are not the most natural managers – I disagree. But, just being at an organization that I knew was willing to invest in me, where I felt comfortable in, and where I could show up as myself contributed to my leadership style.

Coming to REI was a deliberate choice to choose an organization that was mission-purpose driven. I was fascinated with the mission of working for a cooperative and the very unique element of governance associated with servicing sixteen million members rather than the New York Stock Exchange. I think my leadership has been honed over the past two years around being in service to our members, to my team as general counsel, and of course to our clients.

When I think about my leadership philosophy, I think it's important to think as you evolve: What do you stand for? What is your brand? And what is your leadership philosophy? Leadership is a word that's thrown around a lot, but I really believe in creating a sense of belonging with my team. I've spent a lot of years thinking about diversity and inclusion. One of the things I'm super fascinated by is something as simple as *belonging* and making people feel that they belong in the organization. Knowing that your voice is heard and that you are seen is so fundamentally impactful just as a human being. Diversity can have a lot of baggage and loaded words, but fundamentally it's just about people feeling like they are seen and heard.

R. de Silva de Alwis: This class grew out of students coming and telling me that they want to be seen, they want to be heard, they want their presence validated, so this class is really a response to that. You touched on many facets of the philosophy of leadership and what we are also trying to do as part of this class is to debunk the “great man” theory of leadership, which grew out of the sense that leadership was an inherited trait—the trait style of leadership. What we're trying to examine here is that leadership is something that can be learned. It's not something that can be taught so much as learned. And you learn it through association with leaders like you. The third aspect that you touched on was servant leadership and we've been studying leadership theories and many of the traditional theorists are men, white men. We want to learn from women and women of color and men of color. Nelson Mandela's style of leadership was the Ubuntu style of leadership – servant leadership, learning from the community. Who you are reflects on the community, and the community reflects on you? With that kind of idea of service – service is really the core of your leadership philosophy, serving others and empowering others.

M. Mlacker: Hi Wilma, thank you for joining us. We really appreciate it. In terms of servant leadership, do you think that often times there can be a misunderstanding that when a woman presents herself in a certain way, she can be perceived as less authoritative while men don't get that reaction? How did you deal with that issue, if at all?

W. Wallace: I'm still trying to figure it out. I think that it helps to be in a culture where you have control, which is not my style. Control leadership is not valued or deemed to be the most effective way to lead. It's interesting because I was thinking today that so many of the

attributes assigned to women are increasingly attributes that one assigns to effective leadership: empathy, compassion, collaboration. People who will listen and ask questions, rather than have the answer or feel like they need to have the answer. In thinking about the trajectory of my career, I've seen an evolution of what's expected of leaders. Certainly, you have a lot about being an authentic leader, being a vulnerable leader, which is something that I do think that women tend to, for cultural and other reasons, lean in on, instinctively more than men. Your poise, to the degree that you're able to incorporate those capabilities, competencies, and ways of showing up, that's what's being demanded today in organizations that are expected to be innovative, in creating collaborative spaces for diverse perspectives to be heard and shared. I've had my moments when I was "man-spoken," or when I would make a comment and felt that it wasn't heard, but then a male would say essentially the same thing and get a different reaction. You learn certain techniques to be able to call the person out in that situation, but also you learn to recognize how you're showing up in a way that allows yourself to be heard. Earlier in my career, I sat in on a presentation given by communications speaker and she helped me think about how I show up the minute I walk into a room, where do I sit when there's a table with the choice to sit next to the CEO or to sit across from the CEO or to sit in the second row of seats behind the CEO. How do you assert yourself both implicitly and explicitly? How loud are you? How much space do you take up? And I give myself pep talks, which I still do today, to remind myself "How do I want to show up in this particular meeting?" Do I want to show up very authoritatively? Do I want to show up where I'm in listening mode and be very thoughtful about what I'm communicating and how I'm communicating it? I tend to cross my arms a lot, which I see Rangita does as well and sometimes it's super effective, but I've also learned that sometimes it can be off putting to people. These are all tips that you pick up over years and years of just being exposed to mentors and hopefully people who will sponsor you and who will give you clear, helpful, candid feedback on how you're showing up and can do it in an authentic way.

"[W]omen, women of color, or people that are otherwise underrepresented in the legal field should not need to feel the burden that we need to educate people. It's not your job to educate. . . but it is, I think, incumbent upon us to provide information so that people can educate themselves."

E. Desa: Hi Wilma, thank you so much. So much of being a leader, and what we perceive a leader's job to do, is to teach and to lead through example. But there's still a lot of learning that needs to occur in law firm settings and in the legal profession in general. As young lawyers – particularly as a young female lawyers and as young lawyers of color – how do you feel that we can "teach above" to those in authoritative positions? Oftentimes it doesn't feel appropriate or comfortable to broach issues of gender and color to those in superior positions. Are there methods we can utilize "teach" those in positions superior to our own about creating an environment that is comfortable for ourselves or for others in our position?

W. Wallace: I've got a couple ideas I'll throw out there that have helped me bring people along that are entering a journey around issues of inclusion and diversity, who are coming from a different place than I might be. There's an amazing thing that came out about ten years ago, called podcasts – that was supposed to be humorous. I think sharing information to help others educate themselves is helpful. One of the things I'm sitting with – and doing a lot of work with at REIto

drive diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts throughout the organization – is the understanding that particularly impacted people – women, women of color, or people that are otherwise underrepresented in the legal field – should not need to feel the burden that we need to educate people. It's not your job to educate. That gets tiring, frankly, after a while. But it is, I think, incumbent upon us to provide information so that people can educate *themselves*. Whether it be podcasts or helping someone who could benefit from understanding different perspectives, or notions of diversity, inclusion, and equity, or understanding why it's important that people with diverse experiences are in the room, is to feed them information. Take them to affinity bar organizations. Take them somewhere they can start to ingest the information at their own pace, in a way that's not threatening. I've been reading a commentator and thought leader on white fragility recently, Robin DiAngelo at The University of Washington, and she does a really great job of talking about the role and responsibility that people in the dominant role in society play in owning and taking accountability for their own education around issues of diversity, inclusion and equity. I hope that's helpful. I'm going to cut myself off, so I don't ramble on too much, but I hope that's responsive to your question.

E. Brody-Bizar: You've headed legal teams at a variety of successful companies, from Gap to startups to REI. Has the makeup of the teams you've led over these years changed, and have you taken any particular steps to make your teams more diverse?

W. Wallace: I have had the benefit of working for that organizations have been largely equitable from a gender perspective, both on the legal team and leadership team. The challenge is recruiting diverse candidates, from an ethnic, race, and ability perspective. You have to be incredibly intentional about that. It doesn't just come together, particularly in the geographic places she's practice (San Francisco and Seattle). You have to be willing to network and have the intention to interview a diverse group of candidates so there's a more likely outcome that diverse candidate will get that position. My team has been incredibly effective about communicating my expectations to outside counsel and then holding their feet to the fire. Ensuring that those at firms that are working on REI matters are diverse was one of those things I had to take on and it was nerve-racking at the start. But now, I make these expectations clear, that the people with diverse backgrounds working on these matters are getting credit for it. It's about being clear and bold and looking for inspiration to use her platform to impact change.

"I would encourage you throughout your career to identify people who you think will be strong mentors to you and take that relationship super seriously."

S. Bajwa: Hi Wilma. Thank you for joining us. I'm Saba. You talked about this a lot, and I think that retention of women has a lot to do with the culture that they're in. And I sounds as though you've been fortunate to live in cultures that you feel comfortable in – but for those women who are in white, male-dominated spaces, what can women leaders in those spaces do to create a culture so that other women feel that sense of comfort?

W. Wallace: So, I'm a big fan of mentoring programs and sponsorship. And I don't know how much you talked about this in your class, so when I think about major milestones in my career where I felt like an "aha" or breakthrough, it was either around – it was feedback, honest

feedback, that I received from people I trusted – and provided their name and received feedback that was super candid. And another time was when I was assigned to mentor, and I had a lot of informal mentors along the way, some of who know they're mentors, some of who don't. But I only have a couple of formal mentors, and one that I had was happenstance. I actually assigned her to someone on my team, and ultimately the GC let me know that she thought she would be a good mentor for me. And that relationship led to a whole other avenue of opportunity for me to position me for the role I have today. And I would encourage you, throughout your career, to identify people who you think will be strong mentors to you and take that relationship super seriously. The other thing is sponsorship, and I had a handful of people who sponsored me over the years. I am confident that there is no person in America who has gotten to the C-suite without having at least one person who was a sponsor for them and used their capital to put you in a position that you may not have had the confidence to go for yourself. And I try to return the investment, time, and resources that people invested in me through mentorships and through sponsorships, with other women in the room, so they can have the best of my experiences. One of the reason I'm grateful for being able to speak to classes and audiences such as yourself is because I hope to share something with someone who might learn, and it inspires me to continue to advance and help other people have some of the success and learn from some of the mistakes I've made along the way.

R. de Silva de Alwis: What a beautiful and powerful thought to end on. We have so much to learn from the younger generation. They are the ones that push us, and part of this lab on leadership is driven by our students who are developing an understanding of what are the biases and boundaries and borders that prevent women from self-actualizing, and from reaching their full potential, and from pushing the boundaries of society, and coming up with bias and borders and boundary interrupters – and ways in which we can smash those biases, boundaries, and borders.

Linda Addison

Norton Rose Fulbright, LLP

Linda has been serving as an example for other women from the start of her career by becoming the first women Managing Editor of the Texas Law Review. She moved on to become a seasoned trial attorney who spent four years as the US Managing Partner of Norton Rose Fulbright, LLP. Despite a lack of female trial attorneys, her persistence and commitment to her passions allowed her to find a position and develop her skills. While at the firm, she helped promote women's rights by addressing bigotry on an individual level. Her efforts also included a focus on diversity strategy, and she was able to change her firm's approach to diversity leadership through her strategic vision. Linda continued to breakdown glass ceilings outside the office by helping form the Center for Women in Law.

Interview by Fumnanya Ekhaton, Farah Chalisa, Samuel Romm, and Katherine Schroeder

“My view is when the conventional wisdom does not support your goal, you just have to ignore it and put it aside.”

F. Ekhaton: One thing you touched on is that there is no such thing as women's issues, and that men are equally responsible and should be expected to engage. I witnessed issues around allyship and engagement firsthand as a summer associate. For the women's group, organizing something as gender neutral as a clothing drive was very difficult. The male lawyers would ignore the email because they assumed it was a women's only initiative.

L. Addison: That's a really good question, I will answer it first in the law firm context— which is the context in which you have asked it. This is actually one of my legacies, of which I am very proud. Frequently what law firms do when they need a head of diversity or the head of a program like the clothing drive is look around and think, “who has time to do it?” And typically, the person who has time is the person who is not respected, not successful, and does not have a successful practice. Now I am speaking in sweeping generalities, so I am sure you can come up with a few exceptions to what I have just said. But when it comes to getting people to take things seriously, you have to be pragmatic. If you put up a partner with a 10-20 million-dollar practice in charge of the clothing drive, then people at that firm will know that the initiative is pretty important. When you are talking about these sorts of soft issues you have to show it is a priority for the firm.

At my firm, I put a successful and diverse woman in charge of diversity. Whenever she would speak, I would introduce her and say this is such an important job, and that is why I asked her to do it. As a PhD candidate she knows how to use data. As each of you probably knows, when you are trying to lead social change you need data. The whole notion of the right thing to do or the fair thing to do, does not really resonate. Showing people numbers motivates them, and then you start to have something actionable. She did an excellent job, so I then promoted her to be head of the IP department here at the firm. She still does that. As a result, the diversity position became so

highly regarded that people began to see it as a steppingstone—you could go from that position to heading a major practice group. That was another message I wanted to send. Gina completely transformed the position— people knew that if she was doing it, it must be important because she doesn't waste her time and she has a big practice. Gina had so transformed the position, that the next time I asked a woman to head diversity, she thanked me for the opportunity. I don't know what exactly happened at the firm you had the opportunity to work with this summer, there are a lot of variables that I don't know. But in general, if you want people in a law firm to take something seriously you put somebody respected and successful in charge of it and they will know it is an important issue.

F. Chalisa: In the readings we read about you, we learned that event though you were incredible in law school, at the time you graduated, many firms did not consider litigation to be a suitable career path for women. So, my question is – how did you finally get Fulbright to take you seriously, and how did you break through those gender barriers? And once you did break through the barriers, what steps did you take to ensure that the women after you were able to break through them as well?

L. Addison: Thank you. That is a very good question. I think a lot of what I have achieved, and what a lot of what a lot of people have achieved, was done out of naiveté. There are a lot of people who achieve things because they just don't know how hard it's going to be, so maybe part of it was denial, part naiveté, part persistence, and part not taking no for an answer. It never dawned on me that I would not be able to try cases and I had offers from other really good firms, but not for litigation. I just kept talking to firms until I found one that didn't have a problem with me doing litigation. At the time that I graduated from law school in 1976, Fulbright was a regional Texas firm. Now, we are global and very diverse. It was the only Texas firm at the time that permitted me to try cases, but I figured somebody would let me eventually and I just kept talking to people. I am a big believer in persistence. Each of you will have this experience – you'll want something, and people will tell you it can't be done, or you can't do it for some reason. I wanted to go on a public company board and people told me boards don't want lawyers.

There is never a shortage of people to tell you that you can't do something or why you can't. My view is when the conventional wisdom does not support your goal, you just have to ignore it and put it aside. You just have to listen to your inner voice and wisdom and just go for it. A lot of people don't succeed because they get discouraged and conclude it is impossible. It's like the Thomas Edison quote—most people don't know how close they were to success when they give up. I am a big believer in dogged persistence. In terms of opening opportunities for other women

– I am big believer in the power of teaching by example, in changing the world one person at a time. Some of my most rewarding successful and professional relationships were with men who had the reputation of not being good for women to work for. You go in there and they have a good experience with you and suddenly they are open to working with women. So, I always had a sense that it was not just my experience, if I succeeded it'd be an example of why we needed more women and failed then why we didn't need more. I was always mindful of that. I didn't start out being a champion of women's rights but after a while, early on, I realized that the battles I was fighting for myself were things that would benefit other women. I try to help men too – I have mentored men and supervised and trained men, I bring men along too, but I get approached more for help by women.

R. de Silva de Alwis: Would you say your leadership philosophy is “changing the world one person at a time?”

L. Addison: I wouldn't say that is a leadership philosophy, I would say it is a way to overcome bias and bigotry. You can do a lot of good with a one-on-one interaction. We all have biases and prejudices.

K. Schroeder: People are trying to address their biases, yet we are not seeing women in leadership positions at firms. How do we translate a desire on an individual level to widescale change?

L. Addison: You need to identify what the real problem is. The right question in law is “why don't we have more women and people of color building big books of business?” This may be because women don't get invited to the lunch or get the same contact with the client. It isn't that people say we don't want a woman CEO. It is that we don't see women with operational or P&L experience. Women end up in HR and marketing. If you are a woman who wants to be a CEO, you need operational experience and P&L. Some of this might be self-sabotage.

J. Romm: We've been focusing a lot on people who are successful, people with power, but I want to ask a question about people who may have failed or may be mediocre. As a white man, it is safer for me to fail or to be mediocre because I am considered to be the norm, the baseline. Less is expected of me and I have more leeway. I won't suffer as much for my failures as women or people of color might. So I'm wondering what steps you think people can take at any level of an organization to help combat the patriarchal ideology that makes it okay for me to fail and not a similar situated woman, so that a culture of equality and respect permeates every level of the hierarchy and is not dependent upon success or proximity to power.

L. Addison: I think it's absolutely true that there will be fewer negative consequences for you if you fail. There are a lot of data that show that people tend to make excuses for the majority, which in the US happens to be white and happens to be male. They'll say, “well, you know, that memo he wrote really wasn't very good but maybe I didn't explain the assignment well, let's give him another chance.” Whereas women I think are written off more quickly and the people who really get screwed are women of color. If you look at the numbers all over the map in business and the law, you'll see that the numbers for women of color are particularly discouraging. When people know that this happens, and there are a lot of studies – a good HR department can do this – they then are much more likely to give a second or third chance to a member of an underrepresented group. There are times I've been working where someone would come into my office and say, “so and so isn't doing work of our quality” or “somebody just doesn't seem to get it.” And I'd say well how many chances did you give her, and he'd say, “well, one.” I would explain what we do tend to discount women and people of color more quickly - they don't get a second chance; they certainly never get a third. When you explain to supervisors and bosses that this is happening, I think they then become sensitized to it. And once again, that's changing things one person at a time. Any boss you change makes things better. I

had a partner once, great guy, but he had a young woman working for him who returned from maternity leave and it was hard for her to get her hours back up. He basically wasn't assigning her things because he wanted to go easy on her because she was a new mother. I said, "you really can't do that. You can't take that situation into account when assigning work. She needs the same opportunities she would be getting if she didn't have an infant at home. That's her choice how she chooses to organize her household or whether to ask for help." I use that as an example because so often these things that are well meaning have exactly the opposite result so, hopefully, we have enough managers that become sensitized to what human nature is and can help manage through that.

R. de Silva de Alwis: In our class we read *The Bias Interrupters*, by Professor Joan Williams – a piece about being really vigilant about interrupting bias. And what you've done on a person-to-person basis is to interrupt bias.

L. Addison: I would encourage each of you to call people on it whenever you see things like this, but always be polite and always be respectful. If you are, you can frequently educate people (e.g. "I know you didn't mean anything when you said so and so but you need to understand when you say a comment like so and so it might make me, or him, or her feel x."). I'll give you an example. One of my predecessors as head of the law firm, I was on his management committee and we were friends and basically peers. I was slightly subordinate but not significantly. He brought a speaker to one of our management retreats. After the speaker, he asked me, "What's the matter?" To which I replied, "Nothing, why would you think something's the matter?" To which he said, "Well why aren't you smiling?" I said, "What did the speaker say that would make me want to smile?" He replied, "I thought that if you liked the speaker you would be smiling." He's the head of the law firm and a very good friend so I said to him, "Steve, do you realize that men ask women why they're not smiling in circumstances where it would not be appropriate for a man to be smiling? None of the men in this room are smiling. Why do you expect me to smile? I know you didn't mean anything by it, but it is actually a sexist presumption." He looked horrified and said, "I never realized, but you're exactly right." I talk to him more candidly and slightly less respectfully because he's a good friend, but if you're polite and respectful, not strident or angry, but just call to people's attention that a comment, however well-intended, could be misinterpreted or make someone feel out of place. That goes a long way. I'm not naive though. I know that it gets easier the more senior you get.

F. Ekhtor: I just want to ask a question based on something you just said. Sheryl Sandberg has actually made statements publicly saying that the most important decision a woman will make is who she marries. She has said this in a professional and career environment and got a lot of backlash for it. So, my question for you is, one—do you agree with that statement? You alluded to the same idea earlier. And two, do you think that this advice applies equally to men who are ambitious and career-driven?

L. Addison: I do! I actually think that is unisex advice. I think it is more important for women because if you look at the reality of the situation, women tend to assume a disproportionate amount of responsibility at home and for children. So, having the wrong life partner—we are talking in terms of marrying and assuming the woman is going to marry a man, so maybe the safe thing to do is just talk about life partners. But I think having a life partner who views your career as important as you view your own is absolutely critical. I have been quoted on that—I probably said it before Sheryl Sandberg did. I said it in my commencement speech, I say it all the time. It is the

single most important decision you can make. If you don't have the right life partner accompanying you in life, you won't have the same kind of career as someone whose partner was there really supporting and believing in them. It is equally important for men, but it is harder for a woman's career to survive a bad choice than a man's career.

J. Romm: On the point of data and bringing people along and the numbers game, I wonder if you think that that alone would be sufficient to combat discrimination or if you think that we need to couple a numbers case for gender equality along with a strong, ideological commitment and program that is articulated by leadership in order to change a workplace culture and people's ideology and not just have more gender parity because it's better for the bottom line. How can leaders articulate that and not just focus on the numbers and how can people on the bottom of the hierarchy, or lower down, push for change from below?

L. Addison: Jake, I think that's a great question. It is absolutely more powerful if you have both the numbers and ideology together. Most people want to believe that they're doing the right thing and want to feel good about what they're doing. If there's an emotional or social component to their action that is positive, it makes the data much more powerful. Data alone doesn't tend to get you there, but you don't get there without the data in my experience.

F. Chalisa: Earlier in your comments, you mentioned Sheryl Sandberg. Some of our readings criticize the "lean in" ideology because it does not address systemic gender and diversity biases. Do you have any thoughts on this concept?

L. Addison: Sheryl would be the first one to tell you, and she says in the beginning of the book, that she is not dealing with the part of the equation that has to do with what business and companies need to do. She is giving advice to women who she has seen self-sabotage by not leaning in. I think it is terrific advice. The book is not intended to fix or address systemic inequities. It is just a different concept. We can have institutions with biases built-in, led by people with unconscious bias. And you can also have women, in the case of Sheryl Sandberg, who are making unfortunate choices and who are not fully committed to their careers. She's addressing that piece of the equation, not the other.

F. Chalisa: But how do you address one part of that equation without the other?

L. Addison: I think you absolutely do, because I think when women are committed, people will invest in them and believe in them. I leaned in a whole lot at a time when the legal profession was not as hospitable as it is now to women. I see women self-sabotage in lots of different ways; the biggest way is marrying the wrong guy or not having an equitable division of labor at home. There are lots of things that women can do to knock themselves off track. That doesn't mean they aren't also being denied opportunities at work.

I don't think we need to talk about blame at all, but root causes. I think it's better not to use valued terms when you are trying to bring people along on a sensitive subject. Complex problems have complex solutions. When you fix one part of an organism, it can have ripple effects other places. I think you control what you can control. I think women should lean in and organizations should become more equitable. They are not mutually exclusive.

Natalie Jabangwe

CEO of EcoCash

Natalie Jabangwe has become one the leading voices in Africa's financial technology sector. She serves as the chief executive of EcoCash, an offshoot of Econet Wireless and currently the fastest-growing mobile money service in Africa. As the youngest chief executive to oversee a mobile money business in Africa, Natalie has adopted a transformative approach to her work that enables her to not only excel in the patriarchal workplace but also align her company's offerings with the specific needs of women. In a country where gender equality remains far out of reach, Natalie's attempts to empower women through financial independence have transformed the marketplace and social order. Millions of people rely on EcoCash to transfer money, pay for goods and services, pay bills, and communicate with friends and family. The company has brought formerly unbanked people into the formal financial system, offering them a more secure way to save money and access loans. For this work, Natalie was appointed to the United Nations Secretary General's Digital Financing Taskforce, and the World Economic Forum honored her as one of its Young Global Leaders in 2018. Natalie completed her Master's in Organizational Leadership from the University of Oxford, where she received the Oxford University Tutu Fellowship. She also received an Executive MBA from Imperial College London, with a specialization in hi-tech strategy and corporate turnaround, as well as a bachelor's degree from Spelman College. During her time at Spelman, Natalie served briefly in the administration of former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Clarke Franklin, the first black woman elected mayor of a major metropolitan area in the South.

Interviews by Lauren Altus, Lindsay Holcomb, Brendan Holman, and Agnese Nadalini

L. Holcomb: You've now lived in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. Many of the barriers to women's professional development we've spoken about in this class are culturally situated, so have you seen any best practices in any of these three countries that you think could be extrapolated to other contexts?

N. Jabangwe: Without a doubt. What comes to mind is really the concept of geographic dynamics. Every part of the world is different in a really peculiar way. Growing up in Zimbabwe and also now working here in Zimbabwe, which is my first job in Africa, there is a clear understanding that the way businesses run in Africa is contextually different from the way businesses run in the United Kingdom, and certainly very different from the way businesses run in the United States. In the US, there is a greater culture of assertiveness, and you can see that not only in the way entrepreneurial companies approach the market but also in the way leaders of the Civil Rights Movement approached their challenges. People in the US tend to feel empowered enough to stand up against injustices, and to be able to go out there in a market and create transformative solutions.

Life in the United Kingdom is completely different from life in Zimbabwe and in the US. In the United Kingdom, things tend to be more formalized, a little more subtle. They follow a pathway of constitutional means and constitutionalization – not to say that's not the case in the US – but you can see with the advent of Brexit how the United Kingdom today has been able to push on the limits of the existing law and the confines of the system to draft specific agendas.

And then when you come to a place like Zimbabwe – which is likely typical to most places in Africa – there are pretty much undefined borders and boundaries, but that in itself provides an opportunity on which you can shape things that do not exist, and you can actually create the laws and regulations for what the world could be. I think I'll put it in Barack Obama's words: "In Africa, you get the opportunity to live a life or to experience the world as it should be if you can exercise your power to shape it as opposed to what dictators choose for you."

B. Holman: We completed a report last semester on the World Bank's ID4D initiative and the importance of digital identification as it relates to women, in that case specifically in Nigeria and Togo, but I think the same could be broadly said about Africa in general. One of the reasons we realized ID4D is so crucially important relates to its enabling women to access electronic payments. Can you illuminate some of the practical sides of your business and how electronic payments can empower women?

N. Jabangwe: It's an important topic of discussion in Africa because identification is still lagging behind. For most people in Africa, it is not inconceivable to lack a birth certificate and an identity card. So before even addressing the prejudices that come with being a woman or young person, one of the key challenges toward financial inclusion is that people are undocumented and not within the formal sector of the system.

The good news is that technology has given us the power to change this. Surprisingly, it is highly likely that somebody in deep rural Africa may not have an identity card but will be on WhatsApp or own a cell phone. How do we leverage on the power of new-age technologies, particularly telecommunications technologies, to ensure people are identified into the system? Just because you don't have a government-registered identification should not mean you cannot have a mobile money account. Using cell phones, biometric data, and other new technologies can help bridge the gap currently existing in countries marred with huge poverty and low social mobility.

When EcoCash started in 2011, only 10% of Zimbabweans were financially included, and there were only 800 bank accounts in the country. But after introducing EcoCash, we asked the regulator to allow us to collect information of customers on cell phones and link it with the National Registrar's system of identity cards. We then gave customers a preliminary bank account for their basic banking. And today, we are 3.5-times larger than all banks, and we run at least 80% of the country's GDP. Our technology and innovation have lowered barriers to identification and financial services in an unprecedented way.

For women, we have gone even further, providing group savings accounts for women in informal sectors and giving them financial incentives to raise the bar on investments. Once they are onboarded, we use the technology platform to provide loans and credit for some of the work women do, and we accelerate them through the pipeline in financial services to make sure they become credit worthy and credit eligible.

R. De Silva De Alwis: Your story is the story of financial inclusion in Zimbabwe and throughout the world. Before EcoCash, women of Zimbabwe were considered unbankable. Your work has supported the women in the marketplace. Can you tell us their stories and the ways in which your work on mobile money and financial inclusion is impacting women who have thus far been excluded from the formal economy?

N. Jabangwe: The question you posed will shape the future of entrepreneurial markets in African, given women form 52% of the population in African and perform 65% of the work that happens in the agricultural sector. But here's the sad thing: these women do not have access to capital, access to markets, and bank accounts. Historically, they have given their money to their husbands or someone high in society to look after their finances.

Technology has changed this reality for women. One of the funny stories from my time at EcoCash is one about a woman whose husband constantly used to demand funds from her. The day she registered for EcoCash, she would not give her husband her password on her mobile money wallet; she said, "I do not have the money, and my password is a secret." For the first time, this woman was able to control what she would do with her money. And now that women have obtained control of their funds, we've gone a step further to provide them access to markets, and we give them credit they can use to expand their small businesses. Because of the patriarchal construction of most African countries, without financial inclusion, these women would never have the opportunity to, for example, go to a bank and ask for a loan in their own names. Additionally, we have created platforms and a marketplace that allow women to sell their entrepreneurial wares to over 10 million customers through one of our e-commerce platforms.

L. Altus: You have accomplished so much in a relatively short amount of time. Have there been any barriers you've faced in your career you've been able to overcome that you can share with us?

N. Jabangwe: I think number one, it hasn't been very easy to be the youngest CEO on the African Continent to run a corporate FinTech. That alone comes with a lot of prejudices. One of the chief challenges has been the prejudice of age, the prejudice of gender, the prejudice of environment—where one comes from. But I've had a few examples in my life of people who have been able to rise above any form of prejudice. I have watched people like Ursula Burns who was the first Chairman and CEO of Xerox. Ursula Burns grew up in the Bronx, and she was raised by a single mother. Her mom tried to do everything she could to make sure Ursula had the best education. And she ended up managing to send her daughter to a private university after running several jobs. Ursula then joined Xerox for a period of almost 20 years in senior management and ultimately became the first CEO, first black CEO and Chairman.

When you look at someone like Barack Obama, who faced prejudices on the basis of where he came from but rose above all of that prejudice to become the first African-American President of the United States, you see that any person can rise above any kind of prejudice. Certainly, my mentor Shirley Franken, who was first female and African American Mayor of the city of Atlanta challenged me to advance beyond prejudices and, in particular, beyond the prejudice of age. She gave me a very big job at the age of 21 and told me I could do it. Therefore, I am a nonbeliever in prejudice. I do not believe that there are challenges that are so great we cannot rise above them.

A. Nadalini: Which leadership qualities do you think helped you achieve your success? And what future policies will you put in place in your company that will empower more women in Zimbabwe?

N. Jabangwe: One of the discoveries of leadership is that leadership is not about leading ourselves. There is no leadership without followership. When I started in management, my concept of leadership was that you direct people because you are smart and know a little better than them, and as a result, you lead.

My concept of leadership has since changed. We sometimes are so privileged: we are privileged enough to be at Penn Law, we are privileged enough to run an organization, we are privileged enough to have more than five meals per day. True leadership is using the experience and the privileges we have in places where people do not have that privilege and taking these people along on a journey with us so they can also get there.

We started this discussion talking about the geographic dynamics and differences that exist in Zimbabwe. When I first took on this job, in Zimbabwe, I wanted to run it the same way I ran a Fortune 500 company in London. Yet when I returned to Africa, I realized that despite my breadth of experience, I still had a lot of learning to do. I started to understand that leadership is followership; you are not a leader if you do not have followers, and you are not a leader if you do not provide change and transformation for the people around you. It cannot be about ourselves; it always has to be about what we can provide for other people. That takes a lot of self-sacrifice and a lot of patience.

Regarding the second question on what I would like to do for women here in Zimbabwe other than financial inclusion: I would really like to be a champion in the development of the potential of others. If we can have twenty, a hundred more young CEOs running the largest companies in Africa, then I think it would be quite an achievement. I want to spend a lot of my time talking to other young people motivating them to follow their dreams to the top.

It is a very interesting time now in Zimbabwe because there are claims EcoCash should be reined in because of its size. Just today, one of the deputy ministers in the country sent a tweet saying, “We need to rein in EcoCash and this young CEO and whatever she is doing.” I am reminded of the Theodore Roosevelt speech that the courageous people are the people in the arena, who are sweating blood and are trying everything that they can; they are pushing the boundaries to shape the world as it should be and not as it is.

R. De Silva De Alwis: Not only are you the youngest CEO, you are also a young mother with a young child, and many of our students are thinking about work-family balance. How do you combine your role as a new mother and your role as a leader globally?

N. Jabangwe: It is a challenge. People talk about work-life balance, but I think in this unique position women find themselves we need to set a new standard about possibilities.

Recently, I asked my daughter, who just turned seven, what she wants to do when she grows up. She told me she wants to have three jobs: an astronomer, a sea life saver, and a good mom. I think she got the concept of multitasking from watching her mother, who has managed to be a mom, a leader, and the chief executive of a company. She will grow up understanding that she can play all of these roles.

We need to understand as women that not only can we be mothers, we can also be world leaders

and professional women and whatever else we choose without being constrained by the roles and responsibilities tradition has set aside for us. Have I been there 24/7 for my daughter? Absolutely not. But I have established a narrative in my household that helps my daughter and other young women understand they can be whomever they want to be. I believe in being able to manage my responsibilities and the time I spend on my work, my personal development, and my family. That is the example I would like to shape for upcoming young women and their role in this world, and what role they can play despite of the disadvantages they have experienced.

Kamakshi Sivaramakrishnan

Founder and CEO of Drawbridge, Inc.

Kamakshi Sivaramakrishnan is the founder and CEO of Drawbridge, the leading anonymized cross-device identity company in the world. Dr. Sivaramakrishnan was born in India and came to the United States in the early 2000s to pursue a PhD in Information Theory at Stanford University, where she researched “denoising,” the problem of removing noise from measurements or corrupted signals to recover the underlying clean data. After graduating from Stanford, Dr. Sivaramakrishnan worked at AdMob, developing large scale machine learning algorithms to improve prediction and estimation problems for marketers, and then at Google as an engineer. In 2010, Dr. Sivaramakrishnan struck out on her own and founded Drawbridge, Inc. where she developed artificial intelligence that gives marketers new ways to identify a consumer’s digital presence, anticipate their needs and intentions, and deliver appropriate messages in privacy-friendly manner. Last spring, LinkedIn acquired Drawbridge. Dr. Sivaramakrishnan lives in Silicon Valley with her husband and young daughter.

Interview by Molly Wolfe, Charlotte Yin, Ravina Gogna, Allie Gottlieb, and May Alajlan

“I am the one that likes to build companies and likes to build ideas. I am a dreamer. I love innovation that way.”

M. Wolfe: I wanted to ask you about your experience both in higher education and in the business world and if you noticed any differences in how to approach working in a male-dominated space. Was there a difference to your approach in the business world versus being in school? Was there anything you learned during your time in higher education that you then applied when you started working?

K. Sivaramakrishnan: This is something that has been an unfortunate reality for me. If you just sample the number of women around me from my time in high school to my undergraduate education to my graduate school and master’s to PhD to then starting my own business, actually being a part of an early stage technology business, then starting my own business, it has precipitously been a lesser and lesser number of women around me. That has been a reality that I have had to get comfortable with. Nine out of 10 times in any given situation, I am the only woman in the room among ten other board members or five other executives or six other customer-client partners. In those discussions, it’s a room full of men.

This is something that I got a little bit more comfortable with being an engineer by training. I am comfortable with being the woman, the minority in the class. I will not lie and say that I have always been comfortable with this. I had to get comfortable with this. Once I did, I think I found solace and confidence in what I had to offer as a unique person versus seeking that affirmation from the room around me. And in some ways, it’s great to be in that position because you stand out. You are literally among the very few women who are in this unique position, and you stand out. If I do well, everything is pronounced. If I do well, it outshines. And if I make a mistake, it also outshines. So, I always stand out and have a sense of responsibility in the world to be at top- form every time I am out in the public.

The way in which I adapted myself from school to the professional environment is by getting more and more comfortable with myself. I think it is reflected in the fact that I do not seek affirmation from the room around me. It is likely that I am not going to find anyone who looks like me, talks like me, is like me, is a colored woman like me—I'm not going to see that. So, I find confidence in myself, and that process and journey has become much easier for me from school to where I am today in the work environment.

One last point I will add is that, remember I said that the number of women around me has precipitously dropped over the course of the years. That is something that I think has become very pronounced in the start-up environment. To go and raise money and start your own business in the enterprise technology engineering discipline there are generally not that many women. When you talk about women in technology there are a lot of women in technology on a relative basis when we talk about consumer technologies. When you talk about engineering and enterprise technology, there are not that many women. It is still an extreme minority even within the minority of women in technology itself. So, my experience has been to have comfort and confidence in myself, and my journey from college to professional has been becoming more comfortable with that.

C. Yin: Hi, Dr. Sivaramakrishnan. I actually just interned at Sequoia, so it's really amazing to talk to founders like you and learn more about your entrepreneurship experience. I have two questions for you. After your company was sold to LinkedIn/Microsoft, it drove up at least 27% of the business in its Marketing Solutions. So, what is the next step of your career? You seem to be on the top of the world already. Second, I am very impressed that you are breaking up the Silicon Valley's old boy's club as a woman of color. I was wondering are there any mentors in your career progression, what kind of help did you receive from them, and how do you envision yourself giving back to the community and future generations?

K. Sivaramakrishnan: Thank you for your kind words. Congratulations to you, that you interned at Sequoia. It's the epitome of Silicon Valley's excellence in the form of venture capital where women's participation is the lowest among that group. You must be something special. As I said, congratulations to you.

You must have gathered that we are backed by Sequoia as our investors. My board member was the most renowned and successful venture capitalist even by Sequoia standards. With that said, to your question about my journey and what I would like to do after this acquisition, at this point, I am very much focusing on making sure the business is successfully integrated to LinkedIn. That's my near-term priority.

Insofar as how my near-term priority folds into something long term, I am an entrepreneur by heart, and I will always remain that. There are so many interesting problems to solve for in technology, in space communications, in enterprise technology, basically bringing information theory, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and algorithms to create greater products. For me, that's probably my likely path.

The successful recipe of entrepreneurs is that you have a couple of successful projects, and then

you join the venture side and basically flourish in the entrepreneurship ecosystem by investing in them. I am not going to be that kind. I am the one that likes to build companies and likes to build ideas. I am a dreamer. I love innovation that way. So, I think my journey would be done that path. The timing for that depends on how successfully we integrate our technology to LinkedIn/Microsoft.

For your second question about mentorship, I am not a great example of someone who has received mentorship. I believe I didn't do a good job of seeking mentorship. I was able to use my own learning processes much more. Now as I evolve in my career, I am doing a more proactive job of seeking out mentors and good mentorship. I absolutely do not recommend my approach to anybody. It means that you will learn your mistakes in a hard way.

As I reach certain levels, now I want to surround myself with good mentors. I am actually in search for a great mentor. I don't think the recipe for a mentor is another big company's C-level executive. There is mentorship that is not captured in the usual industries. It's about a combination of the masterful skills I am looking for.

Another part of your question is how I give back to the communities around me. I participate in forums for women in entrepreneurship and women in technology to basically integrate women who are earlier in their career. When you have fresh graduates coming into engineering, women are typically surrounded by a disproportion of men around them. I want to be able to tap in and encourage them at that stage, because women also tend to drop out of the work force, even in engineering. Additionally, I am also spending my time in colleges and universities where women are making a choice at that time whether they want to apply for advanced degrees or not. Then, I also spend time with high school students.

There are lots of pop culture pressures around those to fit into certain types. I just want to share my philosophy that it is sexy to be a nerd. Some of the biggest nerds are the wealthiest people on the earth who have created the most impact. The pressure that one needs to fit into certain types needs to be broken up at that certain age.

M. AlAjlan: Can you please describe to us some of the barriers that prevent women's advancement into leadership positions, and if you have encountered or observed any of these barriers yourself, how did you deal with them?

K. Sivaramakrishnan: For sure and thank you for the question. It is a very broad question, and there are many flavors, many experiences and many realities to it. I would probably say that I classify those barriers as external and internal—when I say external and internal, I am talking about external to the woman herself and internal to the woman. Let me give you some very simple examples of what barriers look like and how that basically come to the way of women opting themselves out of the career in technology or growth in leadership.

Eight years back, when I first started this company, I had a VP of operations with whom I would go to search for real estate (meaning commercial real estate for the office), and we were about 10- 15 people—we had outgrown our little incubation office that our investors had provided and we needed to actually get a commercial real estate face—so, I went ahead and looked for a few offices,

and my VP of operations was with me, and he was the stereotypical Caucasian man with me, and he was doing just the right thing—he was there to support me in any important thing that we had to get done for the company. It turned out, though, that the building owners, building real estate agencies, etc. would not talk to me, they would actually talk to him as if he was the person making the decisions. There were many times he would impress upon these agents, owners, and various functional bodies saying, “she is the decision maker not me, you need to talk to her”, but the bias was somehow so ingrained in people—I am just using this very small example to highlight the fact that there are barriers external to a woman that which basically prevent how women respond to some all these things.

There are ways in which I highly limit it. I will be in meetings and I will be in situations where it will take some time for the people in the room to get comfortable with me and to understand and internalize the fact that I am indeed the leader and face of the company. My COO, CRO or CFO are all men—so there is a certain way in which the dynamic is perceived by people outside that in many ways affects women psychologically and encourages them to opt themselves out of the process.

The ways in which I dealt with these situations was that I would call them out. I was not shy about the fact that I had to live this situation. I would call them out and say that they have to address me if they want the right decision in the process—stories and stories about behavior and biases like this have been written about not just here in the Valley, but across the technology industry and more broadly about women in leadership positions—these might not just be examples of the barriers that you might be thinking of, but these are truly examples of emotional barriers that somehow influence women in the way in which they perceive themselves and the way in which they react in situations like this. Many times, this means withdrawing themselves from that situation.

I grew up in India and after I graduated from engineering school, when I wanted to come to the US for my advanced degree, there was enough pressure in my family—I came from a very orthodox family that believed that I should get married and have a more traditional path for myself rather than conducting the journey around my own professional and educational aspirations. That did not make sense to them; it did not make sense to my parents, especially to my mother, that I was choosing a path of my own, and I had to defy that, and I had to fight against that. I had to make myself very clear to the family around me that the choice that they wanted to make for me was not an acceptable option.

I still consider myself to be somewhat lucky because I could have been forced to that situation- my family obviously did not force me in that situation, but still there was sort of that emotional pressure to be able to comply with the certain expectations or a certain norm. These are all

examples of barriers that women face, and I hope you can see that there are many examples of very successful women who have overcome all these barriers, and you are speaking to one such now, and I hope that this gives enough hope, confidence and inspiration to other women that all these barriers are surmountable and that we find strengths in each of ourselves to go ahead and do that.

R. Gogna: Thank you so much again for your time. I am Indian American, and my parents immigrated here. Any time I see an Indian woman in a leadership position of any kind, I am very inspired. People like you pave the way for me and my peers. I really do appreciate you being here. I was reading your profile on the SDG-9. You said how, “We as a society need to commit ourselves to a higher level of accountability for empowering women through initiatives in science and technology. This needs to start as early as middle and high school curriculums.” I know we’ve talked about this already, but I want to take a step back to women in all leadership roles, and not just science and technology. I reflected on my own experiences with leadership in school both as a student and years later, as a teacher. In middle and high school, we were presented with many leadership opportunities, as club leaders, student government positions, and honor roll students. Without fail, the majority of leadership roles were held by young women and girls. However, as soon as these young women (people my age, my older sister’s age) reach adulthood and enter the workforce, the percentage of women in leadership roles drops significantly. What do you think causes this drop off? And what can we as leaders in this room do as we embark on our careers to remain leaders and stay strong?

K. Sivaramakrishnan: First of all, thank you so much for your comments earlier, and I am super excited to be here as a part of women of South Asian origin, and also just women period. With that said, I appreciate and understand your comments about the precipitous drop-off in the number of women in leadership roles. I think it’s a combination of culture and society, and the way the industry around us it set up.

If you don’t mind, I’ll illustrate this with an example from myself, maybe that’s more telling. I am going to put myself in a very vulnerable position when I talk about this here. I am a believer that vulnerability brings people closer. For myself, when I started the company, I made a proactive choice that I wanted to advance the company that I had founded, and I wanted to be singularly devoted to the success of that company. So, I set aside my family to the point that my husband and I decided not to start a family during that time. That was in stark contrast to a lot of my female professional friends from graduate school, and in the industry. They had chosen different values and a different equation. The reason I am citing this story and putting myself in this vulnerable spot by discussing this is because I believe this is a major contributing factor to the drop-off of women in leadership roles. Women have a certain amount socio-economic pressure and a set of expectations that is put on them. It is universal. These pressures and expectations shape their own thinking and their own aspirations for themselves and what is expected of them.

This also reminds me of one such event that I attended when I was in school at Stanford, where one of the women who was on the panel – a very senior executive at Intel at the time – basically said to successful women, “please make it a point to choose a very supportive partner because that is incredibly impactful in the way in which you will continue your journey and profession.”

Again, I put myself in a vulnerable position because I believe I am able to achieve some of these things because I do have a very strong support system in the form of my husband, and my family around me and my husband's family around me. I think some of these factors very much contribute. We would like to believe that these things are not true, but that isn't the case. They are very true. In many instances, women opt themselves out, and women have so many barriers to not be able to get to that point.

When I was selling the business, in the most crucial and critical part in the midst of the transaction to Microsoft and LinkedIn, I was literally two days before delivering my child, and I brought the term sheet from Microsoft. Eight weeks after I delivered my child, I went through the sale of the company through the entire diligence process and transaction. Right after delivery, through her first six months here on Earth, I went through this entire transaction from pregnancy through birth, and after. What I am trying to tell you, is that the reason I was able to do that is because I had a strong support system from my husband.

I will summarize my answer by saying the reason we see a dropping off of women at precipitous rates at leadership levels is the self-imposed and externally imposed limitations that women face and feel. I just talked to you about a set of experiences that I went through to overcome those limitations and barriers. I hope you could recognize the amount of vulnerability it took to share that with you. If you see that I can do it, it is decidedly true that others can do it too. It's a matter of finding the courage and conviction within ourselves. I also understand that it is easier said than done, and there are women in different circumstances, environments, and realities. Life is about stories that we all have about each other, so here is a story about me that you just heard.

A. Gottlieb: You mentioned earlier that you learned by doing, and often by making mistakes. Was there any mistake and lesson you learned thereafter that was particularly valuable?

K. Sivaramakrishnan: One of my mantras for myself—it's true for any entrepreneur, it's true for any leader, at least from my perspective—is that the one reality we all need to come to terms with is we all need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. That's the truth.

In any career path, whether it's leadership, executive, entrepreneurship, or otherwise, there are going to be many circumstances that we have not dealt with before, there are going to be many firsts that we have never encountered before, and we are going to be uncomfortable. One of the realities is that you have to get comfortable with the fact that that's going to happen, and going to happen with enough frequency, whether it's every day, every month, etc. So, when you are encountering these firsts, you are bound to make mistakes. I think sometimes—and I don't want to bring too much of the gender bias here, but it is true, I feel, at least having seen the men and women around me—women tend to be harder on themselves when we make mistakes. Men and women both mistakes, whether they are in a personal or professional setting. I think women tend to be harder on themselves. My lesson that I've learned is that I think, over time, I've gotten more comfortable with making mistakes and with the fact that I'm still learning. And then I kind of move on from that point onwards, rather than really dwelling on it or being too hard on myself. I

kind of take it as a learning experience and move forward.

I know that wasn't quite the question you asked—you asked for that one mistake—but I did want to highlight the fact that women tend to be harder on themselves. I've decidedly seen this on many women around myself. I don't want to make this anecdotal—I think that if there was a reliable social science experiment that could be conducted on this one, I think that very good results would determine the fact that women can be a bit harder on themselves.

But that said, I think my single biggest mistake and my single biggest learning experience has been that in any kind of leadership role, it is extremely critical to have the right team around you. You are as good as your team. For example, my leadership experience has been in entrepreneurship and starting and founding my company. Having the right kind of people in the executive and in the leadership capacity is not trivial—it is a very hard problem—something that I learned by making mistakes.

There were a couple of roles that were particularly difficult to hire for in the company that I founded. The company is based in Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is a highly competitive environment when it comes to recruiting talent, so finding that talent is an extremely critical problem. Through the process, you end up hiring the wrong people, and then you end up living with that mistake of having those people as part of your team who could be wrong for various reasons.

Another mantra for myself is to hire slow, fire fast. You have to make sure that you are very deliberate in having the right people around yourself. Having the wrong people in the early stages is a death sentence for the company. Having the wrong people at later growth stages is very debilitating for the company. And having the wrong people at much later stages—at any stage—is really caustic for the environment and for the company, from a culture perspective, from a strategy perspective, and very simply from a success perspective. So, I have learned the hard way on how to correct some of these wrong hires. I mean, it is a very expensive mistake. So that is sort of my learning experience—for me, the single largest learning experience in my career as an entrepreneur.

S. George: Hi thanks for joining us tonight. One thing we touched on tonight was the idea of culture and role models. Something in SALSA that we are trying to address is bridging the gap between how we are raised culturally versus the community we are going into as lawyers? As a mother, what were the difficulties in changing how you grew up and how you were raised as a child and reframing that for your own child and for yourself when you changed the environment you are working in.

K. Sivaramakrishnan: For me, there is a significant evolution I went through myself from the time I was raised in a fairly orthodox religious community back in India to sort of finding, becoming, someone of my own. Because my life can be described as “shedding a lot of preconceived, orthodox notions that are inculcated in a human being” just because the environment, the circumstances, are such. That's the sort of world I grew up in. At the same time my mother did inculcate in me a strong sense of

individualism and as sense of “I can go ahead and achieve what I want to.” That’s why it was so paradoxical for me when she had the opinion that I had to marry someone, that I had to be the wife of someone, before I came here to the United States. Because she was the same person who instituted and inculcated the sense of individualism in me. Well that sense of individualism in me won. Right? Because I could not settle for something that I was not comfortable with.

Coming here, I grew into a person of my own being, influenced by the experiences around me. I think my sense of being comfortable, making mistakes, and being comfortable with discomfort was something that was there right from the very beginning. As a result of that, I had to shed a lot of what I had known or what I had learned to be shaped by the experiences I was going through, to become the person I am today. I think you very rightfully said this, especially as law professionals, you are going from your cultural roots of background into serving a community that you are in. That sense of empathy is very critical for you to be able to serve the community you’re in or serve your purposes. In some way that is more true for law professionals than those in technology. So, I am in awe of what you guys do there.

My life experiences shaped me into the person I am today. I had to let go of a lot of baggage that I grew up with. That meant conflict, conflict with my family in particular, and their value system versus my evolving belief and value system. I got comfortable with that conflict. Now that is getting to a whole new level as I became a mother, and how I am going to be using that or inculcating that in another human being. My only promise to myself and my daughter is that I am going to lay the foundation of all possibilities for my child rather than shaping her into what I want her to be. I think that is one way my mother fell short, I learned from that. My experience is, let her carve her own path, find her own evolution, rather than me having to influence it. Give her a set of all possibilities and equip her with the fact that she can achieve any of these possibilities.

Waad Alkurini

Senior Associate at White & Case LLP

Waad Alkurini is a senior project finance associate in White & Case LLP (based in Riyadh; currently in London in preparation to be the first Saudi female partner), doesn't see herself as a pioneer. "That's a tough job to take on your shoulders" she says. Ms. Alkurini launched her legal career at a time when women in Saudi Arabia could not be licensed to officially practice law. She recalls that in 2012, after graduating with a law degree from Prince Sultan University (followed by an LL.M. degree from University of Chicago Law School), "I was a lawyer, but not really a lawyer." Women, who were called "service providers" or "agents" were not allowed to go to court or attend hearings and were restricted to transactional work. The law changed about six years ago, allowing women to practice law. Ms. Alkurini shared her thoughts on being part of the first wave of licensed Saudi women lawyers, finding role models and supporting other women.

Interview by May AlAjlan

“Have trust in yourself and what you are capable of, the sky is the limit.”

M. AlAjlan: I would like to start with thanking you for your contribution to our career development and your continuous support throughout our journey as young women in the legal profession. It's such a great honor that I got the opportunity to work closely with an inspiring Saudi lawyer such as yourself. I thought we might start off with asking about your personal experience. Being one of the first female lawyers joining the legal field in 2012 when female lawyers could not even get licensed by that time, was there any obstacles that you encountered in how to approach working in a male-dominated space when you started working? what has been the most significant barrier in your career?

W. Alkurini: My first year was definitely not easy, as gender bias was something that people grew accustomed to and to dare to fight it would be unspoken of. At the start of my career, particularly because I did not have a senior female presence where I worked, I faced certain instances that I could not fight simply because I was grateful enough to stay on the job that I would not dare bring these instances or obstacles up. An example would be being told I am not welcomed at meetings simply because I am a female. However, I have not let these instances become barriers as I decided to keep a blind eye and focus on what is important, my knowledge and my set of skills that one day will place me where I want to be.

M. AlAjlan: From your experience, do you believe that the law firms in Saudi Arabia make continuous efforts towards understanding the barriers that female employees face, whether internally or with clients, and therefore try to improve the culture to deal with such cases openly?

W. Alkurini: Law firms in Saudi Arabia, at least where I worked, do indeed focus on maintaining a gender neutralized environment and put in place where and when appropriate policies to address gender bias related issues.

M. AlAjlan: Do you feel that the lack of Saudi female role models and mentors when you first started, as there weren't any female leaders in the legal profession, has affected your experience? Were there any male role models/mentors by that time who were supportive and believed women should contribute as equals to the legal profession? Also, do you believe that having a female mentor is significant for enhancing the juniors' experience?

W. Alkurini: I was lucky enough to have found several male mentors who heavily invested in my development and my progression and whom I am still in touch with. Where I worked, my seniors and colleagues put in effort towards neutralizing the workplace and avoiding gender discrimination. While I do believe it is important to find relatable figures in the workplace, one's knowledge, development and experience should not be reliant on any external figures. That does not mean, however, that I have not struggled in certain instances where I thought a female voice and guidance would be of much help.

M. AlAjlan: Since you have seven years' experience in the legal field and witnessed the reforms that took place to license Saudi female lawyers and allowing them to litigate in courts, would you say that female lawyers in Saudi are getting equal opportunities to the ones male lawyers are getting? Would you say that the process of promotional opportunities for female lawyers is fair and equitable?

W. Alkurini: Saudi Arabia is putting a tremendous effort towards gender equalization and have in the past few years placed females in sensitive high governmental positions. That said, we have a long way ahead of us to reach an era where women are completely equal to men. This is because while the government is enacting rules to support women, the government cannot, unfortunately, control individuals' behavior, particularly in the private practice, where a woman would be denied an opportunity on the basis of gender. I believe companies and law firms should have affirmative action policies in place to ensure that women are treated equally.

Lastly, I would say this is more of a global issue and not a local one, as, based on my experience, I have seen gender discrimination coming also from expats and lawyers based in different offices around the world.

M. AlAjlan: Do you experience resistance when you are leading projects/discussions with men? Was there a time when you felt that your capabilities are being underestimated just for the fact that you are a woman?

W. Alkurini: Of course, but I think that would be true of every woman around the world in a male dominant workplace. Those who resist are usually the insecure ones. My defense mechanism has always been to be prepared and know what I am talking about. At the end of the day clients want the work done properly and efficiently and so far, I have not faced an incident where a client did not want females staffed on its project.

M. AlAjlan: What is the one behavior or trait that you have seen derail more female lawyers' careers than any other?

W. Alkurini: At a junior level, I think female lawyers are more likely to be able to sustain their careers and, in

the case of law firms, those who decide to leave, their decision is usually based on personal preferences. However, at a senior level, I would say the main cause that drive females away is inequality in respect of opportunities.

M. AlAjlan: Looking back on your journey and knowing what you know now, what is one piece of advice you would have given yourself along the way?

W. Alkurini: Have trust in yourself and what you are capable of, the sky is the limit.

Karen King

Chief Legal Officer, Silver Lake

Karen King joined Silver Lake as Senior Counsel and was promoted to General Counsel and then Managing Director and Chief Legal Officer. Karen has been named as a Woman of Achievement by Legal Momentum and one of “10 women smashing PE’s glass ceiling” by PE Hub. Prior to joining Silver Lake, Karen worked at Simpson Thacher and Bartlett, focusing on capital markets transactions and domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions. Karen graduated from Duke University and Harvard Law School.

Interview by Charlotte Yin

“Relationships are key.”

C. Yin: Hi Karen. I am a second-year student at Penn Law. I am very honored and thrilled to be connected with you! I look forward to learning about your leadership journey at Silver Lake and as a female trailblazer who smashes the glass ceiling of Silicon Valley. Could you tell us more about what you do as a Managing Director and the Chief Legal Officer of Silver Lake, one of the largest technology investors in the world? What do you enjoy in your day-to-day practice?

K. King: As a Managing Director and the Chief Legal Officer of Silver Lake, I am actively engaged with all of the firm’s strategies. Silver Lake has a flagship \$15 billion large-cap private equity fund, a structured equity and debt fund, and a growth stage flex capital fund, among others. Our top-notch legal and compliance team, whom I feel so fortunate to lead, are involved in all legal matters for the firm, including M&A, litigation, fund formation, regulatory compliance and more. The team is spread out across Silicon Valley, New York and London. I also co-lead the firm’s charitable commitment committee and sit on the firm’s cybersecurity committee, risk committee and valuation committees. In addition, the communications and government relations functions co-report into me. And I serve on the board of one of our portfolio companies. I really enjoy the way no two days are alike in my job. I have been at Silver Lake for almost 16 years and there has never been a dull moment.

C. Yin: As a woman in Silicon Valley, what were barriers that you faced in different phases of your career? With the barriers, how did you continue to use your voice and find empowerment?

K. King: Many women have written about being a professional woman in Silicon Valley. I don’t tend to spend a lot of time thinking about what might be barriers and whether one or more of those might be holding me back. For me, relationships are key. I find that I am able to use my voice and find empowerment through the trusted relationships that I have built with those around me, from our Managing Partners to people like my assistant, who makes my life easier every day through all the many things that she does.

C. Yin: You have been named as a Woman of Achievement by Legal Momentum. You are also named by PE Hub as one of “10 women smashing PE’s glass ceiling.” What change(s) have you brought to the industry and how did you achieve it?

K. King: I never set out to change the industry. I have always been aware, however, that there are too few women in private equity and venture capital. Out of that concern, I have mentored women within the firm as well as young women outside the firm, including volunteering to mentor young women from Duke, the university where I graduated, every summer who are majoring in computer science and out in Silicon Valley doing internships at places like Apple and AWS.

C. Yin: What is important to your leadership philosophy?

K. King: Hiring well. I seek to hire people who are better than I am. They become great contributors to the firm, which helps everyone in it, and they teach me as much as I teach them. Also, seek to listen more than you speak.

C. Yin: What's your next step?

K. King: To get used to have a child in college starting next year and to keep growing and developing in my role as it expands over time in a way that is hopefully helpful and additive to the firm.

C. Yin: Do you have any suggestions for women entering Silicon Valley? What you wish you had known after you graduated from law school?

K. King: Believe in yourself. Dedicate time to making close connections with others, especially other women who can provide an invaluable support network. Make time for family, sleep, and friends. Get a dog, it helps keep you sane. And have fun in whatever career you choose.

Melli Darsa

Founder and Senior Partner at Melli Darsa & Co.,
member firm of PwC Global Network

Melli Darsa is the Founder and Senior Partner in Melli Darsa & Co. (MDC). Melli founded the firm mostly on her own, without any men or any global law firm behind it, which distinguished her from other women of her generation. Two years ago, MDC joined PwC Global Network. Darsa is involved in several groups of the legal and Indonesian community. She serves as a member of the Honorary Board of HKHPM (Association of Capital Market Consultants), as well as Advisor for Pro Bono Activities and Vice Chairman of the Board of Experts of PERADI (the Indonesian Bar Association). She also is currently the Vice Chairperson of Legal and Regulatory Affairs of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN). Melli Darsa earned her law degree at the University of Indonesia and an LL.M. degree from Harvard Law School, which has given her the benefit of experience of eastern and western cultures, two different worlds.

Interview by Paola Valderrama Ortiz

“The role of female mentors and sponsors are key. We encourage female lawyers to be buddies, coaches to other females [...].”

P. Valderrama: As the Founder and Senior Partner in Melli Darsa & Co. Advocates and Legal Consultants (MDC), which do you consider is the most relevant bias you had to overcome and how would you recommend to new generations to act with respect to such bias?

M. Darsa: I have seen materials about this kind of issues and biases, and when I talk about biases I don't want to talk about it in a way that I am complaining because the kind of bias that I have experienced is not “you are a girl, so you cannot do it”, it is not like that. It is more like “you are successful, you cannot be a very nice person”. The bias is that it seems that the more successful you are, the person cannot be possibly a very nice person. I feel that is the issue that I have found.

Surprisingly in my country, as you know, always a religious Muslim population, I feel that my experience from the very beginning was that I always had role models that were women. So, there is this situation in Asia surprisingly, where women are at the top of law firms, commercial law firm specially, which is something kind of unusual. And I think that what is unusual in my case at least nowadays is that people look at me because I am the woman that tended to be actually the front person, where there is a lot of men in the back. In my situation, I started to distinguish my career from other female lawyers that also might be in leading law firms because I did it mostly by my own without any men and also without actually any global law firm behind it. And now, two years ago, I did join PwC to sort of develop an unconventional kind of law firm, so that experience also has changed the way I look at these generations.

The paradigm in my country is a little bit unusual and my experience is unusual. It is not that I didn't face challenges, but to what extent those challenges were because of structural and barriers. I think surprisingly in the kind of law that I practice, which is commercial law (because it might not be the same for example in litigation), that it was supposed to be full of biases, you don't find that. So, my experience is in a way different, and I don't know how to say it, but I want to share that I feel in my country the biggest bias is, again, the bias of the tendency that no matter what, there is privilege people being educated but at the end of the day there is an Indonesian local culture. And also, is not only the culture, but it is the idea that you are a female, you are different from men, and your main function is to be a mother and to be a wife. So, at the end of the day is all fine, the society encourages women who study to the top, but if a woman does not also achieve success in the family, as a wife, they are usually either not liked or still not considered successful, and it is the same if they have suffered a divorce. And then there is also the case that if a woman is divorced, they might think she is not very nice. So, that is mostly what I have experienced.

P. Valderrama: Thank you, Melli. In connection with some of what you have told us, it is considered that one of the reasons why senior women leave law firms is because of work-life balance issues. What do you think about this and which actions do you recommend for women to adopt in order to handle these issues in a day-to-day basis?

M. Darsa: I think there is a lot of misunderstanding from others about who you are as a woman, especially when you are still trying to find out who you are. Specially now I feel free, but when I went to Law School in Harvard, at that time I was 27, I was a young mother, and I was going to school trying to achieve my dreams and on the partnership track. Those were very uncomfortable times for me, because I was also trying to find myself, but I thought, "this is what I want to be". And people were not very happy that I had to focus so much on the work in order to make it, but actually I was really enjoying it. I mean, the things that people think you would not enjoy them, actually I was enjoying them; but everybody just thought I should not because women don't enjoy this kind of things. And no, I actually enjoyed it. When I got older everything became more comfortable, and now I feel very comfortable. So, what I am saying is that even the biases that you find, that you discover, maybe they are biases, but on the other hand actually it is about how you deal with them, because at the end of the day it does not become real unless you believe it.

That is why I think that what is more important is that you don't believe the bias because I think that fortunately the world, I mean even in Indonesia, allows policies that are actually very supportive of women; everybody now understands the economics, that if a country has women who are actually working and are also educated it would be a more prosperous country, it would be more educated, and so forth. Everybody understands that. But yet, it is still difficult, and I actually just did a presentation in diversity in the insurance community, it was the first event in Southeast Asia, and I spoke about my own journey after I left Baker & McKenzie. I started with a 60% of statistics and then over 75%, but then by the twelfth or thirteenth year, the women at that time on the age of 30 or 35 felt uncomfortable, they felt uncomfortable with being there, so that is why before that moment the statistic were good and at PwC we have very good statistics for the female. In MDC my statistics are not good, because my partners are male, so the statistics have gone down, but it is not because of lack of support to women, but sometimes it is the women itself, because culturally it is like some women don't want to be too successful.

I just want to give you some context because I don't want to simplify the issues, but I think that fortunately in Indonesia I don't really face that kind of discrimination. In fact, I feel that I faced more discrimination in the United States, when even a couple of years ago when Trump was elected I went to California to be a witness for an arbitration case and the other side had hired this white much older guy, who actually does not even understand securities law, but he was the expert for the other side. And I came looking much younger than probably they thought, and, in the room, they were all men and they just assumed I was not an expert. And I don't experience that even in my own country, so I find this kind of strange, and sometimes I just want to be careful with the questions because also I don't want to make it seem like there is no issue, because there are issues, but I think that in my case is a little bit different.

P. Valderrama: That is a really different and valuable perspective of what I was thinking, and it is really interesting to hear that actually there is a general situation in your country. It cannot be generalized, but at least that most of the women actually can empower themselves if they want is a fortune.

M. Darsa: Yes, they can. In fact, there are statistics that in some positions women in Indonesia are actually more than men. Of course, you look at me and then you also see other women, and on the other hand there are some other cultures where even in Bali, for example, people who actually do the heavy work are the women, they are the ones who carry the stones. So, what I am saying is that even in our culture is not considered that women are always weak. Now, definitely the case is that is only women that can give birth and it must be the mother, and that is very important, and nobody can replace that function. So, society expect us to work around that function, although now— maybe because of the millennials—men also are wanting to be parenting. And in this case, I just don't know where to position myself, because I feel that in a way, I am very Indonesian, but in a way, I am also very western and that my experience might not be also the same as other people; but I think that the journey that you take really depends on how you deal with it, because I think— and I know it sounds kind of naïve—that you have to believe that the system wants to do the right thing with women.

I think in Indonesia at least it would be reversed, because I think I mentioned the fact that there is more of a Muslim movement in Asia, and for example some people want to see me with a veil because I am Muslim, but I don't wear a veil; and otherwise they seem fine, they say “you can do whatever you want, but you would be more perfect, more beautiful with your veil”, and things like that. That kind of comments were different 15 years ago, but also today have an implication because there are some people that would say that a woman can never be a leader, a woman should never be president, they are not good enough, and if there is a Muslim man and a woman there are some people that would say it should be the man; so that is very dangerous, if that kind of thinking continues. But in my view, and I might be being bias, I think that if women don't achieve their full potential it is usually because they don't spot themselves. I find that is more the case, and women at the end of the day find that they are so scared because they think, “I don't want my husband

don't to love me because I am too successful", "I don't want my marriage to end up in a divorce", and this kind of things make them hide themselves.

And again, I don't want to simplify, but we are still losing more women overall, and we don't find qualified women anymore. I can find qualified women once they graduated, at that time is almost 50/50, and then they quit and it goes down, and the replacements are only men, and it is not because of the men, I mean you cannot always blame the men, it is the women who are not there.

P. Valderrama: This is really useful information, thank you, and I have a follow-up question. When you talked about your experience in the U.S. and what you did, including your studies at Harvard, you said it was a face of your life when you were feeling a little bit uncomfortable, you were trying to figure out who you were. I wonder, what help you to overcome that feeling? Do you think that maybe to have a partner in life that understood what you were going through and why were you doing that, actually helped you? Because I notice from some of your answers that you think the support of your family is important; so, is it about the way in which women see themselves, but also about the immediate family and the environment around them?

M. Darsa: Yes, at that time I felt like the most terrible mother in the world, because I left my baby. I was already married at that time for three years and I had a baby. So, I left him at three months, and it was very, very difficult. My immediate family, my mother, my siblings and my husband at that time were completely supportive of me because I think, for them, there was no issue about that. And it was my husband at that time the one who said that we could afford to have a baby and to make sure we have help to take care of him. I think that something we loved at that time in Asia was that your parent really was somebody that you could really have the comfort that she will make time for you. I think that is different from my generation where I don't see myself, for example, taking care full time of my grandson, we are just most busy, like we have more things to do; but at that time my mother was to help and also to support my husband so we were lucky, like Indonesian families at that time were really lucky. I think that support that I had in the 90's, I would not have it now.

P. Valderrama: In the research “Women in the Workplace 2017” made by McKinsey, they identified that while most U.S. law firms have the right policies to improve gender diversity, like offering flexible-work programs, many attorneys still fear that participating in these programs will damage their careers. Seventy-five percent of women and seventy-four percent of men in law firms believe that participating in a part-time or reduced- schedule program will have negative impact on their career. In that sense, more needs to be done to make these a viable option and make these programs culturally acceptable. Do you see this situation also in Indonesia? And how do you think that programs can be in fact culturally acceptable in the law firms?

M. Darsa: I lost two of my star lawyers after they did part time, so I think I tend to agree that going part time is not the way to go. They said that they felt bad most of the time, because they were not there when client needed them, but then their family also felt as if they worked just like they were full time, although they were part time.

I think what is important is for your family to accept that as a woman trying to become a leader in the law firm, that you cannot possibly do the same thing as a mother that someone in a different position can do. In brief, there must be more kindness all around, from our spouse, from our kids, from our parents, and from ourselves.

P. Valderrama: You mentioned that, for example, these policies to incentive diversity, like part-time jobs after pregnancy, exist but actually is the way how women see them, face them and feel about them that makes the system fail at the end, because the way how we face them. Do you think that maybe giving paternal leaves in the same way and in the same terms that you give them for women would make this easier to face for women or how do you handle that in PwC?

M. Darsa: In our country I think that we are not as progressive as some countries where they have a very long paternity leave and, in some countries, the paternity leave can be longer than the maternity leave, depending on the company, which is interesting. This is what my friends say, which have kids, is that at the end of the day is not just about the company giving the time, but the society accepting the men doing as much as the parenting roll as women. This is because in some societies, people still think that maybe doing those things is more “mommy’s job” rather than “daddy’s job”. So, first is that, and then I think that some males are just naturally more maternal, and some males are more paternal, I think you cannot change it, just like some women are more maternal and some women are more paternal. It is not about who we are, is more about the nature. But do I think that giving more paternity leave would help? Maybe I think it would help to direct the fact that paternity is a co-responsibility, I think it might be beneficial. Although of course for me, from the employer side of things, this kind of gender balancing policies are also very hard, they are very expensive. That is why in our organization we actually try to use more digitalization, also as part of trying to ensure that it is not about being present, but is actually about the results, and it is also honoring that you might be doing other things and most people can do multitasking. I think maybe it might help but I am not sure, because we have not tried it.

Additionally, I think that in all the situations that I have had where we have given part-time, they end up feeling more guilty about it, and at the same time the man was also trying to reach certain things in his life. So, what I find is that when the woman is actually aiming to the top the guy is also there, and then basically if he has a clear view of where he wants to be, men always feel that they have contributed enough for this woman's development and that now is their time. It is kind of funny how men can say this to women, "now is my time to develop my career", when actually if they think natural about having each other, is not about my time or your time. But that's what I face, that women feel as if they are a little bit too successful and there was something wrong with the kids, if they get sick, if they are not the number one student of the class or whatever, the woman immediately feels guilty and it is mostly because the thinking of "I have been working so I have no time for them".

So, then they told me I hate this part-time thing, because I feel bad because people look at me, so I think it is also about the relation with the spouse, because I always say to my lawyers: "make sure that you marry someone who really understands this job, that is something that you really truly enjoy". It is difficult sometimes, it is stressful sometimes, but you love it, and you have to love it because it is hard to be a lawyer, and it is true for women in any career but also for women in law, which is different because in law as professionals it means you are somebody that is important, always every day, and the law itself is important. So, if you don't marry someone who understands that, it is going to be very hard. And that is why I think a lot of lawyers end up marrying people who also went to Law School if not lawyers as well. That kind of marriages can manage it, but I know from my American friends that the woman is the one who ends up not working, I mean she ends up giving up her career whatever it was. It is interesting, but that's what happens. So, I think there is something about women on trying to reach the top of their careers, generally, but then law is very specific because it is a service industry, and it is usually very clear in terms of the status that you have to reach. And if you got to a Law School, that means that you are in the top of society, so you are used to perform at the top and I think that is a problem, that women sometimes need to sort of understand that sometimes they have to slow down in order to actually achieve the longer goal. They have to say, well sometimes I am not going to be the most perfect, and actually at certain age. let's say at 38, when everything is sort of awkward because you are trying to have a child, you don't always have time for yourself, but still have to prove yourself in the office; it is very uncomfortable, but I think that if we just get all these emotions out of the way and actually just focus and also have a supportive environment you can reach everything. You just have to pass that stage, because I find that it is very, very enjoyable.

I find that in myself, that's why people say "you must be very passionate about what you do", and I think I might be passionate but I think it is not that, I just think it is a great job. So, I just feel such a pity that so many intelligent potentially great people that could had reached the top, just gave up. And I find that very sad. That's where I find the biggest bias. This is a very conforming society you know, so if it is comfy, you just conform. And, on the other hand, actually we are a country that has a long tradition of knowing women for their strong, for their courage, for being smart and most of the men will admit that, that women are smarter than men, but given that you are the one who has to give birth, please put yourself in perspective. And for some of us that period is hard, especially if your child is not supportive, because your child can be also unsupportive, and he or she might not understand and that makes you feel more guilty. So, you are running with all these emotions and I think that self-knowledge is very important.

P. Valderrama: New generations of young lawyers have become a challenge for law firms, which in many cases are seen by them as “old fashion”. Younger generations look for a purpose, innovation and real diversity policies. How do you think that law firms can adapt to these changes and recruit new young women?

M. Darsa: In our firm, we have adapted our work situation to cater to the needs for flexibility. This means that result is more important than presence. Digitalization also helps to make their lives more comfortable, as they can work from everywhere generally.

But, in connection with the millennials, I think they put themselves to a very high standard. I mean, I think that we (the older generations) came to sort of understand that we cannot all be perfect at everything, but I think that there are higher standards for the younger generations, which is going to make it harder, especially since they don't have the kind of parents that I have, the kind of parents that would scarify their time so you can do that thing that you want. So, I find that maybe my generation might not be that selfless, even in Indonesia, and maybe is not because of that, but it is also that we have more expression as women too, so we are still working. In Indonesia people do not retire early and even if they retire from their works, they will be probably a leader in society and they will still be very active in community, so they would not be just laying around in the house and doing nothing. That, I think, is the challenge for the new generations.

P. Valderrama: How do you see the role of mentors in improving gender diversity in the law firms? How do you motivate women to be mentors for junior lawyers?

M. Darsa: The role of female mentors and sponsors are key. We encourage female lawyers to be buddies, coaches to other females in PwC and as now adapted by MDC. The reality though is that you need to match the coach- coached precisely too. A woman's experience may be quite different to another woman due to her life choices (e.g. to marry, to have kids, or not).

In life, what you must do, and what you must pray for (if you are somebody who prays) is that you get mentors and sponsors. Because I think that there are more supporters than detractors, and you have to focus on those people, and you will find that there are actually a lot of them and that they are interesting and nice people, too. You have, during those times when you doubt of yourself, to hang on and also I think you should not blame the external factors all the time, because if you are strong then you can do everything; sometimes I feel we blame men, and sometimes it is true and it is the outside, is the old guys as I told you about in the United States. I was actually very surprised, and I could not believe that, because I felt discriminated in other country and I don't feel like that ever in Indonesia, we don't have the whole discrimination that a person who dresses-up cannot be also intelligent or tough. So, there is always a set of assumptions, they look at you and they just assume certain things, and I think what I have found and is very important is to be in the right surrounding because in the right surroundings you will find kind spirits, a sister. That is why policies that are supportive are critical and it is so important for firms to understand that they must be more proactive. I don't understand why some organizations are shy to talk about the problem and inclusion, but they are missing the point, because this struggle of women is not yet successful, because you see the statistics and it is still low and unacceptable. We are still not doing well, in part because of a dilution of the agenda, and also because some women would say “I don't need any special favor”, and I disagree because I do think women need a break and there is going to be this period of life that is going to be very difficult.

And I think that it's important to support very much because women sometimes they don't even believe in themselves, so if the society doesn't believe in them, how can they have the strength to continue the journey through something that is going to be rewarded. And no matter what, kids are important, but they will grow up, and they become adults and they leave you. And then what happens if you have not exploited your potential, is unfortunately because you are always somebody's mother, somebody's daughter, you are not yourself, and society has to help you to be yourself.

P. Valderrama: Thank you so much for your time, Melli. I just have one last question. Which do you think that is the main role men partners should have when implementing policies to increase gender diversity in the law firms?

M. Darsa: In PwC Indonesia, ironically it is the men who remember the importance of improving gender diversity because many of the women are too busy trying to multitask with excellence. I think that for gender diversity policy to work, the men need to be involved, as in reality they still make many of the decisions in most organization.

Unfortunately, when certain male to female ratios are achieved, organizations are too easily satisfied that there is no gender diversity issue to be worried about, when actually they are just not being expressed. Without giving unfair special treatments that are unnecessary, organizations need to be more sensitive and sympathetic to the struggles that women face along their career path. If people are resigning and, in the end, there are less women at the top, it means that something still needs to be improved.

Melli Darsa

Interview by Bianca Hsing

B. Hsing: It is truly wonderful to have the opportunity to interview you, Ms. Darsa. I thought we might start off with some insight as to your background. Having been educated in the United States, what was your idea of female leadership? Did you have to adjust your vision of female leadership when you returned to Asia?

M. Darsa: My understanding of female leadership actually came from my experience in Indonesia. At the age of 18, I became a volunteer at the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute. At the time, the Director of the Jakarta Legal Aid was actually a female attorney, Nursyahbani Katjasungkana. After graduating from the law school of the University of Indonesia, I worked in a commercial law firm, Makarim & Taira. I worked for an expatriate senior attorney. Soon afterwards, the female lawyer was appointed to the position of Managing Partner. After graduating from Harvard Law School, I joined Hadiputranto Hadinoto & Partners (Baker & McKenzie), a firm that was founded by two women and three men (one expatriate). Baker & McKenzie would later on be chaired by another female, Christine Lagarde. I did not have to make any changes to my vision of female leadership because to tell you the truth, I did not have any preconceptions about it. I was always raised by my father with the idea that I could be anything I wanted. Whilst I knew in the U.S. there was a glass ceiling, I never thought about it at all. In my career, being female never was an obstacle.

B. Hsing: What do you think are the biggest challenges female leaders in Asia face?

M. Darsa: My experience may be unique to the legal profession of Indonesia, where for many years female acceptance in law schools has always been rather high, and in recent years have always been largely equal. I know that it is much harder to become a Director of a state-owned company, and outside of the financial services industry, women still find barriers.

I cannot speak to what is faced by female leaders outside of Indonesia, but in Indonesia, the biggest challenge is the notion that a woman is supposed to be a successful homemaker no matter what. Marrying, having children, and raising a family well, are still the expectations of society. During my time, I had the advantage of being raised by “baby boomers” where more women were not professionals or working. For example, my mother was able to help me with raising my child as I was going up the partnership ladder. Millennials do not have the same advantage, what with having parents like me who are probably very much active in their profession. The challenge will continue to be the self-limiting and cultural beliefs that a woman in the end must still marry, have kids, and that the family well-being is still her responsibility despite the fact that she may be the breadwinner.

B. Hsing: What are some challenges you have had to face as a female leader? How did you overcome those challenges?

M. Darsa: It depends on what decade you are talking about. In our early 30s, we are still very preoccupied with the children, and not all of us marry men that are helpful with raising the family. The 30s were the hardest time for me, in terms of trying to balance family demands and making partnership. Then when I achieved partnership at a relatively young age by Indonesian standards, it felt rather lonely there because you were working so hard just to prove yourself, but also still sensitive to people's comments and judgments. In my 40s, after having my own firm, and being in command, it was much easier to manage my priorities.

Ironically, my most recent challenge is to keep female subordinates, especially as they become more focused on their family life. Although I started my own firm with a 60% female lawyer composition, which then went up to 75%, in the end I lost a large number of female attorneys, due to them focusing on other priorities or wanting to set up their own firm.

B. Hsing: What do you think aspiring female leaders (in Asia or in general) should do to better prepare themselves for future positions?

M. Darsa: I think they need to be kind to themselves, and sometimes not be such a perfectionist. They must not exhaust themselves to the point they lose their passion for the field. I feel fortunate that I have expanded my interest in life beyond my private practice. Passion, energy, healthy body, and healthy mind are very important. You need to want to be a leader too – of course assuming you have the aptitude and the skillsets.

“Female leaders need to be kind to themselves, and sometimes not be such a perfectionist. They must not exhaust themselves to the point they lose their passion for the field.”

B. Hsing: Did you actively seek out female mentors when you first started your career? What was the process like?

M. Darsa: I have both male and female mentors. The male mentors were more instrumental for the beginning of my career, and the female mentors came along after 15 years of practice. I tend to adopt many mentors and sponsors along the way, by keeping in touch and always asking for guidance about whatever steps I take.

B. Hsing: What do you think are some challenges that female leaders in Asia face, but that female leaders in the U.S. do not, and vice versa?

M. Darsa: I think there are no differences in challenges. However, I think for certain professions, in Indonesia, like corporate law, there is no discrimination whatsoever.

B. Hsing: Could you share some important takeaways you've learned throughout your career on female leadership and empowerment?

M. Darsa: My takeaways are that it is the challenges that we face and overcome, that make us strong, and it is when we help other people fulfil their potential, that we become even more powerful. Female leaders especially must share not only their glory but their struggle – show their humanity, their weaknesses.

B. Hsing: What was the best purchase/investment decision you have ever made? (Whether educational, personal, financial)

M. Darsa: My best investment was of course going to Harvard Law School, and then doing the Bar exam.

B. Hsing: As a very successful leader, who do you turn to for advice nowadays?

M. Darsa: To be honest, when I want advice, I ask those I love the most, and for me this is my family. When I was young, these were my parents; later on, my siblings, and of course, my spouse. Now I ask my kids. People who love you but who believe in your potential and have no hidden agenda are those who give the best advice. I was always amazed how my mother, despite how she never went to university, could always give the most intelligent guidance to my life struggles.

B. Hsing: What has been the best piece of advice you have ever received?

M. Darsa: When I opened my own law firm at the end of 2002, a highly respected senior male lawyer who had his own small firm told me, “You must be very giving when opening a law firm of your own. You will discover the whole point of owning a law firm is what you can do for other people.”

“You must be very giving when opening a law firm of your own. You will discover the whole point of owning a law firm is what you can do for other people.”

B. Hsing: What is it like to be a female leader in Indonesia? Are there any particular cultural, political, or societal norms that influence the power dynamics there? (Whether in terms of the diverse population or other traditional beliefs that may be widely held)

M. Darsa: Generally, in order to maintain our status, keeping a good personal reputation is very important, and that includes the obligation to dress appropriately. There has been more pressure on me to wear the veil from Muslim community. Some people think that I would be a more effective “leader”, particularly if I wanted to enter politics, if I were to wear a veil.

B. Hsing: What are some important qualities that you believe every leader should have, but that people rarely talk about?

M. Darsa: Self-introspection, humility, and generosity.

B. Hsing: Who, or what sources, do you regularly look to for inspiration? (Whether a book, publication, role model, historical figure)

M. Darsa: I try to get inspiration through night sunnah prayers and just basically sort of listening to “higher forces”.

Leen Zaza

Head of Khoshaim & Associates

Leen Zaza is the head of the private mergers and acquisitions and general corporate practice Khoshaim & Associates, a premier law firm in Saudi Arabia. She has led a wide range of corporate and commercial transactions in Saudi Arabia and internationally, including mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, IPOs, and private placements in many industries such as oil and gas, energy, shipping, chemical production, and heavy equipment. Leen was recognized as a Next Generation Lawyer by Legal 500, the only female lawyer to be ranked amongst all private practice areas in Saudi Arabia, and as a Highly Regarded Individual by IFLR1000. She has built a solid market recognition for her skills, her capabilities, and for leading notable deals and transactions. Leen obtained an LL.M. in Commercial Law (Distinction, winner of the Social Sciences and Law Faculty prize for best overall academic performance) and an LL.B. (Honors) from the University of Bristol and is fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. Her pro bono experience includes working with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice - Asociacion Bufete Juridico de Derechos Humanos, AMREF, and the University of Bristol Law Clinic.

Interview by Ghaida Meaigel

“I learned how important it is to listen – to my team, to my clients, to the market, to my competitors, and to my gut.”

G. Meaigel: Leen, tell us a little bit about yourself. Who is Leen? What motivated you to be the leader you are today?

L. Zaza: I am a lawyer by profession and a self-confessed biblio- and linguaphile who loves to travel, meet new people and explore new cultures. I was born in the beautiful city of Damascus, Syria and grew up between Canada and Saudi Arabia. I am British-educated and New York-qualified and have spent the majority of my legal career practicing in Saudi Arabia, with a brief stint in the UAE. In other words, a true global citizen! My incredible parents are my biggest source of motivation. They have instilled the importance of education and its power as a tool to make the world a better place in me and my siblings from a very young age. This is what continues to drive me forward every day: what new things can I learn and use what I know to become a better version of myself and drive change to better the world for those around me.

G. Meaigel: Define a great leader. What are some traits you think great leaders possess?

L. Zaza: What constitutes a great leader is subjective and incredibly circumstance-specific. Therefore, it would be very difficult to define such term in a way that would apply universally. At its very simplest, anyone who influences others is, technically, a “leader.” A “great leader” would be someone who does that well. I do agree that all great leaders share certain traits. When I think of a “great leader”, I think of someone who [...] takes action/initiative, [...] has long-term vision, and [...] is empathetic.

G. Meaigel: What is a one leadership lesson you have learned in your career?

L. Zaza: How important it is to listen – to my team, to my clients, to the market, to my competitors, and to my gut.

G. Meaigel: As a woman leader in a male-dominated world, what was the most difficult challenge you faced? And how did you overcome it?

L. Zaza: There is no particular event or occurrence that I would single out as the most difficult challenge I have faced. As cliché as it sounds, life, and one's career, is rife with all kinds of challenges, and on any given day, even the smallest of incidents or remarks can feel insurmountable and incredibly difficult to face. I have faced my fair share of individuals who have questioned my abilities or dismissed my contributions because of my gender – something which, unfortunately, is faced by women around the world every day. I have come to learn that this often comes from a place of insecurity – sexist behavior is a reflection of the person demonstrating it, and if someone has a problem with me being a female, that is their problem, not mine. So, I have learned that such behavior should not stop me from continuing to pursue my goals in the way that I do.

I have also learned that such behavior should be called out, in the appropriate manner. Part of the problem is that such instances have been tolerated, by both men and women, for far too long. A woman should not feel uncomfortable or less of herself for being on the receiving end of sexist behavior. The person demonstrating such behavior should be the one not made comfortable to demonstrate it in the first place. This is a change which needs to be driven by everyone within society: lawmakers, business owners, managers, colleagues, teachers, parents. Absolutely everyone.

G. Meaigel: You must have dealt with many female professionals, seniors or juniors, during your career. In your own experience, what were the common mistakes women tend to fall in and what do you suggest they should have done instead?

L. Zaza: One of the biggest mistakes I see is female professionals short selling themselves. I came across a study once where the author had asked a group of men and women who work in a corporate setting how “sure” did they have to feel about something before talking about it in a meeting. Most men had responded with 50 to 60%, whereas most women had to feel 90 to 100% sure before even bringing it up! I see an iteration of this all the time – women often feel that they cannot ask for more responsibility or a promotion because they do not feel 100% ready, whereas men just go for it. Similarly, I often see female professionals downplaying their role in a particular matter or their achievements, often quoting the risk of being construed as a show-off, whereas their male counterparts tend to do the opposite and amplify their contributions at every opportunity.

Another issue that I am regularly disheartened to see is female professionals only seeing themselves as being in competition with other females and thinking that the easiest way to progress is by identifying another female professional to replace within their organization. This can manifest even on a subconscious level. Male juniors often express aspirations by referring to a particular position (“I want to become VP/CEO/Head of this practice or department”). With females, it is often with reference to another, usually female, person (“I want to be like X” or “I

want this position because I can do what/better than what X is doing”).

I will admit that it is not entirely fair to call these “mistakes” that female professionals commit, because I do believe that such behavior is largely fueled by the utterly ridiculous societal notions which have surrounded female professionals for so long (and, in many places, continue to do so today). Notions such as a female professional highlighting her experience or attributes being judged – rather than celebrated – as being “too full of herself” or “not nice enough”, or there being insufficient space “at the top” for multiple female figures leading junior female professionals to believe that the only way to grow is by replacing the “token” female representation (on a board/in management/ etc.).

It has become long overdue for all of us (males, females and everyone else) to move past these regressive notions. Female professionals should not be afraid to go after what they want and, equally, should not feel that they have to alter themselves or fit a certain mold to get there.

G. Meaigel: When facing a moment of doubt about your own ability, whether technical or in terms of leadership, how do you deal with it and what do you do to overcome that?

L. Zaza: I embrace it and use this discomfort to grow and push myself forward. If I am feeling doubtful because I do not believe I have the necessary skills or knowledge to embark on a new endeavor, I learn or work on acquiring what I need to feel ready to take something on. If I am feeling doubtful because I’m not feeling confident about tackling something, I throw myself in and face the situation.

G. Meaigel: Many of the young leaders in the Women, Law and Leadership Lab came from backgrounds and families that do not necessarily have a legacy in the practice/professional area they are pursuing. Therefore, they lack access to social capital. How does someone gain social capital in the beginning of their career? Is it a merit-based gain, or should someone strive to be likeable and social?

L. Zaza: I do not view having a legacy or access to social capital of the type you are referring to here as something essential to launch or maintain a career. It is definitely advantageous for those fortunate enough to have access to it, but such benefit is short-lived and can even become a hindrance in the long-term if not utilized properly.

What is far more important and valuable is to build your own network. This comes with time and with regular, yet meaningful, communication with like-minded professionals and peers. A large part of that will be facilitated by merit – if you are good at what you do, others will come to know of that and will garner an interest in you. But to have a goal to be “likeable” and “social” – I do not think that is a necessity for building a professional network, unless you are a social person by nature. I think it is far more important to be yourself and to always be professional when dealing with others.

G. Meaigel: What are some strategies that can help women achieve a more prominent role in their organizations?

L. Zaza: The strategy-making process should not differ based on an individual’s gender. In all

cases, coming up with a strategy should involve [...] identifying a clear goal, [...] analyzing the strengths and opportunities that will help in achieving such goal versus the weaknesses and threats that will challenge being able to achieve it, [...] putting together a plan with a clear timeline of actions that need to be taken to address the challenges that exist, and [...] taking action and implementing such plan. Sure, the type of weaknesses and threats identified [...] and options available to address them [...] may differ between a male and a female, but the process remains the same.

G. Meaigel: As a final question and a remark, what would you say are the three main rules or pieces of advice you would give to the readers of young global leaders?

L. Zaza: Dream big and work hard for it. Do not settle; If something bothers you or is not right, speak up or do something about it. Always treat others with respect. Nothing can justify being disrespectful to others.

Fatima AlQubaisi

Legal Counsel, Dubai Tourism

Fatima Al-Qubaisi is usually referred to as the first Emirati woman to have attended Harvard Law School, one of many things Fatima was the first in. Fatima is currently a Legal Counsel at Dubai Tourism. Prior to that, she worked with Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). Fatima holds an LL.M. degree from Harvard Law School and a B.A. from Paris Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi. She is fluent in English, Arabic, German and French.

Interview by May AlAjlan and Ghaida Meaigel

“There are hundred men in a suit, but then there is only one you.”

Fatima, tell us a little about yourself. What defines you, what motivates you?

F. AlQubaisi: When I was growing up, I joined the debate club very early on. I grew up in a quite difficult household and I was far away from my mother. So, my refuge was school. I loved school and learning, even though when I was growing up, it was not cool to be smart, or to get good grades. It wasn't socially acceptable and I would get called a nerd and so on but I unapologetically enjoyed school and I loved it.

At the age of 12, I was in every single extracurricular activity in school. I was in everything from student council, book club, math club, chess club etc. As long as it did not involve sports, I was in it. One reason for that is that I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of a community. By the age of 14, I was basically running my school as I was assisting the principal.

My interest in the law was gained by seeing how unfair things were in our society towards women. I would hear about cases where women lost custody of their children for no apparent reason other than being a woman, how men could obtain a divorce very easily, but women would struggle to become ostracized by society. And I wondered to myself, who made these laws? It was men. Historically, women were not part of the conversation and were never given a seat at the table. When I was quite young, I decided that I wanted to study law and I wanted to know if it actually were the laws that are preventing women from achieving their goals, or whether it was purely society.

You said you felt you were in a male-dominated world when you started your career. What was the most difficult challenge that you encountered as a woman and how did you overcome it?

F. AlQubaisi: As a woman, I think there were many challenges I faced. One challenge was being stereotyped. When I started my career, there were only few Emirati women doing what I do and there is a stigma associated with being Emirati, possibly being a woman, wearing a veil. These are all factors which can lead people to make certain assumptions about you. I would be complimented on my English, and people would be quite startled to find out I loved the arts, music and poetry. People may try to put you in a certain box and when you do not measure up to that, it frustrates them and in an effort to understand you people may react with confusion. It seems ludicrous to think that we can fit people in today's day and age in any box really, as we are all such unique people from the most interconnected melting pot.

I believe it is very important that you make it clear that you are an individual and as an individual, it is not easy to dismiss you or categorize you. In one of my previous jobs, the company did not really ever have any Emirati females. For example, they would have meetings and lunches outside of the office and weren't sure whether I would be comfortable joining or if they should extend the invitation. A lot of women in that organization had barricaded themselves in trying to pursue a reputation of chastity but then inadvertently distancing themselves from people and processes.

It's important to an early precedent and I made sure that women who were going to come after me would not be suffocated with rules that were made up and that were disadvantageous, like not mixing with men in the workplace, which is necessary in any thriving professional environment.

I also learned that if you are that kind of person who is always blatantly aware of your gender, others will be aware of it too. If you are comfortable in your own skin, it does not matter if you have a speech impediment, if you have a disability, because by owning your true self you earn respect and people will not treat you differently.

Do you think that being a Muslim, conservative, liberal or non-Muslim play a role in client-selection, how do you attract them and how you build your reputation? Or do you think that is something that women should not focus on when building their career?

F. AlQubaisi: I think whatever your personality is, whatever your decision is, whether you want, or you do not want to be conservative; women should be very careful from closing themselves off to opportunities. I strongly believe in being true to yourself but also in accepting others on that very same notion. Based on plenty of research, people perform better when both genders are represented and work together a company. If you only attend meetings with women and are surrounded by only women, it would be a great thing, but you may lose out on diverse thinking. I think women who are conservative may attract clients who are also conservative, but if you are good at your job, you do not need that. You have to reach a healthy balance between respecting your personal preferences but then not losing out opportunities because of your own beliefs. You should adopt this culture of “I earned it” and “I deserve it.” Women have a talent for reading people and our empathy makes us not only great lawyers but also truly heartfelt advocates of a client and their cause.

You said, “You just need to be good at what you do.” Do you think that it is enough for women? Do you think that doing the best you can and trusting that someday it will pay off is the solution? Or do you think you need to do more than that?

F. AlQubaisi: I meant be good at your job with your clients and they will begin to trust you. If you look at the studies, women are much more likely not to ask for a rise – we are much likely to agree to lower salaries and are much less likely to apply for jobs when we do not meet all the criteria and qualifications for it. Women can have a tendency to be self-critical and when there is an opportunity for promotion, we may not step up and we often do not believe we deserve it. I think this is something that women do need to work on and adopt this culture of self-recognition. Another example of this is if you read other books about women in the workplace, you will see that there is a lot of researches even on body Language, as women tend to take up as little space as possible when they are sitting, standing and presenting and this is physiological. This is perhaps behavior that we were taught when we were younger (to take as little space as possible,

to be unnoticed and trying not to interfere) and this all shows now when we are adults. It is really a disadvantage that women need to work on and unlearn. Instead we need to begin to step up and change such behaviors and ensure that we do not instill them in younger girls.

Women should support each other; there are so many boys' clubs, but where are the women clubs? Men have this advantage as they help each other out, and I think we are slowly going in that direction as well. Sadly, as tough as we are on ourselves, we can be equally as tough on fellow women.

However, for every disadvantage we face, we also have immense advantages. For example, the ability to read facial expressions, especially micro-expressions. Women are able to meet people and read them and the situation extremely well and this is very handy when you are meeting with a client, doing due diligence or questioning a witness, in my opinion. We also have a lot of empathy, when we meet with people we actively listen, and clients enjoy being heard. In terms of the law, I think women have such an advantage in dealing with people which comes in very handy especially that in today's digital age, we preserve skills that machines cannot do yet. Another thing that I consider beneficial is that often I am the only woman in the room who is wearing abaya (traditional clothes). Without even saying a word, you can stand out by being a woman and while for so long I thought it was not in my favor, I realized that not only did it get me noticed but it opened the door to many more women. Being the only woman, you are remembered and while your actions may carry more burden if you mess up, when you do well you set a precedent for what women are capable of. There are hundred men in a suit, but then there is only one you.

Can you tell us a little bit about the initiatives you have done and the daily work you do to promote women's empowerment?

F. AlQubaisi: I work on different initiatives, but I would not really call them my own, because it truly is a community effort. Ever since I was in school, I have been very keen on helping women. I realized that women felt comfort just simply by knowing a lawyer. I have been an encourager of divorce of women who were domestically abused and too afraid to take that step. I have cheered on women for pursuing hobbies such as singing, ballet or car racing while society was not yet ready. I no longer fear for frail women in our society who are not able to be equals but I rejoice in the fact that women are strong in their will, their fight and commitment to not just see change but be the change.

I used to tutor women for the TOEFL exam, so they get admitted to universities. I have also seen that having a goal and striving to work towards it tend to be an incredible thing at any age and no matter where you are in life. I had women who were retired and wanted to learn French, and I was happy to tutor them. Even at work, I am an advocate for those who are too afraid to speak up, whether it be the paralegals and secretaries and by speaking up not only did I encourage them to follow suit but also to believe in their cause.

I am a big believer in calling out bad behavior very early on. If someone interrupts you consistently, proceed to mansplain or has the audacity to take credit for your idea, make a joke or simply call them out of it, since they do not have the humility to abstain from such behavior.

Can you tell us more about the personal role model in your life?

F. AlQubaisi: When I was growing up, there were basically two pioneer women who are my role models. Firstly, Her Highness Sheikha Fatima who I was very lucky to have grown up with her actively involved in my education and a big reason that I excelled academically. She organized many activities and the basis behind all of them were to instill a love of learning, be curious and develop work ethic. Her commitment to young people can be seen throughout the country and being the Mother of Nation she has touched all of our lives.

Another person who I always looked up to is my aunt, Amal AlQubaisi, and she is very active as one of the few women I knew back in the day who had an actual career. In 2006, my aunt decided to run for the Federal National Council (FNC) and a lot of people around me said that “women can’t lead and be in this position” and it turned into a debate about religion, tradition and that this is not acceptable. I decided when I was in ninth grade that I would help her campaign, so I went around to students and parents alike to discuss one of the very first elections we had in the country. She went on to not only being a member of the FNC but eventually she became the first female president of a parliament in the Arab world. The discussion has definitely shifted from whether women should be in parliament to what percentage of women should be represented. Not only do women still campaign for the FNC but it is now comprised of 50% women, which is the highest representation of women of a parliament worldwide.

In 2008 the economy the financial crisis hit, however it actually helped women a lot I think when the economy does badly, women do well. When the country was very wealthy, there didn't seem to be a need for women to work, however women joining the workforce gave them economic stability and independence for the first time.

The things that are happening within the UAE, including the vision 2050 which calls for more women participation, and the fact that we have so many female ministers, we are also now starting to have female ambassadors and the many breakthroughs women are making in my lifetime are astounding. All these changes of roles took centuries in other nations and were sped up here in the UAE. We are at the forefront of how women are involved in decision making, seen in government roles and contributing to the future of a nation. Given our small population, commitment to the future generations and our relentless belief in change, we are an integral part of our country's growth and progress.

These are incredible changes. Do you wish to run for office?

F. AlQubaisi: I am not sure yet about that. I work for Dubai Tourism now, and I like it because previously I worked in investments from oil money and now I am looking more into diversifying the economy – so the UAE can make its money from resources other than oil, because that is not going to be here forever. The work culture in any investment company is also quite different from an entity that does media and campaigns and I have learned so much from two stark and opposing styles and structures.

What vision do you have for yourself?

F. AlQubaisi: I keep a very open mind and I hope in the future I will be able to work for a regulator, who knows, perhaps become a judge or legislature. I also think working with technology as our industry (the law industry), which is still very afraid of embracing technology and technological advances is important. Whether we work in tandem with it or against it, technology is coming. So, I think using technology in the future is going to be eye-opening and it

is going to make our careers and the law so much more accessible and clearer. People may be able to assess their cases and decide whether they want to pursue a claim, and I think court cases are going to be smoother and faster and I am eagerly looking forward to that and want to be part of that change.

One lesson I learned pretty early is to know when to walk away. There comes a time, either professionally or personally, where you have to be willing to give up certain relationships with people and potentially even a job. It is important that in those instances you are kind to yourself, know your own worth and are brave enough to do what it takes to leave and not look back.

Tell us a little bit about ways in which you think women can play leading roles in innovation in the UAE and in diversifying the economy. You have had these great mentors and you have had an excellent education as you have been to top schools; how do you think other women can follow in your footsteps?

F. AlQubaisi: I think if you are working towards a goal, it will require a lot of hard work and I knew from a very early age that this was not going to be easy. If I wanted to be a lawyer, be taken seriously and make a change, I will lose people along the way. I might not be very popular, I might have people who will disagree with me and I had to accept that. There also comes a lot of sacrifice, whether it be sacrificing social commitments or being willing to pave the way for women but in that effort burning bridges at times.

I believe people come into your life for a reason and have a purpose and most of the opportunities in my life came from knowing the right people. When I applied to law schools, I was not actually going to apply to Harvard. It crossed my mind but then I laughed about how ridiculous it seemed. My boss at the time and mentor, Harry Stanley, believed in me when I did not believe in myself. He basically locked me in his office and said: "I am going out, and you are going to stay here until you apply to Harvard". That was a turning point in my life and I am eternally grateful.

Passing the torch to the younger generation, what your wisdom for young women from the Middle East?

F. AlQubaisi: I think it would be to never to lose hope. It is easy to reach a point where you think "why bother?" I have been there myself. However, there is always this glimpse of hope and it is there if you just find it. When I see fellow women break barriers and I see that fire in a young girl's eyes that I remember from when I was not abiding by the status quo, I realize we can do it all, and in heels too.

Another key takeaway is to realize that you are not in this alone, so whenever you are dealing with an issue, know that someone before you has dealt with it and someone after you will face it too. Whenever you are facing calamity, you can call upon your network. Call your friends, family and people you trust, the right people will be there for you and they will also back you up. Knowing that you are not alone increases that glimpse of hope even more. All ties together with being confident in yourself, accepting yourself as you are and realizing that this is a slow but steady battle and one must keep the fighting spirit alive.

Megha Parekh

Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer of the Jacksonville Jaguars

Megha Parekh is the Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer of the National Football League's Jacksonville Jaguars. Ms. Parekh is a true inspiration and trailblazer in her field. At 31, she became the only woman of color as well as the youngest General Counsel in the National Football League. Prior to joining the Jaguars, Ms. Parekh was an associate at Proskauer Rose after having received her J.D. from Harvard Law.

Interview by Jessie Sarkis and Ravina Gogna

"Even though you shouldn't have gotten the question in the first place, the best thing to do is maintain composure, and educate that person on why their stereotypes are mistaken."

J. Sarkis: Could you talk about the different issues that you encountered as outside counsel to professional sports organizations while at Proskauer versus the issues you see now as General Counsel of the Jaguars?

M. Parekh: At the law firm, understandably, in-house counsel generally tends to outsource those things that warrant paying outside counsel. There are two main reasons why outside counsel are hired. One is specialty- areas of expertise, such as tax matters. As curious as I am about almost everything, tax is just one of those things that I'm not particularly curious about and that I am happy to have someone else handle. Second is, if something that is such a big material deal for the company. In those instances, I like hearing as many candid opinions as possible because while I can convince myself that my thought process is sound, I really like having people that will challenge that. Those are the two major reasons why I would hire outside counsel.

When I was at Proskauer, the main things that in-house counsel hired us for were larger transactions – financing, mergers, purchases and sales of the actual teams. Then from time-to-time, we were hired to be an independent investigator. Generally, it was those three buckets: M&A, finance, and some investigations.

When you're working as In-house counsel, you are serving your clients 24/7 and it can be about anything. Something that people cautioned me about when I left the law firm was that I'd be working on less- successful deals. True, a \$5,000 sponsorship deal is not the same as \$100 million credit facility. It's also true there are certain things that are routine. However, the flip side of that is that you are fully ingrained in the business. You learn to think like a businessperson. The types of issues that come up are everything in any given day: from a personnel issue, to a harassment issue, hiring, tech, contracts, risk, etc. We were doing real estate development around the stadium because the [Khan] family [the owners of the Jaguars] recently started a pro-wrestling business in January, so now we're engaging talent and sitting in the role of the League on that. The breadth of work is significant and there are opportunities to learn from that breadth of work. What you have to want is being interested in touching one hundred different things at the surface-ish level as opposed to diving really deep into, say, a credit facility because at some point you just run out of time. I tend to engage outside counsel when we're replacing debt, even though I feel comfortable that I know how those structures work and I understand them. Interestingly, I actually like a lot of the other things that come with being in-house, like trying to train our cheerleaders in best practices for harassment which would never really occur at a firm.

J. Sarkis: Given advancements in technology and specifically, the rise of social media, how are teams looking to use social media to expand their fan bases, particularly with respect to younger audiences as well as untapped demographic markets?

M. Parekh: When you look at NFL fans as a whole and even more specifically, Jaguars fans, most of our fans are not actually buying tickets to sit in the stadium. There are only 10 games a year, including pre-season, where fans come to the stadium and experience the game in-person. If we want to meet most of our fans today, it will be either through watching our games through streaming on the internet or via our mobile app. In fact, it has turned out that what fans really want is player content – the content of the players behind-the-scenes, day-in-and-day-out, their experience on the field. In particular, our backup quarterback – Gardner Minshew – has been starting for us since the very first game of the season. There has been an absolute swell and what people are calling “Minshew Mania” – one, because he’s been doing really well, but also two, because he’s just a quirky guy who kind of looks like a character from Napoleon Dynamite. He’s been generating all kinds of social media interest from people wanting to follow him and to know what he’s like.

Actually, the most engagement that we’ve ever had on social media has been about interacting and learning about the brand. Mike Tyson came to our Thursday Night game a few weeks ago and was on the side lines. Within a day of posting the video of Tyson, it became the most watched video that Jaguars’ social media had ever had. Social media at its best helps people make connections. At its worst, it allows people to bully each other from behind a screen. But on the human connection part, a whole bunch of people that might have otherwise just been following Mike Tyson, now see Mike Tyson interact with the Jaguars, and they’re more interested in the team as a result because of his story, his personality, and what it is that brought him to the sideline.

R. Gogna: As an Indian American woman, I have received a lot of questions throughout my professional career and during interviews about my interest in football. I once was even asked if I had someone help me when I drafted my fantasy football team. How have you been able to maintain your composure when you are confronted with these situations?

M. Parekh: Often, men expect that when you’re a woman who is interested in sports, you are suddenly a trivia master of all sports. My first love is baseball, and my second love is Bon Jovi. People often ask what attracts me to rock music, as there is an entire narrative of women as groupies. I tell people that I really like playing football on the beach and playing guitar. I want to be Bon Jovi. When people try to quiz you, just be able to explain articulately why you have that interest. I like sports because it was a way for me to spend time with my older brother. It was a way to make connections with our American neighbors in a way that my parents could not bridge that

gap. This was how we were able to share this collective popular culture and feel a sense of belonging. The point is that you have a substantive reason for why you like sports. Don't let other people's expectations dictate your behavior. Do a good job of defining for yourself what your values are, and you'll be able to answer that question. Even though you shouldn't have gotten the question in the first place, the best thing to do is maintain composure, and educate that person on why their stereotypes are mistaken.

R. Gogna: How did you find a path for mentorship?

M. Parekh: I have a service-driven personality, as in I always want to make other people's lives easier or better. I look at one of my job's responsibilities as how I can make my boss's life easier in any given day. This started in high school, when the high school baseball coach needed help with administrative work and tutoring for the players. I didn't ask what the mentor can do for me, but I ask what I can do to be helpful to help them. Then, because they found what I was doing to be helpful, I ended up having a slew of incredible mentors, professional and personal, who realized that if you come to them with a way that you can be helpful to them, then they will go above and beyond for you. Often times people will ask someone how they got their job, or if they can speak with someone for fifteen minutes. While I recognize that can happen, there are others who might offer up an article that can help my work. Now, that person has made an introduction in a different way, and I want to help them because they've been helpful for me.

R. Gogna: What initiatives have the Jaguars, or the NFL as a whole put in place to increase women and diversity in leadership roles?

M. Parekh: It's one necessary element to have policies in place, and another necessary element is that people are actually encouraged to take them. Law firms are getting better at putting the policies in place, but I challenge that people are encouraged to take advantage of those policies, so that people are actually able to take advantage of a flexible schedule. I started in early 2013. The NFL had gone through a lockout and the team had just gone through a sale. We started from HR baseline zero. We started by tackling the basics of hiring people that meet basic laws. Then we turned to personnel policies, and from there we saw a few big gaps. Our schedules in sports and entertainment are extremely variable based on season. For example, I don't have a Sunday off from now until, hopefully, February. The only way to combat that is to give people flexible time for the other days and allow them to feel comfortable taking that time off. Also, we had a huge difference in terms of new employees, which is common after an acquisition, and several old employees. We instituted a mentorship program to bridge that gap.

I am a big believer that you cannot do your best work without adequate sleep and whatever the right amount of exercise is for you. We implemented trainings for work development, sleeping habits, wellness, and health. We initiated a nutrition program and offered financial education. These programs were designed based on employee surveys. We found that overall employee health has improved in terms of manageable risk factors, and employee stress is being addressed. People are reacting well to what we are responding to, and that is fantastic.

We also implemented standing desks, and over time people realized that it makes people happy, then we are okay with it. I would also take my work outside the stadium in order to get fresh air and sunlight. When I first started, I would hear rumors that people thought I wasn't working hard because I wasn't in my office. It took time for people to realize that when they work outside in the sun, they are also happier throughout the day. We now have three outdoor workstations with power for people to go into. Things evolve over time, and progress is not linear. Some of our initiatives had failed, but it's okay to try and then move on. If you can try to make your employees happy, rested, and productive with opportunities for growth and development, then that is how to combat a demanding schedule.

J. Sarkis: You have mentioned previously that as a woman General Counsel in the NFL you have felt respected and appreciated by your colleagues at the Jaguars organization [including Tom Coughlin, former coach of the New York Giants, and one of my personal heroes]. Nevertheless, what barriers, if any, have you witnessed that continue to impact women, particularly young women, seeking to advance in the sports law field?

M. Parekh: I think one of the barriers is that each side thinks that the other will understand the other. So, we're in a class where we're trying to make sure we analyze challenges that are facing women in law and leadership. I think Tom Coughlin thinks – is this person going to understand what it's like to be a coach of a football team and understand the issues that he deals with, such as working with players and coaches and managing football operations? For me, what's important, is trying to understand where the other person is coming from – whether it's Tom or our social media coordinator, for example. It is hard to do at times. I feared that [Tom] wouldn't understand my role or feel confident in me as a lawyer. I knew who he worked with when he was at the [New York] Giants, who I adore, but the General Counsel of the Giants [William Heller – a Penn Law alumnus] is someone who spent twenty years as a partner at a law firm and then transitioned in-house. I was worried that he might not use me the same way or address me the same way. It took me a lot of time to ask questions and learn about him and his interests before then asserting my opinions into whatever challenges we were facing or working on together.

J. Sarkis: What do you think are the key legal issues that professional sports leagues and teams will have to face in the future?

M. Parekh: On the business side of things, it's really just making sure that we continue to make the in-venue experience exciting for people and then figure out how to maximize the on-screen experience for people, because that is where people are trending towards. Ticket sales are our number one source of revenue, but we can't just continue to rely on people wanting to come to a game at a stadium and experience it that way. As we talked about earlier, we need to figure out what are the other ways in which we can engage with our fans and make them really love the team. In terms of diversity and inclusion, we discussed this a bit, but a lot of places have moved towards having the right policies in place. What we have seen is backlash towards the #MeToo movement where men think the solution is to just not interact with women in the office anymore. What we need is to stop that idea from spreading as a solution towards these issues regarding harassment.

That requires hard conversations to be had. Don't suppress or ignore the difficult conversations. There are hard conversations to be had, not just between people that may be overtly or inadvertently biased and people that are subject to that bias. There is a third group of people who may not have been necessarily involved and may not have felt like they had the control or the tools to speak up – those people have to speak up.

What is apparent to me, more than anything over the last two and a half years when looking at all of these scandals, is that there were a lot of people that either knew or should have known and didn't say anything. That is something that we as a society need to come to a reckoning with and figure out how we can avoid that going forward. How do we make bystanders feel comfortable to intervene and speak up, whether in the moment or afterwards? If we don't give people the tools to surface these concerns, it is going to continue.

Barbara Becker

Mergers and Acquisitions Partner Gibson Dunn New York

Barbara Becker is a corporate partner and Co-Chair of the Mergers and Acquisitions group at Gibson Dunn in New York City. Becker is consistently recognized by top awards in the legal industry, including being named to The Deal's "Women in M&A: ThePowerhouse20", Chambers USA's "America's Leading Lawyers for Business", New York Law Journal's "Top Woman in Law," The National Law Journal's "Outstanding Women Lawyer", and Law360's list of "Top Female Deal Maker." Becker obtained her JD from New York University in 1988, and her B.S. from Wesleyan University in 1985.

Interview by Elysa Desa

"Find the people that want to support your success."

E. Desa: How do you feel you've reached your level of success, given the legal industry's gender gap, particularly among leadership. Is there anything that's stuck out to you, or is there anything you'd like to share about your process and journey that's helped you get to where you are now?

B. Becker: I don't know exactly how to answer in a succinct way. I am one of two daughters and was raised by my father who was a lawyer, and my mother who was a professional. Growing up, there were no gender issues, or barriers, or any sense of different treatment, ever. I didn't even have a brother to compare to, and I was the older one. As an associate at a law firm, I was aware when I started practicing in 1989 that there weren't a lot of female partners, but I definitely had the belief in myself that if I wanted to be a partner, I could be a partner. For me, it was just figuring out whether I wanted to be a partner; I think I had the internal confidence. I worked for a female partner as a junior associate, but predominately my experience was working for men. But I never felt that I was not given opportunities because of my gender, at all. The only time I remember having that issue arise was when there was an opportunity for someone to be seconded to a client in Japan, and a very senior partner (not at Gibson Dunn) basically told me that in Japan women didn't have opportunities, and I wouldn't be able to be considered for that secondment because of my gender. But I didn't take it as anything other than him looking out for me, thinking it wouldn't be a good experience. Another person might have received that as being denied an opportunity, and I sort of looked at it as the glass half full; of course he wants me to have a good experience, and if that culture wasn't going to accept me, why would I want to go?

When I started working with Dennis Friedman, who is my main sponsor, or mentor, here [at Gibson Dunn], he had me pigeon-holed in his mind to do capital markets work because his experience was that females weren't in the M&A world. I had done tons of capital markets but wanted to do M&A and asked to do so. He gave me the opportunity, saw that I could do it, and became my biggest champion. What is the theme?

Maybe it is the confidence to see the possibilities and to capitalize on any opportunity, to sometimes ask for the opportunity, and then of course to perform. It always requires that you exceed expectations.

E. Desa: With that in mind, do you feel that in your career you've had to prove yourself or exceed expectations more so than your male counterparts?

B. Becker: It's so hard. I feel an enormous amount of pressure, personally, to always put in one-hundred percent effort, to always make my client happy, and to make my mentor happy. Is it because I'm female that I'm built that way? Probably. Or is it just because of who I am? It's very hard to say. It's hard to identify who my male counterpart is, and whether they feel the same pressure or if there is a sense of entitlement.

"When I go into a pitch, I'm not just winging it. I've actually studied the company, studied the transaction. So, when I'm competing against my male counterparts, I win because I'm more substantive, and that's where I'm comfortable."

E. Desa: And what about when these things come up in the context of a meeting room? It's well- studied that a female might say something in a meeting, and a male might take that same exact idea and say it – potentially just louder – and get credit for it.

B. Becker: Do I still feel that sometimes? For sure. If I have an idea in a room full of men, is it always heard? No. But that's more in internal settings, not with clients. With clients I don't have that issue at all because I'm usually the most senior person on the call. I would say that issue occurs more with peers, in different settings.

E. Desa: I want to explore one of the things you said earlier about confidence. Our class did a field trip to New York on Monday to meet with three women leaders in business and politics. During our time, one the threads of similarity that emerged throughout the discussions was this idea of confidence. For example, in response to the question "What do you think the biggest barriers are to young females seeking leadership positions?" two of the leaders both felt that the biggest barrier is often yourself. I feel these responses were aimed at the self- critical and doubting nature of females, and our tendency to fixate on the smallest of mistakes, instead of celebrating great successes. Do you feel this is true?

B. Becker: That definitely holds us back! Definitely, definitely. Do I circle around in my head about the one way I could've done something better, and not think about the 99 things I did well? Absolutely. Absolutely. If you think about what makes people successful at a law firm in particular, it's winning clients' confidence. You are being hired, and clients are spending gobs of money on us per hour because they want to know that what you say is the right advice. This means that you have to focus on not just what you say, but how you say it. You need to inspire confidence in your clients. If you're not confident in yourself, or if your affection is one of "I'm sorry but I thought I should raise this point", well why are you sorry? It doesn't go over well. It is a different impact when you say, "I need to raise this issue because it's important that you understand it." And then clients feel more, or less, comfortable. There are a million lawyers that all know the same thing, more or less, though some have better judgment than others. It's really not just about the pure expertise in what we do, but also thinking about what a client actually wants to get from their lawyers.

E. Desa: That's a great point. It sounds like a lot of this is subconscious. It seems to be the case that you need to personally find and cultivate the confidence within yourself, because when you have that, you naturally don't speak with an "I'm sorry" attitude.

B. Becker: Exactly. Another way I've dealt with that is to be prepared. In other words, not to wing it. When I go into a pitch, I'm not just winging it. I've actually studied the company, studied the transaction. So, when I'm competing against my male counterparts, I win because I'm more substantive and that's where I'm comfortable. That's how I compensate for that issue.

"I created the rules that were important to me."

E. Desa: Thank you. Switching gears slightly, if you had to start over from scratch knowing what you know now, is there anything you would have done differently?

B. Becker: There's nothing obvious that comes to mind. I feel very, very lucky and privileged to be where I am. Yes, I've put in the effort to be here, but I'm lucky to be here. One of my philosophies of working at a law firm, especially as it relates to kids and family, was always that I'd never want to compromise what's important to be about my kids and family in service of my career. I always said to myself – which goes back to the quiet confidence or perhaps my own privilege – that if they don't take me on my terms, then I don't want to be here. And I always felt they were always going to want me on my terms. I never felt that I had to be a person that I didn't want to be at work; I felt that I could bring my regular, authentic self to my job. People knew I had four kids, I was a young nursing mother that brought my babies to work, and in fact I brought

my baby to nurse while I was interviewing to join this firm. I thought, if you want me to go to California, I'm happy to go, but my baby comes with me.

I always felt like I had a lot to contribute, I will contribute, but I'm never going to say I'm okay with being away from kids for three days at a time because I wasn't. I created the rules that were important to me, like getting home for dinner, minimizing nighttime client entertainment, living close to work so I could go back and forth to their school, all of that. I created this world where I could live by my rules, feeling like my priorities were in check. Is it one-hundred percent sure-fire always going to work out? No. But on balance, yes. I'm comfortable with where I am, which leads me to a situation where I don't say that I wish I had done differently, or I wish I had taken more or less time off, or anything like that. It comes from a place where I know the firm likes me, I'm doing well, and if they don't like me, I don't want to be here.

E. Desa: For our final question, is there any parting advice you like to impart on young female lawyers, looking to become leaders?

B. Becker: Go with a can-do attitude. Always do your best work. Take advantage of all opportunities presented to you. Don't get despondent if something doesn't go your way – keep on going. Lastly, find the people that want to support your success.

“Take advantage of all opportunities presented to you. Don't get despondent if something doesn't go your way – keep on going.”

Marissa Wesley

Marissa is a passionate advocate for women and girls in diverse settings, building bridges across sectors to advance their rights. Marissa co-founded Win-Win Strategies and served as the Chief Executive Officer until its merger with Women Win at the beginning of 2019, where she served as the Chair of the Global Advisory Council. She regularly speaks and writes on issues relating to global women's empowerment and rights as well as women and leadership. Prior to this work, she was a partner at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, where she spent three decades as a corporate lawyer advising companies, private equity funds, and financial institutions on complex corporate finance transactions. Marissa was recognized as a pragmatic problem solver, consensus builder, business-savvy negotiator, and strong team player, and is known for her leadership qualities such as integrity, judgment, and ability to deliver measurable results.

Interview by Ghaida Meaigel and Katherine Gardner

“You should call out issues when they are very visible.”

G. Meaigel: You spent three decades as a corporate lawyer at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP. You started in 1980. We are sure it was difficult for women then, but it is still difficult for women now especially women of color, immigrants, non-Caucasian women. For someone who is a female professional, a young female associate. Should she bring up issues about gender when she is still junior in her career? Should she start pointing out prejudices or should she focus on her career, do well, advance or focus on this when she is more senior and can “set the agenda”?

M. Wesley: This is equally important for women and women of color to feel comfortable doing that. Allies are important, but at an early age you can create change as well. Sometimes it is simple: using humor or asking them to explain what they mean by something. You don’t need to be confrontational or aggressive, because people do not necessarily see when things are wrong. At the beginning of my career, I was a bit naïve and drifting along. Even though my family and I discussed power structures around the dinner table, I did not realize the world I was in was so male dominated until I walked into my first partnership meeting and I was one of five women out of a hundred men. We are a bit more queued into all of this stuff and we see the issues a bit more, and there is greater sensitivity in these organizations that they want to be better and want to change but sometimes they are not very good at that.

G. Meaigel: Marissa, you often talk in meetings about a comment made by a male partner and your response to that. Can you let us know more about that?

M. Wesley: The first year I was up for partner, I did not make it, and as this was the era of up or out, I thought my career was over. I was in shock.

“I was called to see the senior partner, so I asked him why I did not make partner and he responded that I was ‘not visible enough.’”

I honestly had no idea what he meant. It took a while looking around me and talking to people who were allies of mine at the firm to realize what women often do is put their heads down at their desk and do their work, and that is particularly true when you have a husband, children, other responsibilities and commitments. Men too, but it is more common with women. You get stuff done and you leave. You do not naturally reach out. Now, when I think about it, it was stupid on my part especially that I had a sponsor at the time. This man was my sponsor. He was trying to mentor me, but it completely went over my head. There would be gala dinners with clients, and he would always invite me. I almost always said no, because I wanted to get home or do other things. I did not realize he was trying to advance my career because it was not direct. Nowadays, people are more direct. I slowly learned that “to be visible” involves reaching out more and talking about what I am doing, who my clients were and trying to be a little more proactive about trying to connect with people around the office.

K. Gardner: Before law school, I have worked with a multinational company that had put some initiatives into place, hard mandates, that the company needed 25% women representation on all level. I do not believe that went well. What do you think, and how do you recommend coming back from initiatives that are implemented really terribly, especially at the lower levels?

M. Wesley: I hope people grow to be more sophisticated in building those programs. I agree that this is not an effective way of creating change from a management perspective. It is an admirable goal to implement change for women. What should have been done is to build consensus rather than implementing it directly, and make it clear it is a priority for the organization and have them make sure they build initiatives. As to your question about what to do once the situation is in place, it is hard. What I would do in that situation is gather people that are resentful and talk to them about the fact that this is a goal for the company, and ask them what they would do, how would they want the company to bring in more and do what it should have done.

K. Gardner: Our discussion raises one of the most important debates: quotas for women in business and in political participation. This is an important question for women in leadership. California recently implemented a quota for women on boards, which is a good idea to equalize the field. We are working in the Women, Law and Leadership Lab on an index called Gender and Business Index. We are looking at certain countries where the government set goals to reach a specific percentage of women representation in different fields by a certain year. What are your thoughts?

M. Wesley: Looking at governments that are voted in, such as Norway which has a parliamentary system, showing that they care about this issue as a country is very different from “today to tomorrow we will have 0 to 25% women”. That is not realistic and is a hard thing to implement top down. I think these specific goals are very powerful because they force people to look beyond the usual suspects, that has been the case with the board situation. What has increasingly driven change in the US, in the S&P 500 companies, is investors demand to have diversity on boards. There are a lot of ways to get there, but quotas can be used for more of a structural change.

It is difficult for minorities to access “social capital”, being the access to opportunities for advancement. People favor people who are similar to them, men favor men... etc. Should women seek mentorship from people who are similar to them, like another women, or should they also seek out mentorship from men? Which one of them do you think will have the most impact on your career?

M. Wesley: I think you seek out what works for you. I greatly agree women should support other women; they are the ones who are the prime drivers. I mostly had male mentors, as everyone in my space when I was younger were men. Now, most of my mentors are younger women. There are far more men in management and leadership positions, such as in law firms and the corporate world, and a lot of men are eager and ready to create change.

“However, you cannot force mentorship relationships. They occur naturally, most often with people you work with.”

Keep in mind that most people really like being asked for advice, so to go into someone’s office and say I am thinking of working in this area [their area of practice] and ask for advice is a good strategy to start a relationship.

There are cultural differences in the ways we approach mentoring. There is a growing emphasis on networking. I believe that “building relationships” is better than “networking”, even linguistically. No one would be interested if you say, “I want to be in your network”. What do you think?

M. Wesley: All of this is about relationship building. I have no idea what “networking” means; it is a useless word. It is all about relationship building, about giving and taking. It is about mutuality. When you are younger, you might think “oh what do I have to offer” but now that I am older a lot of my mentors and people who I get advice from are younger than me, with a different view of the world. Giving a different way of looking at the world in ways that can be very helpful is something you definitely can offer. People are valuable for many different things. The other thing that is equally important is that relationships do not always have to be deep. Women are raised to build deep relationships, which is important for the hard advice, and you definitely need those people in your network that you can go to an organization in which you work or outside, and who will be honest with you, about anything, work, professional development, life: you need those people. But you also need to build relationships that are very broad, because these serve you in ways that are powerful. Staying in touch with people over time, sending an article that may be interesting to them. This does not mean that these relationships are not, it just means you do not need to the deep cultivation of people who are very close to you.

Some companies tend to fill in the diversity report and claim diversity by counting women and people of color in lower levels of the ladder, even though there are none on mid and high levels. What strategies help make diversity initiatives real and effective?

M. Wesley: There are lots of ways for diversity initiatives to be deeper. If you do not have the drive from the top to have diversity be a real issue, it is hard for it to filter down. People who work in organizations have to believe that there are incentives and that there is a business value. People have to believe they will be compensated, that it is something they can work on, that it will promote the firm and that it will make the workplace better.

The students here are all global citizens, and recently you wrote an op-ed in the New York Times that we “don’t need any more chickens.” That is the stereotype that women need “chickens” and are given them by NGOs and governments after a conflict, rather than AI or tech, so they can get back on their feet. This can thwart the progress of women, especially in nation rebuilding after conflict.

M. Wesley: My organization was founded after working for many years in a law firm and after working for many years with NGOs and global rights organizations for women. These were the gender experts and the way they work is by listening to women. Each context was very different, and you could not have fit-all strategies. You have to think about what work companies were doing with economic empowerment, such as increasingly investing in women and girls and connecting them with the experts on the ground. Economic empowerment is not simply giving responses for education, but also about unpaid care, violence, and reproductive health and understanding each context and that this will impact the ability and the legal system as well as the social norms and attitudes about who does childcare, etc. There is a range of issues. It is important to get input from people who are affected. It is important to work locally. These issues are all local, and some places are more severe and challenging to deal with but the issues that drive women’s ability to become leaders, to have the attitude to say, “I am a leader,” these are all interwoven.

There is a correlation between women’s empowerment in the workplace, in law firms or a chicken farm, and in family relations: family law issues, violence against women, access to land or property, etc. These relate to women’s empowerment in the workplace. These are not isolated. But violence against women is the biggest and most major impediment in the workplace. Inequality in the family is one of the most important barriers to access to work, the economy, and the marketplace and progress. The women’s role in the workplace is related to the role in the family. Sometimes in the US we forget that connection. Real leadership is looking beyond the surface in depth, and what holds women back. Do you agree?

M. Wesley: It is the legal system, but it is also deeply systemic. It needs to be addressed with men and boys, as well as with women and girls. These are challenging issues that require local cultural context and knowledge, with religious and community leaders to address these issues. No country in the world treat men and women equally on the legal basis, and these issues play across geographies.

Max Weber talked about charisma and leadership that charisma is a genetic trait, and if you do not have charisma, you cannot be a leader. Women are not associated with charisma. Women are graceful and elegant. This is very much trait leadership, which we are debunking here: the great man fighting the battle. What are your thoughts on this?

M. Wesley: I think you have to have a vision of where you want to go, social justice or getting a deal done, and you need to have integrity. Traits that are collaborative are increasingly valued, such as working in a team, and having integrity, collaborative, having humility, being flexible and understanding that people have different strengths in roles are increasingly powerful, and often ignored in male leadership. People have lots of these traits but understanding what is effective is a key and a challenge. Voice is a challenge for women and getting where you want to go while being flexible is often a challenge. When you are in a room with men who are often speaking louder and often do not know what they are doing it. Sometimes, it is not a bad thing to be out there and push your voice.

Cheryl LaFleur

Cheryl is a nationally recognized groundbreaker and leader in the energy industry. Effective October 1, 2019, LaFleur was named to the Board of Directors of the Independent System Operator of New England (ISO-NE), the independent, not-for-profit organization that plans and operates the power system and administers wholesale electricity markets for the New England region. Previously, LaFleur was one of the longest-serving commissioners on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), nominated by President Obama in 2010 and 2014 serving until August 2019. She served as Chairman was 2014-15 and as Acting Chairman from 2013-14 and during 2017. Earlier in her career, LaFleur had more than 20 years' experience as a leader in the electric and natural gas industry. She served as executive vice president and acting CEO of National Grid USA, responsible for the delivery of electricity to 3.4 million customers in the Northeast. She led major efforts to improve reliability and employee safety and led award-winning conservation and demand response programs for customers. LaFleur has been a nonprofit board member and executive and is a frequent speaker on energy and leadership issues. She began her career as an attorney at Ropes and Gray in Boston. She has a J.D. from Harvard Law School, and an A.B. from Princeton University.

Interview by Katherine Gardner

“Life is like connect the dots, but you never know what you are drawing.”

K. Gardner: You have had a fascinating career path, spanning multiple industries, often in male dominated industries such as law in the 1980's, energy and utilities, and on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Would you talk a bit about your career path and what lead you to make the jumps between careers when you did?

C. LaFleur: My career path really starts from when I was applying to college. I was a child of 1970's. I was the first person in family to go to college. This was right when the Ivy's started to open up to women. My high school teacher encouraged me to apply to Princeton because of the classics department. I applied, got in, and received full financial aid. It was very life changing to go to college. Afterwards, I decided to apply to law school. I had planned to work in mental health law as I had volunteered and headed a youth association for mentally challenged children. I went to Harvard Law School; I had gone to college and law school with my husband, and we got married after. I did one summer in mental health law and then figured I would work for a few years to pay off my loans at a big law firm. I ended up staying eight years at Ropes and Gray. I was a litigation associate in the white-collar division and ended up not making partner.

I had thought I had it figured out at 23 and thought life was set. I would have children after I made partner and would work at the firm. I ended up leaving when I was pregnant with my first child. At one point at the firm, I had worked with a bank on a criminal case with the board of directors who was the CEO of local electric company.

At this point, I was looking to do something a bit more part time and had an offer from what was then the New England Electric Company. I went to the head of the law firm and asked for his advice. I also had offer from Reebok, which was a growing company and a great future. His advice for a working mother was to go to the company that offered known challenges and predictability, recommending me to go to the electric company.

This ended up being great. I loved this job. This was in the early stages of environmental laws, and the independent utilities and markets, as well as the last round of nuclear plants. At this point I was a part time lawyer at this point and during this time had another child.

The CEO who hired me died prematurely. The new CEO, who later became my mentor and close friend, invited to me lunch. I was surprised as I was enjoying my job but was not high profile. The new CEO said he when came to company he asked various members of the leadership to give him a list of the smartest people at the company, and I was on lots of the lists. He asked her to be me to be assistant. I decided I wanted to do this for a few years, but it ended up as a major inflection point in my life.

When I started in management it was 1990. I progressed from one management job to other, and my career and skills developed by being given a lot of opportunities and positions. At this point I became a lifer at the electric company. I felt it was what I was meant to do

At this point it was merger mania, and the utility was acquired by National Grid in UK. At this point I was the COO of the US electric and gas business. Around the 2006-time frame, I became the acting CEO after my boss left. I said I would only be the acting CEO if I was a candidate for full time CEO, but they hired a different candidate after a year, bringing in an outsider. At this point they offered much lower position, so I left.

After I left the law firm when I didn't make partner, I thought important part of my career was over, and the same thing happened here in a real way (I was subject to a two-year noncompete for the energy industry). I had a loose plan during these two years: I worked for several non-profits and did some board work, running an education non-profit.

However, after the non-compete ended, I started emailing and networking aggressively and started to get on lists as a candidate for jobs.

I was driving down the road one day when I got a cold call from the new administration in the White House, the Obama administration. They were looking for a New England FERC commissioner. They had a list and wanted woman from New England, so I said yes to be on their final list. Six months later I was nominated to be a FERC commissioner, and I was chairman twice. I left this after many years on August 30, 2019.

My career had lots of ups and downs, and ins and outs. Anyone who is successful will say people have down times. This is part of what you have to expect, as your career is a "movie not a snapshot" as I like to tell my children. When you start your career, you expect it to be a series of all ups. When I started, lots of people went straight through and very few people took time off between undergraduate and law school. We were all thrust in situation where never worked in an office and were very naïve. I didn't even know what a network was in college, or how to ask people about what jobs were like.

K. Gardner: Would you expand a bit on what you felt it was like to be a woman in your career, in the law firm and later as a working mother in a heavily male-dominated industry, working part time, which lead into being the Acting CEO of your utility and later a FERC commissioner.

C. LaFleur: Often women have a sense that your career must be in a place before you have a family, or before you are in your 30's. For example, my daughter's friend took time off because she is a doctor, for fellowships. There is an age dimension as well. This affected my career choices, and is a factor, one of major ones in women and men's careers.

K. Gardner: Would you mind talking a bit more about this as well. I am almost in my 30's and recently heard a talk where a woman in her 40's was lamenting not thinking about having children earlier, as she always thought she would have time later. Biologically it is difficult, even with scientific advances, so she recommended women think about this, even though fertility is often a taboo subject around women focused on their careers.

C. LaFleur: Of course. I had a colleague at FERC who had her eggs frozen. People don't talk about this much and don't say it to each other when they are going through these issues and decisions. It is another dimension and shouldn't be taboo.

“People have different patterns in life. Some women had children and then went to school while some people postpone who as late as they can. Both can make things more difficult in some senses, for different issues.”

I know someone who took 11 years off and restored her career. However, if you can keep your hand in and not get completely out it will likely be better for your career. There can be a lot of frustration when your kids are little, for women who didn't work or were looking at re-entering. Many people look at the cost-benefit tradeoff of paying for daycare compared to not making money, but there is a huge time dimension for your career. You are likely losing money in the end by taking time off.

K. Gardner: Could you discuss this a bit further? You seemed to successfully navigate working part time and still advancing through your career. How did this work for you and would you recommend this path to other, younger women if they are interested in having a career and will be the primary caregiver?

C. LaFleur: When I had my son, I was still working at the law firm. When I had him, they gave me a deal, around the time I didn't make partner in my eighth year. I would work a few days a week and help on other cases, like subbing in for depositions. With this deal I would make three-fifth of my salary and keep my benefits but would fall off the partner track for six months.

After four months, the firm said I could do this a bit longer. However, at this point, I was eight years at the firm and was a Harvard Law graduate. I didn't want to take other's depositions, so I decided to look for somewhere more mainstream for part-time work.

When I went to the electric company, I only had daycare three days a week, so I had to wait until January to have fourth day of daycare. I would only be in three days a week for first few months or at home a bit. They ended up letting me do this and letting the rest of women who had requested this schedule do the same thing after they had told them no previously. Most of the time, I was part-time at the company I worked 80%. However, most weeks I took on a full load, to build up goodwill and credit when something went wrong, such as when the kids had chicken pox, so I could drop out of sight for a few weeks after working more on all other weeks. Three days a week I would pick them up at day care and the last day my husband would do so. Many days I would focus on the children, put them to bed, and would work until 1 AM reading. I joke that my main strategy at this time was not sleeping. But my goal was to make my coworkers feel like I was full time so not have to wait for things. I preferred to work a day or not go in at all. For me, leaving early was difficult (work until 1PM was difficult). These half days were a challenge for me because of my work style. So much has changed, though, as this was in the 1980's. There is plenty of new technology, even such as the answering machine! Email, phones, teleconferencing. Men and women can integrate things into life. However, the downside is you are never off.

K. Gardner: Would you mind talking a bit about being a female executive in the energy industry, in utilities, since this is uncommon, and the challenges you found?

C. LaFleur: There are so many reasons not enough female executives, especially in the electric industry. When I was the Acting CEO of National Grid in 2007, I went to a meeting at the Edison Electric Institute. There were 64 people and 4 women in the group of all CEOs. In 2011 there were still only 4 women. Now there are probably 11 females, and fewer electric companies.

I have thought a lot about why in some industries why women struggle to achieve parity in leadership as quickly as the parity in women entering the pipeline. This is especially true in technical industries. There is the stereotype of only people who have engineering or operational background can move up the chain, and they overlook financial or regulatory background people. They pick the same type of people again and again. Women who have gotten ahead are often engineers or from the operating side, with a few from the financial side.

There is this perception of people who worked on operating side, that they will work nights and weekend, and that no one else will be on call. This is clearly wrong because there are female heart surgeons who are on call 24/7.

There are also some subtle issues as well. I have talked to different people who eventually open up about the characteristics they are more likely to say to a woman.

For example, for many years I was told I was "too diffident." This was what I was told after I failed to make partner. I was viewed this way because I would talk to secretaries a lot, and other lawyers didn't do that, partly because the secretaries were woman.

Decades later when I was in the CEO race, I was told I was caring with employees and the employees liked me, but I needed to be tough enough. This was ridiculous because I had dealt with labor negotiations and a brain tumor and came out other end just fine. People wouldn't ever say that to a man. It's often a way people see women, elements and perception of women, like looking at the examples of female candidates and way people discuss them.

It's hard to know the prejudices people have because don't often express them, but I have gotten some people to admit they believe female execs may not be tough enough. Gaining a critical mass is important because when everyone sees female executives having characteristics very different from each other, as we get experience with electric industry or oil and gas, people will be able to see women as a group of individuals and not a stereotype.

Sometimes put there is this pressure on women. I was one generation past being a pioneer, but I women in law school in the 1950's, where they were one of few in class, felt extra pressure to be as perfect as they could so they could have more females later. This is more pressure on women of color, which is not fair as well. This will develop and the pressure will recede as diversity increases and time passes.

Catherine C. Henry

Catherine C. Henry has spent the majority of her career as a public defender. She started off as an Assistant State Defender in Philadelphia for five years and then for the last seventeen years she has been a Defender with the Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She was promoted from Assistant Federal Defender in 2008 to Senior Litigator. Ms. Henry graduated from Drew University in 1991 and got her J.D. from the District of Columbia School of Law in 1995. She is currently a Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School where she teaches Trial Advocacy. She has also worked as an adjunct professor at Temple Law in the Trial Advocacy Program. She frequently lectures on trial tactics, courtroom technology, various CLE programs and Seminars.

Interview by Amanda Jonas

“Our clients are diverse. So are our juries. We need lawyers with varied backgrounds to be part of our team so we can properly relate to and understand both our clients and our jurors.”

A. Jonas: You are very present in the Philadelphia in the legal community. Besides the Federal Defenders and teaching, what other ways are you involved?

C. Henry: I am a member of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Bars and I was inducted in 2018 as a Fellow in the America College of Trial Lawyers. I am a member of the Penn Laws Inns of Court and spent several years coaching the Temple moot court team

A. Jonas: What motivates you to do so much in the community?

C. Henry: There are many women I admire and look up to in the legal profession. I have had several mentors and I attempt to mentor young women that I encounter in my workplace and in the other opportunities such as Moot Court and Inns of Court.

A. Jonas: How did you transition from your role as an assistant litigator to a senior litigator?

C. Henry: It took a lot of work and perseverance. I started off as an assistant litigator knowing that I was capable of working hard and achieving a leadership role, so I kept that perspective as I started out.

A. Jonas: You told me once the meaning of “don’t make a federal case out of it” can you share that with us and then say why it makes your role as a senior litigator so impressive?

C. Henry: The saying “a federal case” means that federal cases are very difficult to defend against. You are against the government. They don’t bring cases they think they can’t win. They have the best resources, they have the technology, the evidence...federal cases are the toughest cases without a doubt. That’s why they say that. I think that you are implying that its impressive that despite all that, I was able to be successful at what I do.

A. Jonas: What is your advice for women lawyers?

C. Henry: Believe in yourself. Don't let anyone make you feel less than or inferior. We deserve our seat at the table. I know that I am just as capable and competent as a male attorney and I use any instances where others might try to make me feel less than, as motivation to be even better.

A. Jonas: I personally feel that you have been my greatest mentor at Penn. You let me extern with you at the Federal Defenders office and it was the best experience I have had since I came to law school. Can you share why and how you mentor young lawyers?

C. Henry: I tried to let you be as hands on and have as much responsibility as possible during the trial. It is/was important for me that you felt empowered to participate in a real way in the trial. I think that by making it sure that you knew it was okay to ask questions, okay to make mistakes, okay to not quite get an issue or a point of law right away...it allowed you to develop a confidence in your instincts and abilities that you would never have had if I had spoon fed you everything.

A. Jonas: What advice do you have for young women who want to find a mentorship like the one I have with you?

C. Henry: Ask. You were my student in my Trial Advocacy, and you were very persistent about asking me to work for me. I think I told you I didn't need you that semester, but you wouldn't let up. It was that honest and sincere determination that made me take you on and I think that more young women should emulate that.

"Don't let anyone make you feel less than or inferior."

A. Jonas: How do you know when you are being annoying versus persistent?

C. Henry: It's definitely a context thing. But you weren't asking me for a handout. You were asking me for the chance to work for me, to prove you could be an asset. You also showed genuine interest in what I do and a desire to learn more about what I do. That's important as well.

A. Jonas: Switching topics, why is diversity important in the legal community?

C. Henry: Racial, ethnic, socio-economic and gender diversity is very important. It creates a richer environment than one where everyone looks and thinks the same. It is important to have a variety of voices especially in the legal community.

We are able to represent our clients better when we have a diverse team of lawyers. I think that's true across the board not just in law. Our clients are diverse. So are our juries. We need lawyers with varied backgrounds to be part of our team so we can properly relate to and understand both our clients and our jurors.

A. Jonas: What do you think is the greatest barrier to a successful career?

C. Henry: Trial work often requires late nights at the office, but women attorneys also have to care for children at home and attend school events. Male counterparts often do not have the same family responsibilities. Because of that men are sometimes seen as "harder workers" because they are available to be in the office.

A. Jonas: Besides being an incredible lawyer, you are an incredible mom. Can you tell us about your commitments as a mom?

C. Henry: I have two children in college, my son, Zach, is at Syracuse and my daughter Maddie is at Cornell. Maddie is on the Cornell Women's Varsity Field Hockey team, so I make sure I drive to support her all her games. I visit both of my kids often.

A. Jonas: I think you talk to your kids more than any mom I have ever met. That's amazing that you have such a good relationship with them while being so successful. How do you balance that and your job?

C. Henry: I make sure to set my priorities. I have been able to have a successful career where I can place my kids first. There is no such thing as balance. However, the women I work with support me.

A. Jonas: What do you mean?

C. Henry: I have had wonderful experiences with the women I work with. The woman who hired me at my currently position was always supportive and nurtured my talents. She hired me when my second child was a newborn baby. She consistently promoted me above other more senior male attorney and celebrated any success that I had. My boss also accommodated my schedule to allow me to attend any and all of the numerous events my children participated in. The other women in my office also support and cover for each other whenever necessary without complaint.

Rachel Vogelstein

Rachel Vogelstein is the Douglas Dillon senior fellow and director of the Women and Foreign Policy program at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington, DC, and a professor of gender and U.S. foreign policy at Georgetown Law School. At CFR, Rachel's research is focused on the relationship between women's advancement and prosperity, stability, and security. She is the author of Ending Child Marriage (2013), Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention and Resolution (2016), Building Inclusive Economies (2017), and Countering Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (2018). Rachel has worked alongside the top scholars and minds in Foreign Affairs and continues to break barriers and boundaries in the legal profession.

Interviews by Eduarda Lague, Alex Eaton, Chrissy Pak, and Emi Mitani

“This is not simply an issue of human rights or representation, although it certainly is both of those, but it is also a question on strategic imperative. When we include women at the table, we benefit from the information that they bring and the full complement of resources that they can bring to bear. When we exclude women, we are losing out on that talent at the table.”

E. Lague: More and more women are studying international affairs. However, the senior leadership in these fields continue to be disproportionately men, and it is disproportionately male field. Foreign affairs has been referred to an “Old Boy’s Network” and women feeling a lack of mentorship or sponsorship. And we have talked a lot in this class about that being dismissed as a woman’s issue. I was wondering how were you able to break these barriers in a profession not traditionally seen as a “woman’s expertise”, and what else can be done to bridge that leadership gap?

R. Vogelstein: There really is a continuing challenge. I think in the United States we can actually see now several, three women break the barrier of becoming a female Secretary of State. We have certainly witnessed the highest leadership level at the State Department. But that does not change the fundamental dynamics that the questioner mentioned, and certainly, there are problems of the continued underrepresentation of women at the state department and national security establishment overall. There are still too few women who have the opportunity in foreign ministries around the world, and so, what that means is that our foreign policy and national security policies are being formulated and promulgated without the benefits and talent of 50% of the world’s population, so what that does is artificially constrain what we can achieve.

And, there are really important reasons to address those gaps. The issue of peace and security, immediately comes to mind, given the important research that shows that peace agreements are more likely to be forged in the first instance if women are at the peace table. Peace agreements are more likely to last if women are involved. This is not simply an issue of human rights or representation, although it certainly is both of those, but it is also a question on strategic imperative. When we include women at the table, we benefit from the information that they bring and the full complement of resources that they can bring to bear. When we exclude women, we are losing out on that talent at the table. In Washington, you may be familiar with a new effort, that I am really proud to have helped start, which is called the Leadership Coalition for Women in National Security and the acronym is LCWINS. What LCWINS is focused on is closing these gaps and ensuring that there is sufficient representation of women in leadership positions from a policy making perspective as well as across the national security apparatus. And, I am really pleased that, while it is a nonpartisan group, that we have actually managed to get all of the leading presidential candidates, who are currently running for president, to commit to gender parity in national security and foreign policy staffing in 2021 should they become elected. We have an initiative called 50/50 in 2020. We have offered this opportunity to sign our pledge for gender parity in staffing to both sides. We have about 15 candidates on the democratic side that have signed. We have not yet heard from the incumbent on the Republican side. I think that said, what is really interesting to see, is the opportunity that has been created in recent years by a growing bipartisan consensus that having women's participation in leadership positions, and certainly at the peace table, redounds to our national security interests.

A. Eaton: Hi Rachel, thank you for being here with us. We really appreciate it. So I know that in addition to being a Douglas Dillon senior fellow and the director of the Women and Foreign Policy program at the Council on Foreign Relations you're also a professor of gender and U.S. foreign policy at Georgetown Law School, and I was just wondering, as law students who are entering into the real world at some point, what traits do you see that translate in your female students that lead to them excelling in their careers?

R. Vogelstein: Well that's an excellent question and I am so thrilled that you guys are taking this class whether you are planning to pursue faculty as a full time profession or you are pursuing another work, wherever you end up, I hope your studies this semester will continue to inspire you to do what you can, to be part of this fight. You know I think there's a really special responsibility and opportunity for female lawyers when it comes to the global movement for women's rights. There are still so many barriers written in law and so there is opportunity to offer your expertise in how policy is made and how policies are changed. You know, this is thinking not only thinking of the importance of legislative reform but also thinking about court interpretation. There is a great need for lawyers to understand the strategic value of impact litigation which is as important in international courts as it is in domestic courts, as well as lawyers who are savvy to legislative history and the importance of creating a record when developing policy in a parliament. So, I think there's a great opportunity, and whether are you are interested in getting involved in the United States or lending support to actions from the ground in other countries, there are certainly a lot of ways to do that.

“These norms are changeable, that there’s an opportunity for progress, and the more women who put themselves out there as you’re suggesting, the more likely we are to see change more rapidly.”

C. Pak: With the 2016 election, we’ve all heard a lot about how gender bias can impact women as political candidates. In your role as a senior advisor to Hillary Clinton’s campaign or as a policy advisor for governmental organizations, did you find that gender bias played a different role in your position as compared to your previous experience, and what advice would you have for aspiring female law students looking to join politics?

R. Vogelstein: Well, I’m delighted to hear [of] your interest, and I think there’s a line that’s drawn in terms of her own inspiration for getting into public life, which is dare to compete, there’s a story of when she was contemplating whether to enter the race for New York State Senate and to become the first US Senator from the state of NY who was a woman, which she successfully did in 2000, and at the time she was First Lady and trying to decide whether to jump in, and she received an award at a school, and one of the athletes that presented the award leaned up to her and whispered in her ear, “Dare to Compete.” Of course, this was the competitor herself who had put herself on the line in a sports arena and encouraged the Secretary to do that in a political arena, and as you know, she certainly did that many times over. I think there are certainly barriers and stereotypes that face women leaders, whether that’s in political life or in economic life, certainly we’ve seen under-representation of women leadership not just in Parliaments and in capitals but also in C-suites and in other leadership opportunities across the globe and certainly here in the US. We know that these barriers exist. But we also know that these norms are changeable, and they shift, and what’s really interesting to see is the social science research that suggests that when you have women who break through, it actually does start to change not only the aspirations that girls and women have for themselves but also the aspirations that fathers have for their daughters-- and that is really a profound showing that the data suggests: that actually having leadership that you can see, that you believe you can be, can actually make a big difference. The other piece of evidence we have is that when women hit a critical 30% threshold in representation, that we start to see differences in policymaking and decision-making. And I think the theory there is that when you have a critical mass of women at the table, then having women at the table is no longer exceptional, and women are not compared against one another or tasked with representing their entire gender, but instead you have an opportunity for women to speak in their own right. And then you start to see differences in policy-making and decision-making. So I think what we’ve been seeing in the last 20-25 years with a slight increase in women’s political representation, as well as what we’ve seen in the last 2 years, since the 2017 women’s march and the rise of the #MeToo movement globally, there’s been a notable increase in women who’ve been willing to step forward into the arena and run for office, and that has resulted in gains in many countries--while incremental, still very important.

And I think that what that shows is that these norms are changeable, that there’s an opportunity for progress, and the more women who put themselves out there as you’re suggesting, the more likely we are to see change more rapidly.

E. Mitani: Although there is a significant link between achieving gender equality and sustainable development, official development assistance to support gender equality has been low. What are your thoughts on why this has been the case and what needs to be done?

R. Vogelstein: It sounds like a question on sustainable development and support for that. It is a timely question. I have written a paper about this topic that I would like to recommend all of you that is called “closing the gender gap development financing.” In that paper, I made the case that despite much of the lofty rhetoric that we often hear about the importance of gender equality to development interest, to sustainable development, and to foreign policy outcomes, we are not seeing investment concomitant with that level of rhetoric. And in fact, the OECD nations that report on development assistance aggregate OECD has found contribute less than four percent of the aggregate aid to gender equality as a primary function. And, that is an incredible missed opportunity I think when we consider again, we are talking about 50 percent of the world’s population, we are investing in sustainable development in a way that does not capitalize our the full human potential and capital, we are artificially shortchanging what we might achieve. So, I think what is really important is that we build on policy of development and rhetoric that we often hear and call for concrete commitments that actually increase through budgetary line items, the percentage of funding for foreign assistance, and the budgetary support within countries around the world to advance gender equality as a domestic and a foreign policy priority. I know that in the event of the 25th anniversary of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing which will take place in July in Paris next year that there is a movement on foot to ensure that we have a series of financial commitments and resource commitments that would close that gender gap development and financing.

And, the case I have made particularly to the U.S. government because I thought it was more on the U.S. foreign policy is that we really want to catalyze more investment not only in our own budget but in other budget from other donor countries around the world. I recalled in my work for the “creation of a new pooled funding mechanism” that will allow for the U.S. to leverage its dollars by combining with the similar like-minded countries and making an increase in foreign assistance funding that is focused on advancing gender equality as a fundamental sustainable development goal. I still hope that it is an idea that will come to pass. What we have seen to date are niche funds that are focused on particular issues that would point to the issues of women’s economic participation in particular. There was a development several years ago at G20, I think it was 3 years ago at this point. There was a new initiative to increase the access to capital for women entrepreneurs, which is commendable and laudable but what we know from the research is that isolating one individual gap such as women’s economic participation or access to capital without addressing this whole constellation of barriers that women face including legal barriers that inhibit their abilities to work, health gaps that prevent them from participating in the economy or in security apparatuses, and education and other gaps that unless we develop an approach that encompasses the full range of gaps that women face, we are not going to capitalize and see the full human and economic potential that we would otherwise see.

The Honorable Anita B. Brody

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Judge Anita B. Brody graduated from Wellesley College a twenty-years-old in 1955 and, after being told by Harvard Business School that they did not accept women, pursued a law degree from Columbia Law School where she was one of three women in her class. She was a deputy assistant state attorney general in New York, before moving to Florida for her husband's job. She returned to practice in 1973, after taking time to raise her three children. She practiced primarily family law – but really “anything that walked into the office.” In 1981, she was elected to the Court of Common Pleas for Montgomery County where she sat until she was sworn onto the Federal bench in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in 1992. Judge Brody is undoubtedly a pioneer in her own right. I am also fortunate enough to call her grandmother. We spoke about her path to the bench, particularly to the Court of Common Pleas, the importance of women supporting other women, her career philosophy, and how she has worked to effect change– both for those who appear before her and for her colleagues.

Interview by Emily Brody-Bizar

*“I said I’m going to promote myself...
I decided that whatever I was, it was going to be helpful.”*

E. Brody-Bizar: Hi Grandma, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me about my class. This class is about women in leadership, and how women have navigated their careers into these positions, what roadblocks they encounter, and how they support other women and minorities in their own paths to leadership.

A. Brody: I have a very old playbook, so I thought I might talk to you about my time on the Court of Common Pleas. Rather than thinking about how we can change things, my mindset while pursuing my first judgeship might be helpful.

E. Brody-Bizar: Let’s start at the beginning of your judicial career then, with your campaign. How did you figure out how you were going to run? How did you navigate that space successfully, when you didn’t really have any examples?

A. Brody: I said I’m going to promote myself. It was not a climate where you could say it might be helpful in the long run to tell people to hire a woman – this is a different climate than today. Today there might be advantages and disadvantages. What happened to me, is I decided that whatever I was, it was going to be helpful. That was my plan. As I looked around, and there were a lot of Jewish people. Politics is politics and the community I lived in was 100% catholic and protestant, but I said to myself a lot of Jewish people were moving into the district, so it might be helpful to have a Jewish person in Montgomery County.

There was only one Jewish person on a bench of about fifteen...and there was no woman. So, I said to myself, you know, it might be helpful to have a woman.

So I had my job, and there was another woman who also became very successful, she went on the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, but we were competing for the same position on the Court of Common Pleas, and I realized a little bit earlier than she did what the political [landscape] was. And I got to understand a little bit more about politics.

I had one woman who was very helpful for me, and that person turned out to be my colleague on the Federal bench, which was Norma Shapiro. She was very, very helpful to me, on a personal level. And I found most of this was personal. So, I promoted the fact that I was a two- for-oner, I was both a woman and Jewish.

I also looked to my credentials, and I did have credentials that were somewhat unique, because I had gone to Columbia Law School, which was a, you know, a top-notch law school. And I also had gone to Wellesley College, which at the time was important. So, although I was going into a very, very WASPy community – I'll never forget – someone was introducing me around and was very reluctant to have Jewish people on the bench. And a woman on the bench...and this person said, who himself was a Princeton grad, said 'Don't worry about it, she went to Wellesley and Columbia Law School.' Meaning, if you have to have somebody, you might as well have somebody with our kind of credentials. You had to face reality, that's the way it was."

E. Brody-Bizar: How was Norma personally helpful to you? In class we talk a lot about the benefits of women having sponsors.

A. Brody: Well, she gave me clues. She would call me up and say 'You have to go to a Republican fundraiser here. Women don't show up at fundraisers.' Things that are not true anymore, but that's what she would say. And I said 'Oh, do you have to give money? I don't have much money.' [And she should tell me] 'Oh you don't have to give a lot of money. And back in my day you didn't have to give a lot of money, but you had to be able to afford to go to a fundraiser.

E. Brody-Bizar: So, you would go to a party fundraiser and meet people there so they would know who you were to vote for you?

A. Brody: Yes, well, it wasn't a matter of voting, by the time I ran, it was getting the party people to support me. I'll never forget, she and I went to one of these county fundraisers together and she was driving, and her car had a tire blowout, and that was pretty upsetting on the turnpike, both of us are in long gowns. Anyway, somebody came by and fixed our tire. (someone stopped on the side of the road and helped them, so they did make it to the fundraiser.) She taught me that. She also followed my career. She gave me a sense that I could do it. She was not a Federal Judge at that time, but I'm talking about promoting me. She helped identify the people that were instrumental and to convince them that it was important. So, for me, it was a very personal endeavor.

“You try to figure out ties. What kind of ties do I have to this person?”

E. Brody-Bizar: I didn’t realize your relationship went that far back.

A. Brody: Well, how I met her, was, you have to understand the isolation of all of this. When I came to Philadelphia in 1965, I knew no one. Absolutely N-O. And I went to a League of Women Voters’ meeting, and that was helpful because at least it had someone who wanted to talk about the things I wanted to talk about, because women weren’t talking about the things I wanted to talk about at it. It was hard to find women who were ready to talk about [politics]. So, I had called, and they said, ‘Oh you know, there’s another woman who’s also not employed for a while, while she had young children, you’ve got to meet her.’ So, I called Norma out of the clear and said ‘Norma I want to meet you, I understand you are a lawyer and also staying home. So, I got a lot of support from her on that basis, too. And it was also helpful of course that her husband was a physician and my husband was a physician and they used to go on the trolley to [the] medical school together. So that was helpful, too. You try to figure out ties, what kind of ties do I have to this person. But again, when she opened my eyes [to] what politics was all about...that was a big thing. I then went on the Court of Common Pleas, and I really loved that job.

The first thing Norma says to me...For the first six months you say absolutely nothing in judges’ meetings...Nothing. Until you figure out what’s going on.’ And that was very helpful. And then I became friendly with other people up in Montgomery County, and I got the Bar Association to support me, all sorts of things. In Montgomery County [the Bar Association] voted on you, on whether you should be appointed to be a judge. And I had relatively little experience. Very, very little courtroom experience.

Frankly, nowadays I would never have gotten it because with the Internet they could look up what my cases were, but if I could mention five cases, that was just fine back then. But now that would not be true...I think that some of the things I’m saying to you are still true. there are some things from my experience that are still true.

E. Brody-Bizar: Of course. Even though the landscape has changed there are some basic lessons from this that we can take away. You don’t let any kind of shyness stop you – well, you’re not shy – but someone tells you to go out and make a connection, you don’t let anything hold you back.

A. Brody: That is true. But I also had a father who was very, very supportive. That was very helpful.

“My mentor turned to me and he said, ‘Shut up if you want to be a judge.’”

E. Brody-Bizar: So, what made you decide that you wanted to be a judge? You’ve mentioned that you didn’t have any female role models, on television or others. And You had really just been practicing family law for a few years.

A. Brody: Or anything that walked into the office. It was 90% family law.

It was a little bit of my personality. I looked around and thought maybe this was a possibility. You have to take signals. I did have a political mentor. He found me to an extent, I just mentioned some of the things that made me very appealing. I came from Lower Merion Township and they were looking for a judge from Lower Merion. He really led me...

I said, I asked him 'do you think it's alright into practice with these two other people and he said 'if the name is Brody Something & Something, that's fine,' In other words I just needed to be the main partner.

He also took me around. I went to a Bar Association meeting, every year they had a member meeting, and it was all the way up in Pottstown. And you know what the entertainment was for the evening? Did I ever tell you this? It was lingerie. And one of the judges in the commonwealth court kept on screaming 'Bring on the big ones, I like the big ones.' It was lovely. I was just livid over this show. And my mentor turned to me and he said to me 'Shut up if you want to be a judge.'

E. Brody-Bizar: Do you still think that is good advice for women, that you just have to do what you have to do in order to get where you want to go?

A. Brody: Absolutely. Think of the climate. I think so. The best way for women to be promoted is to promote women. So those characteristics that help you promote women, that help women achieve, those are the best.

E. Brody-Bizar: What characteristics do you mean, doing what you have to do to get to that position?

A. Brody: Exactly, exactly. I don't want you to do anything illegal, but you have to be smart. And men have been doing this for years. They have been doing it for years. We have to figure out how to do it.

You have to know how life works and how the world works. My father was helpful in that, too. He taught me the ways of the men's world, and in my day, it was all the men's world. But the women who are successful now are doing the same thing. I'll never forget, in high school, where, in order to get into the honor society, you had to sit on guard duty. So I was sitting on guard duty, and [I asked this redneck to see a hall pass and] he threatened me, put his arm around my throat, and said you see that pretty puss... next time you ask me for a pass, that face won't be so pretty. And I came home, and I cried, and I cried. My father did not bring me in to the principal to report him because he was much too smart. And I said, 'What am I going to do tomorrow,' and he said 'What do you mean what are you going to do tomorrow? You're not going to ask him for the pass.' Life is learning, at least in my experience, learning what gets you what you want. And I'm not telling you to do this in an illegal way.

You have to do this without whining... You quietly support women, and God knows I have done that, with a real vengeance, but not by being a victim. I sound awfully brazen, don't I.

E. Brody-Bizar: You and Mom definitely raised me with the perspective of operating within the system rather than breaking it.

A. Brody: Once you get in, I am the best, most feeling, human judge... I care, not only to follow the law, which I do, but to advance the law in such a way that it is helpful to women or helpful to people who are disadvantaged or poor, or not getting their fair share of life because of their race. I really care.

But as far as women in the profession...until you become in a position that I'm in, you're not going to be able to do that kind of goodness...I have all sorts of constraints because I'm a Federal judge. A [chair of a Republic Committee in the state] was starting an investigation of the death penalty in the state, and he asked me to go on it, he wanted my point of view – I'm sure he knew where I stand on it – and the ethics committee said I couldn't because I might have a Death Penalty case before me. So, I have a tremendous number of constraints. But at the same time, when people come into my office on a conference, women who come in, I smile at them like I smile at the men. I think I make them feel very relaxed, and I think that's helpful, because it helps to increase their power in their own law firms, because of the kind of reception they get. Each one goes at it in a different way.

E. Brody-Bizar: I would love to more hear about the ways you have tried to advance other women and minorities. I know that this is something that you do, but I would love to hear you talk about it.

A. Brody: How am I helpful? First of all, women law clerks. A lot of the men have women law clerks, but I bond with them. At an interview, they come in and I just really, really like them.

And supporting other women on the bench on individual issues, even though I do that less now because I'm older. But I certainly did. I talked to the judges – by the time I got onto the Common Pleas Court, I really turned it around...The court administrator in state court arranged for all the judges to go to an Eagles football game, except me. I couldn't believe it. I took out my very close friend on the state court who was African American and I said to him, 'Horace, why are they not inviting me?'...and he said 'Because there are some jokes they can't tell with you around.'...And I said to him 'Horace, there are some jokes they can't tell because you're around. And he didn't answer me. You can imagine how furious I was. I didn't do anything for a couple years because I got advice to stay back, from someone who really liked me, another friend. He said 'Don't go there. I don't go. Don't go there.'

But after he left the bench, I did. And I went to each judge individually and talked to them about what this was, and what they had done. And I finally said to them, would you have ever gone if Horace couldn't go?' And all of a sudden, they realized, of course they wouldn't. When I pointed out there was some kinds of discrimination they would tolerate, and that was discrimination against women, but they wouldn't tolerate racial discrimination, there was something just awful about that. Isn't that interesting? And what do you think they did – because there were so many people on the bench who didn't want me [at the game] that they never went to another football game. A little furious at me, but that's ok. I was the one who ran for [state] Supreme Court and I was the one who got onto the Federal bench.

“When I lost, I said to myself, how can I use this?”

E. Brody-Bizar: You've said that you would have been perfectly happy to stay on the Court of Common Pleas. What pushed you to leave this position, and run for the Supreme Court and then later to seek Federal Appointment? What made you want to keep going forward?

A. Brody: It may have been partially because the people on the bench in Montgomery County, a lot of them, they were very anti – they may just not have liked me. But a lot of them, when I became more vocal [were not happy with me]. I said to myself, I'm going to promote myself. And I used the same things I had used before there was no Jewish person and no women. And then I turned out to be a very good campaigner. I mean, I faced a lot. I had people all over the state in the Republican primary who would not sign my petition because they did not want a woman on the supreme court. Women who did not want a woman on the Supreme Court. And some didn't want a Jew.

E. Brody-Bizar: I know you didn't win the ballot race when you ran to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, how did you decide what you were going to do next? Again, you didn't really have models to follow on this front.

A. Brody: I didn't get on the bench, but I did win the Republican primary, and back then – I told you I have a very old playbook – it was very important to win the primary. And the party felt they owed me something. And that's how I got onto the Federal bench. When I lost, I said to myself, how can I use this? I don't know what gave me the insight to do that, but I did. And I kept up with all of the women, all over the state, holiday cards and telephone calls and all sorts of things.

E. Brody-Bizar: If I were to sum up a lot of what we've talked about, my takeaway of what your leadership philosophy is, and the way you advance yourself and other women, what would you say it is?

A. Brody: It's all about personal achievement. Advancing your own personal achievement, and then others, without screaming and yelling. You do that by achieving in important places. Achieving doesn't mean writing the most brilliant brief. It's also being able to come to somebody who you've befriended and saying, 'Help me out on this,' I'm not sure I am going to be able to [do it on my own]. Men do that all the time. Men go to other people – they may not say help me out – but they certainly go to other people to try ideas out, in a law firm for example. They don't think that they should do things in an isolated way. Sometimes somebody gives you a hint and then you go run away with it. That's been my experience.

Let me tell you, I was thinking about the difference in my experience as a common pleas judge and a Federal judge. As a common pleas judge, I did a lot of wonderful things for individual people. As a Federal judge, I'm deciding major questions, and I see when I rule, not so much that it affects this particular person or that particular person, but how it affects everybody. And, frankly, the ways in which I think that I was more helpful to the women's movement in state court, than I am here, because of the type of law that I was handling. So, you never know when you're going to have an impact. I thought about this a lot. The important things of my following through on a sexual harassment case is that other people might be less likely to harass, but I am now in a position to be able to do that. But the question becomes, how do you get into that position. And I think that altogether, your place in a law firm, a person's place in a law firm, has to also be thought of that way. It's wonderful to write wonderful briefs, and I'm not telling you that isn't important, and writing well is probably the most important, but I think that it's also important to be able to promote yourself within a law firm and be able to impact on what goes on. And that might include, and it probably would include, attitudes towards women. I can't say how it is, for example, in Big Law...but you know, I think that people respecting you and liking you is very important. Not only in the world of politics. I'm not telling you don't do your job well, you have to do your job well, but that's 50 million people.

Indira Jaising

Co-Founder of Lawyers' Collective

Indira Jaising has become one of the most prominent women's rights lawyers of her generation, advocating for gender equality from the hallowed halls of the Indian Supreme Court and the United Nations. Born in Mumbai, Ms. Jaising later received a bachelor's degree from Bangalore University before completing a post-graduate degree in law at the University of Bombay. She later founded the Lawyers Collective with her partner Anand Grover, and the two have since transformed the organization into one of the most important—and effective—advocates for women's rights and LGBTQ right in India. Ms. Jaising was the first woman to be selected a Senior Advocate by the High Court of Bombay, and upon appointment by Sonia Ghandi, she also became the first woman appointed Additional Solicitor General of India. Her caseload has included legal battles against the patriarchal guardianship system in India, sexual harassment in the workplace, and environmental degradation committed by multinational corporations. While serving on the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ms. Jaising oversaw the implementation of CEDAW worldwide to ensure international women's rights were adequately codified in domestic laws. Hailed as a "distinct and discerning voice that must be heard to make sense of these troubling times," Ms. Jaising has embraced transformational leadership to challenge cultures of misogyny and uproot existing structures that render women second-class citizens.

Interview by Brendan Holman

B. Holman: You attended school in Mumbai and attended Bangalore University before receiving your law degree from the University of Bombay. Did your education inspire your interest in international women's rights, or did an interest in international women's rights guide you to law school?

I. Jaising: Primarily my being a woman led me to women's rights. I came from a very traditional, conservative joint family. All daughters in the family were expected to marry, and a dowry was expected at the time of marriage. I had seen my cousins married off in this manner, despite the fact that they were educated. Those images of dowry stuck in my mind, and I gradually resolved it was not for me. I was the first daughter of the family to insist on practicing law, and to insist that I actually take a job once qualified.

Until then, no daughter of the family had ever worked. I think this was my biggest achievement. My parents may not have liked this development, but they did not actively resist my joining a law firm. In fact, they helped me find a job. Since then, many of the family's daughters have worked and become successful professionals.

B. Holman: As the first woman to be designated Senior Advocate by the High Court of Bombay in 1986 and the first woman to be appointed Additional Solicitor General of India in 2009, you have broken considerable barriers in the field of law in India. What motivated you to seek these positions, and what leadership qualities allowed you to accomplish such feats?

I. Jaising: I did not seek these positions; they came to me. It seems someone was silently observing my work. I started in law representing workers and the trade union movement, appearing mostly in the labor courts.

“Gradually, I began representing women in employment, demanding equal pay for equal work.”

This took me to the High Court of Bombay and transformed me into a constitutional lawyer, as the right to equality is granted in India by our constitution.

I first represented woman flight attendants of Air India who complained of discrimination against them basis of sex. They were forced to retire at marriage, or at the age of 35, whichever occurred sooner. They were not permitted to become supervisors of the cabin. We argued the matter to the High Court, a process that allowed me to combine my interest in labor law, women’s rights, and constitutional law in one case.

Since then, I have not looked back. Eventually the Judges of the High Court recognized my potential and commitments to gender justice, and they designated me a senior. The same happened when I was appointed Additional Solicitor General of India. The late MR Gulam Ahanvati became the Attorney General of India. He had observed my progress over the years, as I often appeared against him in cases and prevailed in those cases. Realizing I could be an asset to the Government, he recommended me for the post. This is why I say it was never my ambition to seek posts or positions; they came to me.

Today there are many women following my example. After new government acquired power in 2014, I resigned as Additional Solicitor General, and a woman was appointed to fill my place. We now have two women Additional Solicitor Generals. For the Government also, there was no looking back. That being said, never has a woman been appointed Attorney General or Chief Justice of India. There is still progress to be made.

B. Holman: You were a member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. In the 38 years since the CEDAW was adopted, gender inequality has held its grip on the international community, and violence against women continues unabated in numerous countries. Why has it been so difficult to translate the principles expressed in in the CEDAW into practice, and what will it require for a fundamental shift toward true gender equality worldwide?

I. Jaising: I found the committee often divided along political and religious lines, but we operated within those limitations. I did face problems on achieving unanimity on issues of defending justice, but I also found it very helpful to be a lawyer. It was possible to convince members based on legal principles, and we did a lot of good work. The rest is up to individual governments to implement the treaties they sign and to work with the general comments.

I often used these documents in the cases on issues of gender justice I successfully argued in the Supreme Court of India. Most recently, I argued a case challenging the ban on entry of women between the ages of 10 and 50 in the Shabrimalai temple. The discrimination was so obviously based on sex that it was possible for me to use international law and succeed.

B. Holman - Leaders must be optimists themselves or must at least be able to convince followers that their goals can in fact be realized. Yet regarding the fight for

women's rights, the current outlook appears bleak: governments worldwide have expressed blatant disregard for human rights, and openly misogynist leaders have risen to power. How do you as a leader remain hopeful in such a regressive climate, and how do you inspire others to continue alongside you?

I. Jaising: This by far is the most difficult question to answer. Nothing in my career or my experience prepared me for this dramatic shift. I lived my professional life thinking law was an instrument of liberation of the oppressed masses, and that if economic rights could be safeguarded through public interest litigation and collective action, all would be well. I took my civil and political rights for granted; they were just there, and I did not need to fight for them.

Now those rights are endangered. The organization I founded, The Lawyers Collective, is being prosecuted, as are me and Anand Grover, my partner and co-founder of Lawyers Collective. The allegations are laughable. We stand accused of undermining democracy or subverting it to the benefit of foreign funders. A draconian law regulating foreign funding has been weaponized to target us. We are accused of being “anti-national,” and we are prosecuted for sedition under a colonial law.

I realize now the most threatening right to authoritarian governments is the right to free speech.

“It is indeed difficult to survive in a situation like this but survive we must in order to stay alive and continue our important work.”

We are resisting this attack on us and on others. I am inspired by the amount of support we receive from law students and the international community, including UN agencies. It is important to join hands globally, as only when you are supported emotionally and legally can you succeed against the injustice heaped on human rights defenders.

Amy Weaver

General Counsel of Salesforce

Amy Weaver is the president of legal and general counsel of Sales force. She is also a member of the company's executive committee. Prior to joining Sales force, Amy Weaver was executive vice president and general counsel of Univar Inc. Previously she was senior vice president and deputy general counsel at Expedia, Inc. and also practiced law at Cravath, Swaine & Moore and at Perkins Coie LLP. Through her work at Sales force, Amy Weaver has promoted diversity and inclusion, and the importance of corporate social responsibility. She has a strong voice on both legal matters and matters of social justice. Amy Weaver demonstrates that leadership is not solely about management but also about the commitment to the public good.

Interview by Marie-Sophie Revault

“One must realize that leadership isn't pounding the table, it isn't being the most aggressive, but it is figuring out how to be the most effective, figuring out how to actually get things, as opposed to worrying about being the loudest or who is going to get the credit at the end of the day.”

R. de Silva de Alwis: Stronger communities makes stronger companies. You have used Salesforce's platform as a platform for the public good. It is so ambitious and so inspiring. We studied in this class the relation between diversity and women's leadership and the firm's performance, the ways in which firms' profitability, productivity, innovations and reputation benefit from women leadership. You have been a founding spokesperson on the issue of women leadership globally. Do you see in concrete and practical ways, the correlation between diversity and women's leadership, and the firm's performance?

A. Weaver: I do. There has been a lot of talk on that recently since the business roundtable came out with their statement this summer on what does it mean to look at shareholders and what does it mean to say that companies don't just look at shareholders. I think there's been a lot of back and forth on that matter and also a lot of confusion. A lot of people are feeling like one could be forsaking shareholders and forgetting their importance in this situation. I think that investing in communities and investing in your employees, and in diversity, actually builds stronger companies, and stronger companies long term, which is an incredible benefit to shareholders. You want to make sure that people realize that this isn't an either/or. Looking at all of this really comes back to looking at the health of the company, which is a terrific thing. In terms of a diversity of leadership, one of the things I feel most passionate about is really shaking up things and asking people to redefine what we think is a leader. One of the things that has concerned me about the way we train women into the workforce, is that we push a lot of women into training programs or internship programs. These programs can be terrific, but they also will be teaching women to adopt whatever leadership standard has been used for hundreds of years, without really asking what we should actually be doing. We should be focusing on not giving out the image that we need to fix women. What we need to do is to fix the rules and we need to really look at the written rules and the unwritten rules in the corporate world and be able to challenge those rules, and rethink how women may work.

M. Revault: In your introduction to the Women and Equality summit, you said that you felt throughout your experiences that people constantly tried to mold you into their own definition of leadership. Throughout this class we have aimed at redefining leadership, especially through the lens of woman leadership. Could share with us what you believe could be new models of what it means to be a leader and how you've tried to steer towards those new models?

A. Weaver: I think that one of the things that took me the longest to get was that I should act as myself in the workplace. I came into the workplace at a time where there was only one or two women working at the law firm I came into. It was really hard to know how to act, and therefore I tried to model my behavior on people around me. It took me quite a while to realize that what was working for all the men I was working with, was not necessarily the skills that were going to be the most effective for me. When I finally realized I was never going to completely blend in and be mistaken for one of the guys, it gave me a newfound freedom as I knew that I was going to rise or fail based on my own set of skills and I needed to figure those out. A few years into my career, I was preparing for a negotiation and one of my mentors, a senior man, came to me and told me that the way I was going to do well on this negotiation was to march aggressively into the room, lay down the law, and use some of his choice-words. He kept saying, "whatever you do Amy, don't be too nice". I listened to him, nodded, and then finally said that that was in no way how I was going to handle the situation. He looked very taken aback. Of course, everything he described would have worked beautifully for him. But if I had marched into that room and had pounded the table, the only thing that would've happened would be that everyone would've started laughing. I would have looked and felt ridiculous. I had to realize that by going in there and being confident that I could navigate on my own skills, I could do it successfully and I was able to do just so. That type of realization is very important. One must realize that leadership isn't pounding the table, it isn't being the most aggressive, but it is figuring out how to be the most effective, figuring out how to actually get things done and make them stick as opposed to worrying about being the loudest or who is going to get the credit at the end of the day.

M. Revault: We previously talked about how the community can have an impact on woman leadership as well as on diversity, and we also discussed numerous times in this class the ways in which we can involve everyone in this discussion. The idea would be to not only have specific groups within corporations composed of people concerned by such topic working on those questions but also making sure that others are involved in the discussion. It is beneficial for people not specifically targeted to also have a place in the conversation. As such, would you have any advice as to how to include everyone in the discussion within the company?

A. Weaver: Sure, what you need is allies. Every group needs allies. For women that means we need men involved, very much, in these conversations. It is absolutely critical to them and their livelihood as well. I have three sons, and one of the reasons I believe I am so passionate about

furthering the leadership of women is that I truly believe that it will make their lives better as well. I think they will have more fulfilling careers; I think they'll have more fulfilling families and relationships if women are 50% of everything. In the workplace, I think it is really critical to make certain men are welcome into the conversation, that they are seen as people who can contribute, who are going to give good advice, who are going to be mentors. Women need to make sure that we are welcoming them to a seat at the table for these conversations. I've always been very skeptical of studies that said that if you have more women on a board it will be more effective, or if you have more women in a company it will be more effective. The reason is because it feels like we have to justify why we should be at a table. However, I spoke to a man recently from McKinsey, who said that the benefit of some of those studies is that it felt like it gave him a force as he could demonstrate why it would be good for the company because he could point to those numbers. I thought it was interesting and a good reminder for me that it can sometimes be very uncomfortable for men to get into these conversations and speak their minds. With these concrete studies, it is easier for them to join in.

R. de Silva de Alwis: You built a movement at Salesforce, and that is through the power of your leadership. What is your leadership philosophy? What is your theory of change?

A. Weaver: I don't know if I have a one-word sentence for this. I do remember a few years ago, at an awards ceremony, they were giving awards to many people who had shown leadership and those people could come on stage and say only ten words for their speech. I think I used seven and they were: be kind, be grateful and get enough sleep.

Emily Nordquist

Emily Nordquist is the Senior Program Manager for the Baumhart Center, an interdisciplinary center at Loyola University Chicago that equips leaders with the business tools to accelerate social impact. Before joining Baumhart, Emily worked for LISC's New Markets Support Company (NMSC), a Chicago-based social enterprise, and a subsidiary of one of the largest community development financial institutions in the country. NMSC delivers creative financing solutions to expand economic opportunity and has created over 7,000 jobs in low-income communities across U.S. cities and in rural America. In her role, Emily led the impact management process for NMSC's portfolio of \$1 billion of investments in health care centers, schools, community centers, industrial facilities and more. Emily also developed and supported internal fund management, impact compliance, and asset management processes.

Emily is a 2018 inaugural Obama Foundation Community Leadership Corps (CLC) Member and a current Alumni Ambassador for the CLC program. She is also known for her efforts in helping young women in Chicago achieve financial wellness through her community-based organization, Penny. She was given the opportunity to speak about her work in reimagining financial well-being for women at the 2018 Obama Summit.

Emily has her bachelor's degree in Economics and an MBA from Quinlan School of Business at Loyola University Chicago. She currently serves on the Impact Investing Advisory Council of the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago and volunteers her time with the Illinois Diversity Council.

Interview by Claire Samuelson

C. Samuelson: You're only 25 years old, and yet you've accomplished so much in your work, including starting your own company, Penny, to help empower women financially. What has been your journey to leadership?

E. Norquist: I have always been really passionate about social justice and civic engagement. I grew up in a family where that was very valued, and I have always been very excited about business and getting an MBA. To me it was always not just about profits and money but about the fact that my dad was able to grow a business in one of the most underdeveloped and low-income neighborhoods in Minneapolis and he was able to provide quality jobs to people – it framed my understanding about business, that at the end of the day it's just about people and serving communities. I look to integrate those business practices with social justice and with a lens of caring for people and communities. I started out by going to diversity and inclusion spaces in college and ended up landing in world of community development in finance – driving both public and private capital into low-income communities. The question we tackle is how to be pro-development while still being inclusive? We want to invest in community development without just raising prices and driving people out of their communities. We ask, how do we build these communities to serve its people, remain inclusive and develop jobs so people can live and work and maintain a healthy life. Right now, I'm transitioning jobs to work an academic center

at Loyola University Chicago which focuses on social enterprise and the integration of social justice and business. I will be overseeing that department.

C. Samuelson: How would you describe how your leadership style has developed so far?

E. Norquist: It's important to have a purpose that's greater than yourself and how to always think about how to be more inclusive in the workplace. Similarly, when you think about moving up in job, how can you bring other women with you and empower them too – scaling these big ideas is not about solving a problem to use it to our own benefit. We need to ask how we can solve problems so that we're all growing and advocating together. I have developed my leadership style primarily through mentorship from my leaders. Any opportunity I have to help other women move through spaces that I have previously navigated before is the best way I can contribute to others at this point in my career. I strive to be vulnerable in my work and share my personal story about why I have arrived in the spaces I occupy professionally. It is super important to show “this is my identity, and this is why I'm here doing the work” because it helps other women see how to do the work and to be brave. It's important to be intentional about these things.

C. Samuelson: Have you experienced any barriers to accessing leadership positions or as a leader? Do you see any that impact women generally?

E. Norquist: The barriers begin literally with a resume. If you have a name that doesn't sound white or that is traditionally a woman's name, the reviewer adopts automatic bias, even if unconscious bias but that's the reality. Barriers to leadership is something that grows with time. Often when a woman gets a job, she is asked what she was paid at her previous job and as soon as the woman shares that figure, which has already been impacted by bias, the new amount is based on that figure.

This practice is outlawed some places because it impacts the woman year after year.

These are all factors that policy-wise inhibit advancement for women in business, but there are also more subtle things that happen in the workplace that prevent women from reaching their potential. For example, women are really good at being flexible and working in spaces of ambiguity and grey area. Women can take on so much different stuff, which is such a great skill, but men don't have to do the same. For men there is a really clear trajectory for how they'll progress at a company, title-wise, whereas women can take on all of these different projects and work in grey-area but since these spaces and projects are not as defined, their career paths are a lot more non-traditional and frustrated.

“Bring other people up and show them that “I also struggle with that and we're in this together”

C. Samuelson: Do you have any ideas for how women can overcome these barriers? What solutions do you have in mind for changing the system?

E.Norquist: Narratives. Using your own vulnerability to bring other people up and show them that “I also struggle with that and we’re in this together.” You don’t have to be this perfect model reflecting what everybody wants you to be, you just have to come in as yourself and show that behavior every day. While there is this pressure to fill some type of mold, I just didn’t fit any of the molds, so I am trying to approach work authentically, just as I see other women leaders breaking that mold and giving me permission be more authentic in the workplace.

In addition, we need to continue to increase and sustain diversity. People need to expand their talent pools outside of the handful of universities they know and go beyond those spaces to recruit people, including and especially in historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Workplaces much include a professional corporate diversity training, but not your average mandatory trainings. It is important to have something that senior leadership is prioritizing along with their willingness to be vulnerable, even if that means getting a diversity coach. There is so much gender and racial bias, but people don’t know how much it has an impact, even on talent retention, for example. It is important and good to have bottom-up movements, but we also need to have top-down movements to convince leaders that bias and white fragility is pervasive, so they can start working to produce more inclusive spaces. This can start with better representation by women and minorities on corporate boards. The statistics are crazy low but it’s also thinking about how to train people about unconscious bias in a format that isn’t just a mandated thirty-minute HR video. People don’t always see the value in doing those things, but it changes everything. It is telling that one study found that approximately 80% of white men thought that diversity and inclusion trainings were effective while the majority of people of color and women didn’t think so. Diversity training must be re-imagined.

Judge Shelley C. Chapman

Judge Shelley C. Chapman is a United States Bankruptcy Judge in the Southern District of New York. She graduated from Cornell University with distinction in all subjects and received her J.D., cum laude, from Harvard Law School. Judge Chapman began her legal career in private practice, working at several major law firms. She was a partner at Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP when appointed to the federal bench in March 2010. Shortly after joining the bench, Judge Chapman was assigned to preside over the largest bankruptcy case in U.S. history – the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy. During her career, Judge Chapman has also served on the board of directors of a nonprofit, taught as an adjunct professor, and started a family, raising two successful daughters who are women leaders in their own right. Judge Chapman's example demonstrates how one woman's leadership can transcend the present moment and inspire a lineage of women leaders.

Interview by Michelle Mlacker

“I made a point of introducing myself to everyone in a room because what I found over the years is that, particularly when you're younger and you're tagging along with a more senior male partner, it's like you're wearing the Harry Potter invisibility cloak.”

M. Mlacker: In this seminar that I'm currently taking on women's leadership, we have heard from a number of truly inspiring, successful women who have pioneered diversity and inclusion initiatives in their respective fields. Not only are you at the top of your profession, but you are in a field that is not known for its inclusive environment. How have you been intentional in the way you carried yourself in certain situations? And I'm not necessarily referring to your time right now as a judge, but really at any point in your career.

S. Chapman: It is true that bankruptcy and restructuring is still a male-dominated field. Since the very beginning of my career I have always gone into courtrooms, boardrooms, and conference rooms assuming that I would be the only woman in the room. In my own mind, I made sure that I was aware of it and that I never invited anyone to interact with me “as a woman” as opposed to just another lawyer representing a client. I tried never to take the bait when someone complimented me on my clothing. I made a point of introducing myself to everyone in the room because over the years I found that, particularly when you're younger and you're tagging along with more senior male partners, it's like you're wearing the Harry Potter invisibility cloak. The male partner may forget about you and not introduce you. I've seen a lot of women over the years go along with that, but it was never okay with me. I would always tell the senior partner to introduce me and if he didn't, I made sure to identify myself and explain what role I was playing in the case. I always tried to project a presence. One of my mantras has been to act in a manner that commands respect so you do not have to demand respect.

M. Mlacker: When I met up with you in New York City this past summer, you mentioned an incident where some men from a foreign country came to observe one of your courtroom proceedings. Could you retell that story?

S. Chapman: One of the many wonderful extracurricular things I get to do as a judge in the Southern District of New York is to host judges and lawyers from around the world. We do that under the auspices of the U.S. Courts, the Commerce Department, and the State Department as part of ongoing efforts to assist countries around the world develop their judiciary and their court systems. These visits allow visiting judges and lawyers to become informed about the U.S. court system. Particularly in the area of insolvency, there have been developments over the past five to ten years with many foreign jurisdictions adopting our chapter 11 restructuring model as opposed to a liquidation model. Some of these visitors have come from countries, particularly certain countries in the Middle East, where women do not enjoy rights that are commensurate with the rights women enjoy here in the United States. In some countries, women still do not work as lawyers and certainly are not members of the judiciary. I was conducting a very large trial in a contested chapter 11 hearing that was going to be observed by a contingent of judges and important government officials from one such country. We prepared a five-page summary of issues in advance of the trial, which involved the valuation of a communications company. We had the summary translated into Arabic and sent over to the delegation. During the trial, there were two rows of visitors in the courtroom watching me try the case, listening with the assistance of simultaneous translation. It was really wonderful. We then took a break and went into a conference room. I was the only woman in the room. I think it was a great experience for them to get to talk to me and see a woman presiding over such a complex and important case. I get asked many interesting questions by visiting delegations. More than once I have been asked, “Well whom do you go to when it’s time to decide? Who gives you permission to make a decision?” Those questions engendered all kinds of interesting discussions about the independence of the judiciary here in the U.S. Another time, a visitor, one of the top-ranking government officials from that particular country, very proudly told me that his country was about to swear in their first woman judge. And that’s good—it’s progress. I am privileged to take part in these discussions.

M. Mlacker: One of the readings for this seminar has been Deborah Rhode’s work on **Women and Leadership**. Rhode cites a lot of abysmal statistics on women’s representation, one of which highlighted the business landscape, showing that women account for a third of MBA graduates, but only 4 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs. As someone who plays a big role in the reconfiguration of large financial institutions, why do you think that women remain so underrepresented in leadership roles and what strategies do you think are most likely to change that?

“There’s data out there that shows that gender diversity is not just the right thing to do, it doesn’t just make people feel good and give them bragging rights, it actually results in more profitable companies and a larger percentage of innovative ideas.”

S. Chapman: This is a really troubling statistic that’s been around for a long time. And I

don't really have a good answer to it, other than to say that the male domination at the top just engenders more male domination.

Certainly, the attrition that you see in large companies as women move up the ranks contributes to it. When it's time to pick a CEO and you look around, there are just fewer women who have put in the time and who are in the position to be picked. I think that's changing but changing grudgingly. There's data out there now that's actually pretty interesting. One of my daughters (the surgeon, not the lawyer) has become a leader in analyzing these issues in her field, which is orthopedic surgery, an area in which there are very, very few women. She and I have looked at data that show that when large corporations have women in their senior management and on their boards, they're actually more profitable. There's data out there that shows that gender diversity is not just the right thing to do, it doesn't just make people feel good and give them bragging rights, but it actually results in more profitable companies and a larger percentage of innovative ideas. Some of these studies ascribe this to the fact that women generally have a more collaborative leadership and management style. I think that little by little that statistic is going to change.

But I also have some more negative thoughts about progress in this area. Sometimes women take themselves out of the running because they are acting on their priorities in ways that are different from the ways that men traditionally act on their priorities. Women ask themselves, in the law firm context for example, why do I want the holy grail that is a partnership at a top-tiered law firm? I don't want to be at my desk until 1:00 a.m. Women just seem to be more attuned to their own priorities and deciding what is more important to them. That kind of different set of prioritizations may also contribute to why we don't see more Fortune 500 women CEOs.

M. Mlacker: What are some of the most common missteps you see women take in their professions?

S. Chapman: I don't know if it's so much a misstep, but there are some behaviors women engage in that hold them back. The classic "story" is that if you go to Harvard Law School and ask the men, hey how many of you think you're in the top ten percent of your class, 90% would say they are. But if you ask women the same question, 10% would say they are. So, the moral of the story is that women tend to undersell themselves. Women tend not to take credit, seek to be given credit, or blow their own horns as much as men because they view that kind of behavior in a negative way. But there's a right way to do it and a wrong way to do it. The other thing I observed during my time in private practice is that when men and women arrive at a law firm they act in different ways. I've observed that the young male associates' immediate goal is to figure out the power structure. Who's in the corner office, who really controls the business, who's got the biggest book of business, whom should I have lunch with. They're immediately looking at the playing field and figuring out how to play. Women associates tends to be rule followers. For example, you get told when you join a law firm that there's an assignment system and this is the assigning partner. And women tend to play by the rules instead of going out and finding the partner who's got the biggest client and deciding that I'm going to get on his team. I'm going to become his "guy." I think women aren't as good at doing that. What I've always said is if you don't ask, you don't get. I'm not going to advise women to be annoying but get out there and go darken someone's door. Partners in law firms and senior executives in companies are very busy and they don't tend to stop for anything, but if you stick your head in their door and say, "Hey, do you have some time for me?"—they'll probably say yes. I think one reason why women miss out on opportunities is because they do not aggressively pursue good assignments and fight to be visible in their organizations.

M. Mlacker: Deborah Rhode's also cited research that showed women are less likely than men to make partner even controlling for other factors, including law school grades and time spent out of the workforce on part-time schedules. I found the last part of that research interesting because I know you are someone who made partner after having worked a part-time schedule for a period of time. How did you make that work for you long-term? What steps did you take to ensure that you remained an integral and vital member of the firm?

S. Chapman: That was a really long time ago, in the early 1990s. I had taken about two years off when my daughters were born. I just completely resigned from my firm. When I wanted to go back to work, I just announced that I wanted to work part time. It was a combination of a lot of fortuitous circumstances: I had bankruptcy expertise and that was the beginning of a bankruptcy boom, so there was a need for my skill-set, and my record at the firm was viewed very positively so they were willing to take a chance on me in that regard. I was kind of annoyingly persistent about it. I insisted that I was going to make it work. It was also a different era then. I know younger people will probably have a hard time wrapping their minds around this, but it was just the beginning of computers and voicemail and the internet, so there was still a concept of the beginning and end of a workday. People would actually go home, and the day would end! There were all kinds of "devices" that male partners at the firm made up to get used to the fact that I wasn't in the office all the time. I convinced them that even when I'm not there, I'm still available. You can call me at home. I may go home at 4:30 p.m. to meet my kids after school, but after dinner time, I'll be working again. It's not much different than the associates who order in dinner and eat for an hour or so in a conference room and then keep working. I remember one partner asked me, "Well, what do I do when I want to talk to you on a day that you're not here?" And I said, "Just tell yourself that I'm working on my 'mommy case,' because I work on more than one case at a time. I might be in a deposition or traveling on case A and you may want to call me on case B and I'm just not available." I became really good at managing everyone's concern about whether I was going to be there. I never dropped the ball. I do remember one time where I had to get a fax out and I didn't have babysitter coverage, so I had to bring my three-year-old to the office and she hid under my desk while I got the fax out. I did what I had to do and, fortunately for me, I had a lot of great support in the firm. I became a partner and still worked part time. I do have to say though that part time quickly migrated into what everyone else would call full time because I ran the hiring committee and I ran the summer program etc. I was happy to do that extra work because it gave me visibility in the firm, and it gave me a say over a lot of important policy changes happening at that time.

M. Mlacker: Mothers, even those working full-time, are assumed to be less available and committed, an assumption that is not usually made about fathers. You are the mother of two highly successful and formidable daughters. And you raised these two daughters while also developing a career. How did you approach motherhood as compared to your career and professional development?

S. Chapman: They were just different things. Being a good mother was and remains the most important thing in my life and I always made that clear to everyone. When I became a partner at Willkie Farr, I remember vividly sitting in a corner office with the head of the firm and telling him, my family comes first. If one of my kids doesn't feel well, even though my husband's a

doctor, they're going to call me and I'm going to go... and just to demonstrate the point, believe it or not, my cellphone rang, and it was one of my daughters. He laughed and said, that's just a total setup. And it wasn't. I think it's like being able to walk and talk and chew gum at the same time. Was I stressed a lot of the time? Some of the time, yes. Was I tired a lot of the time? Yes. But for me, there was no room for compromising on being there for my daughters. Now in fairness, I have to say that I lucked out in the husband department and the caregiver department. I had one wonderful woman caregiver who was with us for the entire time that we needed help and she was extremely reliable. That was an amazing and necessary thing that gave me peace of mind. And my husband, even though he's a pretty high-powered physician, was always available when my day ran later than expected and I needed backup. Those two support components cannot be underestimated. I think being able to not miss anything, like ball games and piano recitals, just made me happier. I was home to cook dinner and just be there during homework. And I think when you're happier, you can do your job better. I never had any concern that my kids were suffering because I was working. Now that they are grown and I am on the bench I can share some of my little secrets, like taking conference calls during halftime at basketball games. Or while on the sidelines during softball games. But here's the thing. It always bothered me when my male colleagues would parade down the hall in the afternoon and say, hey everyone "I'm leaving early to watch my kid play soccer" whereas my assistant would say, "she's out of the office in a meeting." Men got bragging rights because they went to see their kids play ball, but women had to fly under the radar.

M. Mlacker: Women and minorities face difficulty developing "social capital" in the form of access to advice, support, sponsorship, desirable assignments and new business opportunities. As I was preparing this interview, I came across another interview you did. And in that interview, you said that stellar performance as a young associate is "capital" that will help propel a successful career, which made me think about whether we could view "social capital" and "stellar performance capital" as coexisting in a sort of symbiotic relationship. I'm curious though, how you view, based on your own experiences, the interconnectedness between stellar performance and "social capital"?

S. Chapman: I think they do coexist. Stellar performance capital, as you call it, is one of the most important things. I think that's the thing that got me past the young motherhood phase because when I was a young associate, I worked very hard and I had courtroom successes. I was viewed as a real go-getter and someone who could be relied on. I think that was capital that I deployed when I wanted to pursue a part-time position. So, that's kind of performance capital. I think social capital is something else and that relates to what I said before about, for example, my willingness to run the summer program and do hiring. Those kinds of things and also working on pro bono assignments and other projects for the firm, that gives you access to social capital because you get to know people that you otherwise would not get to know. And you're seen as being out there, flying the flag of the firm. You never know when you're going to make a good connection and you never know when that connection is going to lead to business, and law is a business. I do remember, way back in the day, trying to take advantage of connections at my daughters' school. My daughters went to a well-known private school on the Upper East Side of New York. Many of the parents (mostly the fathers) were in banking or law. I just remember how annoyed I'd be because the fathers would all sit around talking about their business connections and when I would try to engage, they would just look right through me. It was bizarre. So, you retreat to try to make those connections with women, which I did. And then you

work your way up. There are lots of different ways to build up social capital and they all have to do with extending yourself and getting involved in organizations. I was the chairman of the board of a women's domestic violence nonprofit that offered legal advice to women in domestic crisis, and I made a lot of connections in that environment. You have to balance how many extra things you take on but that's a really good way to build up social capital. I think, however, that stellar performance capital is the number one thing. Doing a really good job and making sure people know about it is the number one thing. But there's a synergistic effect, a booster effect by also garnering the social capital to pair it with. I think social capital in and of itself doesn't cut it. You have to do more than talk the talk, you have to do really good work.

“They encouraged my ability to command a room, teaching me tricks of the trade like, never go into a meeting without knowing what you're going to say to whom, and how you want the meeting to come out.”

M. Mlacker: Many of the women leaders who have spoken to us throughout this seminar have repeatedly mentioned the importance of mentors and sponsors. Did you have mentors and sponsors? And if so, how did those relationships develop?

S. Chapman: Yes, I had a lot of mentors and sponsors. When I first got to my law firm in Chicago, I was given to a young woman partner who was charged with looking after me. I think I had a little pizzazz coming in because the firm was in Chicago and I was coming from Harvard. Haha! I guess I was considered a good catch, so they gave me to this young woman partner who was dynamite. She took me in hand, which was really important because, as I told you, I was the first person in my family to go to college and I had never been in a professional office, ever, until I was a summer associate at Paul Weiss. I had no clothes. I had never been to any fancy restaurants. I didn't know what all the fancy foods were that people were ordering. I was just unpolished. She took charge of me, from tip to toe. She told me, you need to wear lipstick, you can't wear a dress to court, you need to wear a suit to court. She pushed me to develop my speaking skills. She made me do things that I had never done before. She would say, “Okay, you're going to argue this motion now.” She took the first thing I ever wrote and literally ripped it up and threw it in the garbage and told me to start over. I thought my career was going to be over before it even started. Over the years, I've had other people like her who've really helped me. My mentors have helped me develop my persona and my sense of self. They encouraged my ability to command a room, teaching me tricks of the trade like, never go into a meeting without knowing what you're going to say to whom, and how you want the meeting to come out. It's all about doing the work and preparation and having people to teach you. When you watch really good lawyers in action, they make it look so easy. But it's not. It takes a lot of preparation and people telling you to do that preparation and how to do it. Sponsors are people who may not directly mentor you, but they take a liking to you as an important player and someone having an important role in the future of the firm. They advocate for you.

When I was still in the part-time mode, there were partners in the firm who came to my defense and said, she's doing great, leave her alone, this is a good thing. So, you really do have to have both. And it's important to have them at all levels, not just at the highest levels. When you're a junior associate, I think it's important to find a senior associate so that when you have that horrible moment when the partner says to you, go research x and y and give me a memo or a draft and you walk out and have no idea what they're talking about, you can go to someone and

say, “What do I do, where do I find it, and would you review my memo or draft?” It’s important to find that person who will help you learn.

M. Mlacker: Some people view leadership as attaining a certain position or power, others describe it in terms of traits, skills, and relationships. How would you describe your leadership style?

S. Chapman: I think my leadership style is collaborative and inclusive. I might have very strong ideas about what the right path is, or what the right result is, but I try to work to get buy-in among the constituents in any particular decision-making process instead of just imposing my will. Now obviously as a judge, I have to say this is what you’re going to do. But even in the context of judging, I try to engage people so that they can understand what I’m basing my decision on and where I want everyone to go.

M. Mlacker: But how do you actually get buy-in from people?

S. Chapman: You get buy-in by modeling the behavior you want people to adopt. You assume that they’re going to act in the way that you want them to act and when they hear that, it sounds more natural to them and they say, of course that’s what we’re going to do. I’m not a yeller, I’m just a how-are-we-going-to-solve-this kind of a person. I do think that I’m kind of friendly-ish. I try to make people want to agree with me. I try to present myself in a way that they want to agree with me. And again, preparation plays a big role in this. I also think it’s important to make people feel like we’re all in this together. It’s not a top down style of leadership; it’s a real bottom up leadership style.

“I do think that you can have a very fulfilling personal life and a fulfilling business life at the same time.”

M. Mlacker: One of the businesswomen we spoke with said something I found very interesting. She said: “you can do it all, you just can’t do it all at once.” What is your reaction to that statement?

S. Chapman: It depends on how you define “all.” It reminds me of a story I might have mentioned to you before. One time when I was a partner at my first law firm, I had a young interviewee in my office. And if you look around my office, you see all my deal toys and my diplomas and all these pictures of my kids. So, this interviewee asked me, don’t I regret not being more successful than I am? I said, what do you mean by that? I’m a partner at a major law firm. I make a nice living. I have a wonderful family. Do I wish I were running the firm? Do I wish I had a bigger book of business? It was a telling instance of how some people think about success. I believe that you can do it all. I believe that I did do it all. Did I look great all the time? Nope. Did I go to the gym every day? Nope. But in terms of feeling satisfied with being a good mother, being a good wife, and doing a good job at work -- and doing some good for society -- I think you can do it all. If “all” also includes lots of so-called leisure time, then you can’t because there aren’t enough hours in a day. But I do think that you can have a very fulfilling personal life and a fulfilling business life at the same time. In that regard I am truly blessed.

Debbie Freedman

Debbie Freedman is the Executive Director of Community Legal Services (CLS) of Philadelphia, the largest public interest law firm in Pennsylvania. A graduate of Yale Law School and a lecturer on strategic litigation for social change at Penn Law, Debbie has dedicated her legal career to equal justice, individual client cases, and systematic advocacy, particularly in the areas of public benefits, disability law, and family advocacy.

Interview by Jake Romm

“Women should absolutely have opportunities at every level of society, but the trickle-down idea is not a reality in any way. Real change must be more broad-based than that to have any staying power.”

J. Romm: Looking through your professional history, it seems as though you have always done work on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized communities. Has that always been your plan? What prompted you to take this route, especially considering that law schools do not always push you down that route?

D. Freedman: I definitely went to law school with the strong intention of not only doing public interest, but also being a legal aid lawyer. I have had a lot of experiences in my life that made me think about the importance of public interest. Some of it was growing up in West Philly, seeing the differences between kids in that neighborhood and what different kids had access to, and seeing the struggles of low-income families throughout high school and college. I just attended a leadership meeting where they asked us to list things in our home life background that contributed to your leadership. I am Jewish, and there was a lot of talk growing up about social justice in my home life background. When I graduated from college, I knew I wanted to do something with social justice. I worked in D.C., and I saw a lot of people who knew nothing of social justice. That really inspired me to want to be a legal aid lawyer, and I went to law school with that in mind.

J. Romm: The law—and especially big corporate law—is notoriously behind the times in terms of gender equality and sexism in the workplace. Have you found that atmosphere and that problem in the public interest world, and, if so, how did you navigate it?

D. Freedman: When I first started at CLS in 1992, there were a lot more men in leadership who had a lot of strong opinions. But, already at that point, there were also a lot of strong women in leadership. I was very lucky to have very strong women as my supervisors who really blazed a path for me and protected me from some of that. Now, public interest law is dominated by women at the leadership level, so I have not really experienced those problems. In my current job, where I interact with many partners at law firms, I still experience attitudes that shock me because I am used to the public interest world.

J. Romm: Something implicit in what you are saying, which we discuss a lot in class, is the importance of having women mentors. I think that extends to men coming up in the legal world as well. Would you agree with that?

D. Freedman: I think mentorship is really important. People have been mentors in a lot of different ways for me. I got into legal management as a supervising attorney at CLS for people who did public benefits law. I never thought about management, but Cathy Carr saw something in me and asked me to be a managing attorney of a much larger team for our family law practice and I loved it.

Her mentoring me into thinking I could do that job and seeing something in me was really meaningful. I also had a lot of informal mentors who I admired and connected with and looking back I modeled myself on them and learned a lot from them.

J. Romm: Now that you are in Cathy Carr's former position, how have you continued that very important legacy of mentoring and making sure you have a good workplace for everybody?

D. Freedman: The main thing is to try to make it clear that the entire management team and myself really value treating people with respect, supporting each other through the real stress of public interest law, and creating opportunities for people in the workplace. One thing that is hard for everyone as they move into higher and higher levels for management, is that when you are managing seven people, for instance, it is really easy to treat everyone well. When you manage twenty people, it is easy to treat ten of them well and tell them to treat the other ten well. Now, there are 125 people at CLS (and 140 in another month), and so it is important to have a great management team in place, support each other, and hold each other accountable—nothing is perfect, but I definitely feel lucky to have that.

"The main thing is to try to make it clear that the entire management team and myself really value treating people with respect, supporting each other through the real stress of public interest law, and creating opportunities for people in the workplace."

J. Romm: Could you tell me about past work you have done for women's issues, for instance, your work against HB 129, which prevented women who were using drugs from receiving certain federal benefits, or your work on the domestic workers' bill of rights?

D. Freedman: The domestic workers' bill, for instance, is very female-oriented, and a lot of what we do is represent women as caregivers. 75% of our eviction clients are women, which is shocking to me. A lot of people say that eviction is for women what incarceration is for men—it is an epidemic that uses the legal system that creates a downward spiral into poverty. At CLS, we represent a lot of women in trying to preserve their housing and their families in child welfare cases, which is extremely gendered work that rests on a lot of different ideas about motherhood and parenthood should be.

J. Romm: You mentioned that a lot of your family law work depends on antiquated notion of who a caregiver is and what motherhood should be. To what extent does your work involve textual reading of the law to protect and promote individual rights, versus challenging a law for being antiquated and based on invalid gender-based stereotypes?

D. Freedman: It would be rare for us to argue that a law is antiquated. We almost always use the law, but like everything, it depends on your forum. When we talk about eviction in Philadelphia City Council, which is pretty progressive, we talk about race and gender, but when we are in court trying to prevent an eviction, we argue based on the law and the tenant's legal rights. With the domestic workers' bill, we almost always talk about it in terms of intersectionality. A lot of it is race and gender. There is a long history of racist portrayals of Black women on welfare, including, for instance, the idea of a welfare queen that Ronald Reagan perpetuated. In a way, we fall back in some ways on the "good mother" idea: that these women are escaping domestic violence.

J. Romm: Have you had issues or cases where you found a tension between the fight for gender equality and what the client wanted?

D. Freedman: What comes to mind is that I have represented a lot of women who have developed addiction and mental health issues as a result of sexual assault. It would be very helpful in some ways to portray that and talk about it—it makes them more sympathetic and explain the reasons for the addiction and helps our arguments for compassion and sympathy. But my clients tend to find that disempowering, and in that case, we have to accept what the client wants. We sometimes try to push the client a little bit, because it sometimes is the only way to achieve a positive outcome for the client. We try to tell them that it will not define their entire life—it is only ten minutes in court that will lead to long-term benefits. Talking about sexual assault in a case that would require them to be in court twenty times, for instance, would be a different matter.

J. Romm: In an article by Tressie McMillan Cottom in *Dissent*, talking about Anne-Marie Slaughter and corporate feminism, says:

"I called Slaughter's thesis a version of trickle-down feminism. Much like the economic ideology that generating wealth for a few will trickle down to improve the relative prosperity of the many, trickle-down feminism assumes that better options for elite white women will trickle down to the rest of us. Slaughter says as much in her *Atlantic* article, arguing that caring about the well-being of elite women means elevating powerful women who will take care of the interests of less powerful women...In practice this looks like extracting loyalty from poor women in the service sector while using service-sector labor to negotiate economic elite parity with men in the contracting, competitive good-jobs sector of a global knowledge economy."

Do you agree with this, the idea that we need to focus on getting more women in the C-suite and asking service and domestic workers to be content with their roles and wait for the benefits to trickle down? Or do you think the struggle for women's equality is better fought from the bottom up rather than from the top down?

D. Freedman: No, that does not work. I do not think that a “top-down” from corporate culture is helpful; it might be better than nothing. I also disagree that Lean In is helpful—maybe it is for some people—but I find it to be so narrowly focused on women with resources to be enraging. Women should absolutely have opportunities at every level of society, but the trickle-down idea is not a reality in any way. Real change must be more broad-based than that to have any staying power.

J. Romm: What can men be doing across the board to be better allies for women in achieving gender equality?

D. Freedman: When women speak up as individuals about problem, men need to support women rather than hiding them. Supporting issues that raise the minimum wage and support women’s economic power is critical. Supporting enforcement of the Family Medical Leave Act and pregnancy discrimination law—wages, childcare, and healthcare are the big things that men should support.

Catherine Carr

Catherine Carr, L'79, is vice-chair of the Stoneleigh Foundation, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and a lecturer at its School of Social Policy & Practice. She is the immediate past Executive Director of Philadelphia's Community Legal Services (CLS), where she worked for 20 years as its first female and longest-serving executive director. She has held and continues to hold a range of leadership roles in bar associations and public interest law organizations both locally and nationally, including as co-chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Task Force on Civil Gideon and Access to Justice; coordinator for the National Legal Aid and Defender Association's (NLADA) Strategic Advocacy Initiative; an American Bar Foundation Fellow; an American Law Institute member; a Management Information Exchange Board member; the Independence Foundation's Board Secretary; and an Oversight Board member for the Mayor of Philadelphia's Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity.

Interview by Jake Romm

"There is value to standing up to these men. As we get power, we must use our power to define our own values."

J. Romm: Looking through your professional history, it seems as though you have always done work on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized communities and spent 30 years at CLS. Has that always been your plan? What prompted you to take this route, especially considering that law schools do not always push you down that route?

C. Carr: Originally, my plan was to focus on women's issues. I was the first women studies major at Yale. The women's issues, in terms of my daily life and what went on in the school, were everywhere. There were no women's bathrooms, there were debates about whether there should be guards in the women's dormitories and whether women should even be let in. Those issues really percolated. I felt very strongly that we needed to be seen as absolutely equal and accepted and that became my focus. I was pretty obnoxious—I would take a literature course and talk about the role of women in Shakespeare and in the Odyssey. There were a few women law students at Yale who ran seminars; it was fascinating to me. When I graduated, I worked at Connecticut Women's Education Legal Fund and ran a family law conference.

When I came to Penn Law, I was really exposed to poverty, and I had a middle-class suburban background. I felt that my eyes were really open to poverty in a way I had not understood before. I worked on the Women's Law Project on the ERA at Penn, but I became interested in poverty next.

J. Romm: Did you experience a similar environment at Penn Law where men were unwelcoming of you and other women?

C. Carr: We had a very unusual class at the law school: they let in more women, more minorities, and more slightly older people who were three years out of college. There were still professors who gave women a hard time and people who were unsympathetic to women's issues. It was less intense here than at Yale, but it made a difference being with a bunch of women who wanted to be lawyers.

J. Romm: The law—and especially big corporate law—is notoriously behind the times in terms of gender equality and sexism in the workplace. Have you found that atmosphere and that problem in the public interest world, and, if so, how did you navigate it?

C. Carr: The public interest world had been largely men because law schools had been largely men. It was still unusual to have a lot of women, but it was starting to happen. I clerked for one year for the first woman judge in Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and I heard through her about the corporate experience. She believed that women just had to work harder than men to prove themselves, and that was just the way it was. I knew from the very beginning that I did not go to law school to go to a corporate law firm. By the time I became executive director of CLS, I knew I needed to work with law firm people in terms of pro bono work and fundraising, who were almost exclusively men. There was very much a male-dominated atmosphere. When I became director, I think there were two women in management, with the rest being men much older than I was. I certainly had imposter syndrome and was never on a management track, but people would tell me I could do it and I began to believe I could. Managing the older men and making them behave was not easy—there was this phenomenon that you had to make your name known as a litigator to get into management without a clue or interest beyond your own advancement. I had to deal with guys like that and reigning them in was difficult. I worked a lot with the corporate law world and have been on panels, and women in law firms give up a lot in terms of hours and time and family time.

What always struck me is that law firm leadership always complains about the lack of women in leadership and why they drop out of law firms, but it is because law firms have male values about what work-life looks like.

“Just because we are becoming leaders and part of the C-suite does not mean that we have to run our lives like men always have. Part of what I hope we bring to the table is a different balance and approach to work, family, work-life balance, ambition, and cooperation.”

None of this has to be connected to gender. For women, some have been happy advancing and taking on corporate culture that has been defined by men. Some have opened their own firm to define a culture that looks different. The legal aid world still struggles with older men who have been in legal aid for forty or fifty years who complain about young people not wanting to stay until 10 p.m., but it is less gender-specific now. They act like this is the value and this is what work needs to be, but I think women have brought something different to the table.

J. Romm: How do you feel about *Lean In*?

C. Carr: There is something to the Lean In theory. For women to find their voices and in that sense lean in makes a lot of sense. Leaning in should not require giving up family life. Frankly, being in the world of legal leadership, the women in the profession committee of the Bar Association would talk about childcare for themselves but not for poorer women; the self-focus for the richest women feels wrong to me. Women who have “made it,” who have power, need to figure out how to use that power and not let men push them around, which may mean leaving that entire culture of masculine corporate culture. It should mean standing up as a leader, which could mean working fewer hours. We have a lot of change to make.

Women need to be as forceful as the men and make our voices heard as much as the men and say we are worth as much as the men. There is value to standing up to these men. As we get power, we must use our power to define our own values.

J. Romm: On the question of economics, which has been a huge part of your work, some have called for economic revolution first, and that social issues will follow. How do you think your work for people in poverty and gender equality are inextricably linked?

C. Carr: In some ways, poor women may be much worse off in recent decades than before. Programs were designed to help poor women who were also mothers, but then there was a shift of culture that expected all women to work. As a result, we cut off welfare for women who stayed home with their children while incarcerating a lot of the men. Low-income jobs have gone away, too, for example. Things have gotten worse. I really believe we have made a lot of racial progress, but generally not progress in fighting poverty. The economics dimension is so race-based, and we are only beginning to talk about that productively. I get upset when people only see race—gender is a huge part of poverty as well. Race, gender, and poverty are so intertwined.

J. Romm: Once you became the first woman executive director at CLS, did you face any pushback? How have you paved the way for future women?

C. Carr: I pulled women into management and really saw the skills that women brought to management. For whatever reason, legal aid has become heavily women-dominated. I saw a lot of men in management who were not good at it, and it was a challenge to deal with them. Some men thought that management meant yelling at their staff—that is not appropriate.

We stood up to these men who had been allowed to do that. Board members and older male board members were very supportive of women, too. A lot of people wanted to help, but a few men thought they should tell me how to do my job. You have to push back and be strong. I still deal with this stuff. It is important to recognize the limitations of some of the people you deal with, to bring powerful and thoughtful women to the table, and to have a team-based approach. A lot of law firm partners have no clue how to do the strategic change that public interest lawyers do. We think about big issues and how to make change, and what kind of connections one needs to make them. There is a wonderful cohort of women across the country in legal aid leadership roles now.

“It is important to recognize the limitations of some of the people you deal with, to bring powerful and thoughtful women to the table, and to have a team-based approach.”

J. Romm: What can men be doing across the board to be better allies for women in achieving gender equality?

C. Carr: The culture has changed tremendously. Men now think that their daughters should be leaders, and that means they think women should have opportunities and education. I think people have really changed, and men are mostly there for women. Younger men are figuring it out. Older men, when you talk about sexual assault laws and consent, they just do not get it. They defend this biological, romantic reality that this is something that cannot be controlled by laws. Young men working on this front is extremely important, to argue that men are not inherently aggressors.

Ellen Robb

Ellen Robb is a former legal and social justice activist focusing on feminism, environmental justice, and urban development issues. In 1973, she ran as a candidate for public office to become an elected member of the Weehawken Board of Education but, as the wife of a judge, she was forced to drop out of the race due to an administrative regulation banning a judge's wife from political activity. She petitioned the Supreme Court of New Jersey to review this ban on spousal political activity, which ultimately ruled in her favor. Most recently, she served on the Weehawken Historical Commission and worked on the Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy to secure the waterfront for use by the general public. She is a mother to two and grandmother to three, and she has been married for nearly 63 years.

Interview by Sophia Gaulkin

“To effect change we need to build on this and on each other.”

S. Gaulkin: What motivated you to pursue a legal remedy to securing your right to engage in political activities regardless of your marital relationship?

E. Robb: The community of women really pushed me to challenge this, both individual women and community organizations. If not for them, I might not have pursued it. When the Supreme Court of New Jersey told me not to run, I disagreed with it and wrote a letter back that I would respect their decision for the time being, but I told them I would not give up. They said that if I were to run for public office it would damage public confidence in the judicial system in New Jersey, despite the fact that what I was doing—running to be a member of the education board—would be different from typical political campaigns, with no campaign financing or political parties.

“The community of women really pushed me to challenge this, both individual women and community organizations. If not for them, I might not have pursued it.”

S. Gaulkin: In 1972, in a case called *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that “the marital couple is not an independent entity with a mind and heart of its own, but an association of two individuals each with a separate intellectual and emotional makeup.” In class, we discuss the ways in which law influences culture and vice versa. How have you experienced the conversation between law and culture? How important do you think this Supreme Court decision was for your case, which you started just a year later?

E. Robb: My case was part of the modern trend to recognize the independence, interests, rights, activities, and responsibilities of both spouses in marriage. Stereotypes were starting to break down. There was a social and legal recognition of women's autonomy. To effect change we need to build on this and on each other. A married woman in New Jersey already had the right to own her own property, take out debts in her name, enter into a partnership or even a criminal conspiracy with her husband, and testify against him in certain cases. In 1975, after I filed my petition but before the decision, the Court held that a wife is not compelled to take her husband's name. New Jersey, apparently at that time, was the only state that banned judges' wives from political activity, and only New York City tried to do so.

“Stereotypes were starting to break down. There was a social and legal recognition of women’s autonomy. To effect change we need to build on this and on each other.”

S. Gaulkin: How much opposition did you face from the public and the media? How did women and men’s responses differ?

E. Robb: Forty-some-odd years dulls one’s recollections. Though I particularly remember that women were supportive but insistent that this be challenged, while men were by and large jocular but dismissive and sometimes testy as in: “Can’t the Judge control his wife”? My husband supported me. He told the court that he could not stop me from running. The media covered it well, even the New York Times, although newspapers were not always in my favor. Articles that were against my case mainly seemed to be concerned about an independent judiciary rather than my role as a wife, though that was implied.

S. Gaulkin: Did you experience any gender-based discrimination in the legal proceedings? What kept you motivated through the years of litigation?

E. Robb: The Chief Justice at first said that although he believed there would be any issues of my husband’s ability to be impartial, running for the school board would still create the appearance of conflict. I had written to the court that I hoped they would keep an open mind in considering my position. Public interest and women’s groups in the state became very involved in the case, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the League of Women Voters, and the Women’s Political Caucus. It was exhausting and, at the same time, helpful that so many people wanted to guide my case. In the end it was hard for the government’s lawyer to argue against me.

S. Gaulkin: I did some research and found that your case from 1976 has been cited at least 113 times. More specifically, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals used your case in rejecting a prohibition on the employment of court clerks married to police officers. Multiple law review and journal articles, appellants’ briefs, administrative decisions, ethics decisions, and even a 2019 Practice Series cited it in opposition to gender-based barriers and restrictions on wives’ activity. Did you expect to have such a large impact?

E. Robb: It is gratifying to know that the long-ago effort seems to have been useful over time. We long for the day when we will not need to fight for these issues anymore. How long will that be? Even though men have by and large been dismissive of women’s issues, it is clear that women are winning. Pursuing any legal remedy is exhausting, and community support and the importance of fighting for other women are both profound sources of strength, but it is important to have confidence that you will make an impact. I wish I had that then.

“We long for the day when we will not need to fight for these issues anymore. How long will that be? Even though men have by and large been dismissive of women’s issues, it is clear that women are winning.”

Britney Wilson

Britney Wilson, a graduate of Howard University and Penn Law, is currently a civil rights attorney at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice. Before NCLEJ, she was a fellow at the Center for Constitutional Rights and at the American Civil Liberties Union. Her extensive commitment to protecting and promoting social justice covers a range of marginalized groups and complex civil rights issues, including but not at all limited to discriminatory policing, inclusion in higher education, immigration and voting rights, fair housing, and the criminalization of poverty. Her advocacy has a particular emphasis on people with disabilities and people of color.

Wilson has also written and spoken extensively about the intersection of these social justice issues, and has been featured in This American Life, Longreads, The Nation Magazine, and HBO.

Interview by Sophia Gaulkin

“Always stay true to yourself, do not forget your creativity, and remember there is more than one way to solve a problem.”

S. Gaulkin: In class we have been discussing strategies and theories about interrupting and disrupting biases, particularly gender-based biases, both on a person-to-person basis and structurally. One of your articles said that as a civil rights attorney, you tend to think in terms of systems and policies rather than individual problematic people. I was wondering if you could speak about your thoughts or advice on the best ways to disrupt biases, based on your experience?

B. Wilson: You're right. I'm a civil rights attorney and I do tend to think in terms of systems, but it depends on what I'm trying to tackle. In that article you referenced, I was speaking more specifically about Access- a-Ride and the ableism that manifests itself in the system and the way passengers are treated. There, I'm not as focused on individual actions because a driver can be nice to me, but that doesn't treat the structural problem, which is the way that the system functions, which, in turn, is at least based in part on the low expectations that people with disabilities have because of others' stereotypes about us. In that context, I tend to be less focused on one-on-one contact in limiting biases, although that is important in certain instances. On the day-to-day basis, I think individual interactions can challenge biases and potentially make people think differently about them. Personally, I've taught a lot of people about ableism, who would not have otherwise thought about what it would be like to be disabled, because they didn't have to think about it before they became friends with me. In that way, individual interactions can be useful for disrupting biases, but when we talk about systems, policies, companies, and procedures, I think that needs to be tackled on a structural level, because that trickles down to the individual level.

S. Gaulkin: Relatedly, do you have advice on how to maximize the chances of being listened to, for example, like when you spoke at the MTA board meeting to propose major changes to Access- a-Ride? How can young leaders navigate situations in which they have the opportunity to confront and challenge those who are privileged and in positions of power?

B. Wilson: I don't spend a lot of time thinking about whether people are less likely to listen to me because I am a woman, or disabled, or Black, because I am all of those things. I know that is a factor, but if I consciously thought about it as a barrier, I think I might let it become a barrier. Being heard is a necessity to me—it is not something that I have had to consciously think about. I know I have to speak up because I would not have gotten to this point if I did not. In terms of being heard, my life has been about having to be heard because of all those identities.

“Being heard is a necessity to me—it is not something that I have had to consciously think about. I know I have to speak up because I would not have gotten to this point if I did not.”

I know that women and people of all different marginalized groups are often overlooked, and I know that speaking up and being heard is not an option for some people. It is because I represent these groups that I know the importance of being heard. If anything, it is another level of determination and responsibility to be heard. It is not so much that these identities are a barrier to being heard; it is because of these identities that I know I need to be heard, because that voice and that perspective needs to be at the room and be at the table. If I am at the table, then I need to be doing something at the table. Much of the advocacy that I have been able to do is because of the connections I have had at the privilege that I have acquired from my education and career path: not everyone has had access to that, and I am very conscious of that. It is important to be aware that others are not at the table, and because of that awareness, to be more determined to make your voice heard, to use your spot there, to make sure that this voice is represented, and to pave the way for other people who have not been at the table but should be.

S. Gaulkin: You have obviously done a lot of legal work fighting for civil rights, racial justice, rights for individuals with disabilities, and the way these issues intersect. I was wondering about your experience tackling intersectional issues—how can lawyers who only or mainly focus on gender equality, for instance, better adopt a more intersectional or holistic approach to their legal work and advocacy?

“Beyond traditional legal methods and structures, it is important how we tell stories and whose stories we tell. As lawyers that is what we are at the end of the day: storytellers.”

B. Wilson: I think intersectionality, or the recognition that people are part of multiple groups or multiple marginalized groups, is becoming more popular as a term, but I am not convinced that people fully understand what that means or how to advocate around it. In some cases, it is overused or misused as a term, but it is important to figure out how to apply and use intersectional approaches. The law currently does not recognize truly intersectional arguments: for example, if I filed a discrimination lawsuit, the court would not necessarily let me argue that it was because of my race and my disability. In a way, because people bring multiple claims within a complaint, we already have an inherent understanding that many things can be actionable because on a particular incident. I want to see a broader recognition when it comes to intersectionality and intersectional identities; I want people to be able to bring claims that they were discriminated on as Black women, because it is not the same experience as discrimination only the basis of gender. We need more people to try bringing those claims to pressure courts to recognize them.

Whose stories we tend to highlight, the media coverage we push for—there are many ways to engage in intersectional advocacy, not only in the courtroom, but also in the media through the stories we tell. Like anything, intersectionality needs to take multiple forms.

S. Gaulkin: Apart from all the work you do and have done in the legal context, I am really interested in the ways in which you use storytelling and other non-legal strategies for advancing social justice, particularly sharing your experience in *This American Life*, your spoken word poetry, getting featured on news segments and other media, and also what you called “Stage 1” in your Longreads article: writing blog posts, posting on social media, and creating Change.org petitions. What are some lessons or advice you have for women lawyers about using these strategies separately from or in combination with legal strategies?

B. Wilson: My first identity is as a writer: that is my background—spoken word and poetry—and I have been writing and publishing before lawyering and before anything. For me, when something happens to me, I want to make sense of it, which I do through words and storytelling. That is how people relate to each other and learn to relate to each other. Fortunately, and unfortunately, people often need to feel related to others in order to be moved to action. I figured out early on that one way to share my feelings and experiences with people was through my writing; I continue to do that as a lawyer. I do not even necessarily think about it from a strategic standpoint for advocacy. It had that effect, and it was partially an intended effect, but when I sat down to write my Longreads piece, for example, it was because it was a blatant example of all the “-isms” that I am always fighting against, even as I have to live through them. This is sexism, misogyny, ableism, power, all of these things wrapped up into one, and in order to explain that, I needed

to get it on paper. My advice to other lawyers in terms of other forms of advocacy is that everyone needs to get out of the traditional legal box. I think law school across the board does a horrible job of fostering creativity and thinking out of the box: you spend three years being taught formulaic methods and rules. When you actually enter the legal world, you realize that a lot of it is more flexible than we like to think it is. I remember a law school classmate told me to take my background in spoken word and the HBO documentary off my resume. I thought that was crazy—this is who I am, and I am glad I did not take his advice. I was a writer before coming to law school and I am still a writer. Always stay true to yourself, do not forget your creativity, and remember there is more than one way to solve a problem.

S. Gaulkin: After listening to your podcast and reading your article, I have kept thinking about what you said about how the way you are treated is often influenced by how you look and, by extension, what others think they can get away with. This really resonates with me and I am sure with a lot of women in the Leadership Lab. We are often confronted, without any choice, with inappropriate, disgusting, or harassing situations, that do not put us in physical danger, but we feel powerless to speak up not only out of fear of retaliation, but also because of an internal conversation over whether people will think we are overreacting or whether we will be believed. In these situations, as you said, it will not matter that we have shiny law degrees or have been working to fight against this injustice—that will not save us in the moment. What advice do you have for those of us who will continue to go through these moments? What do we do with these moments? How can we weaponize them most effectively, like I think you did, by filing complaints and spreading awareness through sharing your experience?

B. Wilson: We need to keep speaking up, which is easier said than done. That is why I chose not only to write about it but also complain about that situation in particular. There is a saying that you treat people how to treat you. When you say nothing or do nothing—I knew in that particular instance—he might do that to someone else. He might think his behavior was okay, and it was not. The only way to challenge that is to share my story and stand up against it. Your question references a range of situations, and I know that it is not as easy to speak up about those types of situations and to file complaints, because there are sometimes repercussions for the people who file the complaint. But I feel like you have to try. Otherwise, unfortunately, nobody gets the message. I would emphasize that it is not always going to be easy to tell your story, and people are not always going to receive your story either. This particular instance, the Access-a-Ride story, which has been adapted twice and will be in another format in the future—I pitched it to seven different outlets before it was published. People are not always going to receive it or appreciate your story, so perseverance is needed. It took a while to get it out there, and then, once I did, it was adapted by This American Life. I could not have imagined that it would have the impact that it ultimately had.

Serena Mayeri

Professor of Law and History at the University of Pennsylvania

Serena Mayeri joined the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 2006. Professor Mayeri teaches courses on legal and constitutional history, antidiscrimination law and policy, family law and history, civil rights and feminism, and marriage and its alternatives. She holds a secondary appointment in the Department of History and is also a core faculty member in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies program. Her scholarship focuses on the historical impact of progressive and conservative social movements on legal and constitutional change. Professor Mayeri was named a Distinguished Lecturer by the Organization of American Historians and received the Robert A. Gorman Award for Excellence in teaching. Professor Mayeri wrote articles, essays, and book chapters for numerous legal journals, newspapers, and magazines on gender equality, intersectionality, and the institution of marriage among other topics. Professor Mayeri is currently writing a book titled "The Status of Marriage: Marital Supremacy Challenged and Remade, 1960-2000." This book examines this history of challenges to marriage's primacy as a legal institution and a source of public and private benefits.

Professor Mayeri graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College with a BA in Social Studies. While at Harvard, she received the Detur Prize for First-Year Achievement, the Institute of Politics Political Journalism Award, as well as the Thomas Temple Hoopes Prize for Senior Honors Thesis for her thesis titled "The Difference Discrimination Makes: Substantive Equal Protection and the Virginia Military Institute Case." Professor Mayeri received her JD degree from Yale Law School, where she was a Senior Editor on the Yale Law Journal and Articles Editor on the Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities. At Yale Law School, Professor Mayeri was selected for various fellowships and received the Michael Egger Prize for Best Student Note on Current Social Problem. Professor Mayeri also received her PhD in History from Yale University. Her first book, Reasoning from Race: Feminism, Law, and the Civil Rights Revolution, received the Littleton-Griswold Prize from the American Historical Association and the Darlene Clark Hine Award from the Organization of American Historians.

Interview by Sarah Heberlig, Raisa Masud, and Kimberly Kelly

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much. As you know, our class looks at women in leadership roles and the different barriers they face in the legal field, in their scholastic work, as well as their viewpoints. We are focused on reconceptualizing leadership for women and reimagining the workplace, whether that is at an academic or corporate level, or in public life. We are very excited to speak with you about your work. Thank you.

Something that I have noticed from your background is that you have invested much scholarship in looking at social change movements, and how social movements power change at both a legal and societal level. I am curious about what brought you to that space. Was there a specific lightbulb moment? Or, how did you first get involved in the advocacy social movement space?

S. Mayeri: I had to think about that a little bit. I would trace it to college. I did an externship with a journalist my junior year of college. It was through a research partnership program that paired academics and visiting scholars, or in this case, a journalist, which is what I thought I wanted to be at that time, with students. Basically, I was a research assistant. It was much more than that for me, and probably much less than that for the journalist I was working with. In other words, I was learning more from her, for sure, than she was learning from me. She [Florence George Graves] was an investigative reporter who had broken a number of important stories. It is actually interesting to think about it now. An earlier “me too,” a wave of “me too,” in the sense that she had investigated politicians [such as Senator Bob Packwood] who had been accused of sexually harassing their employees. She wanted to get a sense of the larger context for thinking about sexual harassment and sex discrimination, generally. So, my job was to read a whole bunch of books about that and report back to her. That enabled me to learn a lot of material that I had not really been exposed to in my courses. I had never taken, and I did not take any women’s studies courses in college. But I found myself gravitating to those topics when I needed to write a paper for a class. I would choose a topic [...] the topics that interested me tended to be ones related to gender and race.

S. Heberlig: Through that experience, is that when you started to—if you do— label yourself as a feminist, and figure out what feminism means to you? Was it through that experience, or did that come later?

S. Mayeri: That is a great question. I think so, yes. I do not think that that was a label that I ever resisted. At the same time, I was not someone who was completely open to labeling myself in that way, publicly, at the time. I remember [...] there was a reason that I did not take women’s studies courses in college. I think they were stigmatized in a certain way. This was in the early to mid ‘90s, I was at an institution where I do not think that I had a female professor until my junior year of college. [I did have several amazing female professors and mentors thereafter, though, including historians Ellen Herman and Ellen Fitzpatrick, economist Claudia Goldin, and political theorist Seyla Benhabib, as well as terrific male mentors including historian James Goodman and writer Lee Daniels]. Until then, I was studying subjects that were fairly.

male-dominated, at least at the institution where I was. My extracurricular activities were also very male dominated, and so I think there was a certain reticence on my part to be as forthcoming about that as I would be later. But I did not have any qualms about [feminism] from a subjective standpoint.

S. Heberlig: So, what would you define feminism as?

S. Mayeri: That is a great question. I have been thinking about that since you posed it. I think that there are a lot of feminisms and there is not any one definition. I would say that as a general matter, feminism is about allowing all people to have opportunities to flourish regardless of sex, gender, identity, race, and any other category that might be constraining.

As a general matter, feminism is about allowing all people to have opportunities to flourish regardless of sex, gender, identity, race, and any other category that may be constraining.

S. Heberlig: It is very interesting that you bring that up because I was looking at one of your articles that you wrote for the Boston Law Review, Historicizing the “End of Men”: The Politics of Reactions (s), and you had discussed the Moynihan Report that referenced that women’s advancement might correlate with men’s demise— the “end of men, rise of women” rhetoric. The idea that feminism is all- inclusive is something that a lot of women perpetuate, but that society sometimes paints differently.

How do you feel that women can navigate that space? This idea that women can be encouraged to lean in, to advocate for themselves, but not “too far” or “too much”? How do we balance that equality of success, equality of race, equality of gender?

S. Mayeri: I struggle with this question because I am no expert on navigating the interpersonal challenges of being a woman in various contexts. I think most of my work has been more about the structural aspects of inequality, than it has been about how one lives one’s own life. It is certainly something that I think about as a person, but not something that I feel I have a lot of expertise in. That said, I guess for advice on those questions, I feel as if I have come to a place where I know where to look for that information. One of the scholars and advocates who has tried to both tackle some of the structural aspects, but also think about the interpersonal aspects of that dilemma, is Joan Williams and her Center for Work Life Law. She has written a number of books, with practical advice, that is an alternative to the “lean in” philosophy in a way [...].

S. Heberlig: Yes, it [lean in philosophy] can be very isolating because it only applies to a few.

S. Mayeri: Yes. I do also think that the answer to those questions are going to be very context specific. Even within a very rarified elite professional world. The world of academia is very different from the world of corporate law. I would not presume to understand either, but certainly not the areas where I have not had any experience myself.

S. Heberlig: Thank you.

S. Mayeri: That was not a very helpful answer.

S. Heberlig: It is helpful! You have pointed us to another resource.

I like that you mention that there are structural and interpersonal components to female success and leadership. I think that one of the things that surfaces frequently is marriage, because marriage can be categorized into both of those buckets. I know that you have done a lot of work looking at marriage and how it impacts women. You are even in the midst of contributing to the space further with your book, The Status of Marriage: Marital Supremacy Challenged and Remade. Something from our course that is very interesting is that a lot of the leaders, when asked what their number one piece of advice is—and they have so much expertise and experience in their respective fields— but they say, “pick the right partner.” I am curious what your thoughts are on that, and also how marriage can be both an opening and constricting system for women?

S. Mayeri: That is a great question. So, the book that I am working on right now is in some ways more about the structural questions rather than the interpersonal questions. But interestingly, that interpersonal dynamic, or the assertion that the most important choice that a woman, usually a professional woman, makes is her partner is one that very much enters into the project. That was certainly Ruth Bader Ginsburg's mantra as well. Despite the fact that, as you said, she did a lot of things in the professional sphere that had little to do, at least on the surface, with who she had chosen as her partner. I find it fascinating that they have now become cultural icons as a couple.

K. Kelly: The entire documentary...the majority of it was about their relationship.

S. Mayeri: I do not know if you have seen the biopic, but it is even more about that. The documentary is a lot better. The biopic was surprisingly engaging though. I took my nine-year-old son. It was fun to see it through his eyes. I think that was part of the reason why I enjoyed it.

You see a very interesting dynamic in the feminist movement of the 1970s, where the elite lawyers are strategizing about how to achieve legal equality for women. Many of them are focusing on marriage itself and on equality within marriage. That is happening at a time when people are not entirely aware that marriage is going to become increasingly inaccessible to large swaths of the population. Almost by its very nature, the focus on a marital partnership and creating the possibility for egalitarian marriage in terms of the legal structures and government policies that are in place, and in terms of creating a culture in which men are caregivers and women are breadwinners with everyone sharing responsibilities, that seems all very important and crucial. But it is also increasingly irrelevant to the growing number of women and men who are not in two-parent marital relationships, or do not have jobs that give them the government and private benefits that are associated with marital relationships. So, that is in some sense what I am focusing on. The increasingly stark contrast between the creation of the possibility of an egalitarian marriage for an elite group of women, on the one hand, and the continued way in which our legal system privileges marriage and the increasing gap—what is called the marriage gap—based on education and income. This is really a fairly new phenomenon over the last few decades. It used to be that highly educated women were less likely to get married, in a time when women had to choose in some ways between a career and family. Now, it is highly educated white women who are the foremost practitioners of marriage.

S. Heberlig: So, marriage is still relevant?

S. Mayeri: I think it is very relevant in the way that it continues to be privileged in our laws and policies, despite its increasing—I do not want to say irrelevance—to large portions of the population. It is relevant in the sense that the legal primacy of marriage affects everyone, and the fact that we get many of our benefits, public and private, from marriage, excludes a lot of people.

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much. That is a different take from what we have heard.

“[Marriage] is very relevant in the way that it continues to be privileged in our laws and policies, despite its increasing—I do not want to say irrelevance—to large portions of the population.”

R. Masud: In 2011, in your book, *Reasoning from Race*, you stated that “in the early 1970s, reasoning from race served Ginsburg’s cautious radicalism well: the law of race discrimination grounded feminist claims in legal precedent. At the same time, characterizing sex-based classifications as similar to racial distinctions boldly reframed as invidious what many had long considered benign.” What motivated you to look at Justice Ginsburg’s work as a litigator in the 1970s to help the Court strike down laws that treated men and women differently because of gender?

S. Mayeri: I think I came to her work from a variety of different angles. First, my senior thesis in college was about the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) case which you probably read in constitutional law. I still remember the day that President Clinton nominated Justice Ginsburg. It was a big moment in my life as a high school student. By the time I wrote my senior thesis on the VMI case, I became academically interested. But then I thought I was going to move on from that topic. I went to graduate school to study history, and I thought I needed to go further back in time and played around with a number of different topics. Then, I read Pauli Murray’s autobiography. She was a central figure in feminist legal strategy in the 1960s who, among many other contributions, laid the groundwork for Justice Ginsburg’s legal strategy, particularly her constitutional strategy. And Murray has recently become better known and better appreciated.

At the time I read her autobiography, she was someone who was known only by historians. Even today, I would say her contributions are underappreciated. She was a civil rights lawyer who was a generation older than Justice Ginsburg and was pivotal in a bunch of different social movements. She would drop a transformative legal theory and then move onto something else, which is part of the reason why she did not get as much credit for her contributions until recently. So, she was my gateway back into the topic of the relationship between race and gender in the law. And because Justice Ginsburg implemented her strategy, that was my path back.

R. Masud: I had read an article titled “Lawyers as Leaders” in the *Yale Law Journal* where the author had named many lawyers of past generations who were also leaders. They were all male lawyers. It is an example of the literature available on lawyers as leaders. Do you consider any female lawyers to be leaders and why?

S. Mayeri: In my world, almost all of the leaders were female. All of the lawyers who are leaders in my story are women. My familiarity with the dynamics of female leadership is largely drawn from historical examples although some of the folks I studied are still around and leading. Eleanor Holmes Norton is a good example. She was a pivotal feminist legal strategist in a very different position than Pauli Murray. Murray was always on the margins of actual political power; she never held a significant government position or another position where she could implement her legal theories. They were mainly implemented by others. Eleanor Holmes Norton was the head of the New York City Human Rights Commission in the early 1970s and later head of the EEOC; she was a pretty transformative leader in both of those arenas. So, because I study and teach employment discrimination law, she is crucially important to how the feminist strategy was translated into the legal space during that period, which was one of the most pivotal periods of legal change for women and people of color.

“All of the lawyers who are leaders in my story are women.”

R. Masud: What is your definition of success in the legal profession?

S. Mayeri: There is no one definition of success. So, I guess I would like to think that a successful person in the legal profession leaves the world a little better than they found it.

“There is no one definition of success. I would like to think that a successful person in the legal profession leaves the world a little better than they found it.”

K. Kelly: Going off Raisa’s question on what your definition of success is and how you believe that while there is not one definition of success, you would like to think that a successful person in the legal profession is one who leaves the world a little better than they found it. Our very first interview was with Addison who, although she didn’t say this was her definition of success, advised to try to change the world one person at a time, specifically in the way they approach gender equality. Is that what you mean when you say leave the world a better place? Not necessarily big constitutional changes in legal strategy for feminists, but just in our day to day lives maybe trying to get, for example, a partner who doesn’t work with a younger woman to put them on a deal or a case, or was your definition of success in the legal profession from a broader perspective?

S. Mayeri: I think there are a lot of different ways to get at these problems and no one person can pursue all of them at the same time. I think there are avenues in the legal profession that may allow for more transformative change than others. It could be that one person’s contribution can change the law in a particular way, but another may be changing the culture of their firm, or advocating for policies in their own workplace and doing pro-bono work or community or public service that advances their definition of social justice. It can take a lot of different forms.

K. Kelly: Going off what Sarah mentioned before on how you look into how social movements power change both on a legal and societal level. I was curious what your perspective on the social movement of ‘Me Too’ is and whether you think it actually sparked legal change with the ‘Times Up Legal Defense Fund. Finally, what do you think the next steps are for the legal community on a broader level?

S. Mayeri: I think there are some potential dangers the legal response to ‘Me Too’ may be vulnerable to falling into. Dangers that are not new to the feminist legal advocacy, or to legal advocacy against harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Vicki Schultz, who is a very prominent scholar in employment discrimination law, has long pointed to a tendency to focus too much on sexualized harassment, which is of course very important and an important barrier to women’s advancement in the workplace. But Professor Schultz has argued for a conception of harassment that focuses on any type of conduct that undermines women’s ability to be full members of their workplace, to be full citizens.

Whether or not that takes the form of sexualized behavior, sexual violence, or the form of undermining women's competence in other ways. Either literally sabotaging their work or undermining other people's perception of the work or making the work environment so hostile as to be unbearable-- it takes a lot of different forms. She worries, and I share her concern, that focusing too much on the very real problem of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace may erroneously convey the impression that that is the major or the only barrier to women's inequality in work. The other is that I think the 'Times Up Legal Defense Fund' and other such efforts are vitally important, and I have no problem with them at all. I do think it would be unfortunate if we overlooked the degree to which there are more structural problems that lead to women's vulnerability to harassment, violence, and exploitation of all sorts--sexual and otherwise. While it is important to provide lawyers and money for lawyers, in some ways that is treating the symptom rather than the cause.

"Focusing too much on the very real problem of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace may erroneously convey the impression that [sexual harassment and assault] are the major or only barriers to women's inequality in work."

K. Kelly: Is it more of putting a Band-Aid on the problem instead of trying to proactively get ahead of it, at least with the legal defense fund?

S. Mayeri: I want to be clear to say that organizations, like the National Women's Law Center [which has been involved with the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund] are also doing that broader work. I do not mean to suggest that work is not being done.

K. Kelly: But specifically, the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund?

S. Mayeri: Yes, I think it's important to remember that there are structural forces: for example, racial and gender segregation, the decline of unions, the degree to which immigrant women are in a particularly vulnerable position because of their legal status. There are a lot of constraints and pressures and other background contextual factors that are a large part of what makes harassment and violence a situation that they don't have the power to escape. They are in situations where they are subjected to that kind of treatment, not just because they are women but because they don't have other options or are constrained by their undocumented or otherwise precarious citizenship status.

K. Kelly: Do you think that there could be a better social movement right now that could address these structural issues? This kind of segues into my next question, regarding the 1960s/1970s feminist strategy that resulted in a narrower definition of legal equality because there was a split between advocacies. I guess in fear of having something similar happening today with the 'Me Too' movement, do you think there is a way to focus on sexual harassment and broader structural change to proactively get at it? Or are these two separate problems that you don't need to combine into one social movement?

S. Mayeri: Yeah, there are definitely social movements that are addressing, and have been addressing those structural issues. I think about the domestic workers movement, which has attempted to provide some recourse for people, largely women, who are in extremely vulnerable situations that are often not even in the purview of the law, at all. In fact, they have very little legal or other recourse against all different abuses, including sexual harassment but other types of exploitation as well, including wage theft, hunger, under compensation, and other kinds of physical violence. That social movement comes to mind because there have been some effective coalitions between domestic workers and employers to try to give workers more tools to create some rights and assert them. So, I think it is possible, although it is challenging. That is also a good example of why it is challenging to [build coalitions] because to some degree different groups of women have different material interests and coalition building can be more of a challenge but also more powerful when it happens.

K. Kelly: Does that relate to what you said regarding the 1960s and 1970s feminist movement that overcame different divisions? When you say divisions do you just mean differences in how they view legal equality?

S. Mayeri: Yes, I think so. Some of the divisions in the period leading up to the 1960s had to do with how people defined equality, and equality for whom. There were class divisions and divisions between women who considered themselves to be advocates for elite professional women versus other, often elite women, who thought themselves advocates for working women, and then working women themselves who thought themselves distinct from both of those groups. I was also referring to racial divisions among people we may now call feminists, folks like Pauli Murray played an important role in trying to bridge those gaps.

K. Kelly: How would you define the modern legal feminist strategy? Do you suggest or have any perspectives on what you think is the best way to broaden the definition of legal equality within the feminist community?

S. Mayeri: I think that would be a tough question to answer at any moment in legal history. I think it is particularly hard now because that I'm not sure there is a feminist legal strategy or even a feminist legal community exactly. I don't mean that in a pessimistic way; it is not clear to me that there are one or two organizations spearheading a feminist legal movement in the way they arguably were for a short period of time in the 1970s. Though you could also argue that there was similar diversity of organizations and advocacy then on a smaller scale. One of the things that happens in the 80s and 90s is a kind of professionalization of feminism generally; there are more organizations working on feminist issues, maybe somewhat less coordination – if one ever thinks there was ever coordination – and a trend toward a greater diversity of leadership of those organizations, which is certainly all to the good. With that diversity comes goals that may be in tension with one another, but that is fine and natural and to be expected. One parallel that I find interesting between the earlier period and the present moment is the degree to which coalescing around a common foe can be very helpful to social movements.

K. Kelly: I looked at a lot of your research discussing intersectionality with feminist theory. As Raisa said earlier, a lot of African American women in the 1970s brought cases of sexual equality to the court, and let me know if I misinterpreted this by any means, but I thought

you mentioned the simplified version of feminist equality that came out of the court was more a result of the court simplifying it and less a result of the feminist community not bringing forth an intersectional feminist theory? Is that a correct interpretation, because if so, that was interesting to me as I thought the feminist theory at that time was less focused on intersectionality and that is why people look back at the 1970s and think the feminist strategy didn't value intersectionality as much? Is that correct?

S. Mayeri: Yes, I think that's right.

"I think often the people who are at the intersection of different categories of disadvantage are both in the best position to see the way forward and to take on some of the most difficult questions facing people who are marginalized in various ways."

K. Kelly: How would you advise the best way to approach this issue in the future, where you don't know if the court will ever accept these feminist strategies with intersectionality at its core? Also, do you find any interpersonal ways you can approach feminist strategy with intersectionality at its core?

S. Mayeri: I think, as a scholar, my historical projects have often been to try to uncover the more intersectional roots of what looks like an elite movement. I don't want to downplay the degree to which there were certainly elements of feminist legal advocacy that were exclusionary in those ways. I guess I see the project as less an exculpation of white feminists of that period and more a recognition that there were women of color who played a hugely important role in laying the legal groundwork for their strategies, both as lawyers and advocates and as plaintiffs and ordinary people organizing in the workplace and elsewhere. And I think that is a phenomenon that is still with us today. I think often times the people who are at the intersection of different categories of disadvantage are both in the best position to see the way forward and to take on some of the most difficult questions facing people who are marginalized in various ways.

Unfortunately, that is always a tough position to be in because when you are in that position you are often advocating for more transformational and radical approaches to a problem than people who have greater privilege who don't necessarily see those intersections as easily, or it is not necessarily in their interest to see those intersections as easily. I wish history provided some sort of roadmap to help us overcome that problem. I don't think it really does, but it also reminds us where we can look for those possibilities in the present day as well. To the extent I feel equipped to comment on how people should think about this in their everyday lives, one part may be knowing where to look for ideas and strategies; figuring out how to think about coalitions and being open to approaching all questions from a perspective that takes into account not just one axis of inequality or discrimination or disadvantage but thinks about what various elements may be affecting that experience. I've learned a tremendous amount about this from colleagues who are leading thinkers in this area, such as Professors Regina Austin and Dorothy Roberts, as well as from the less well-known ordinary people whose historical contributions I study.

"Be open to approaching all questions from a perspective that takes into account not just one axis or inequality, discrimination, or disadvantage, but thinks about the various elements that may be affecting that experience."

Carolyn Edgar

Managing Counsel – Technology, Intellectual Property and Social Media at the Bank of New York Mellon Corporation

Carolyn Edgar joined the Bank of New York Mellon Corporation (BNY Mellon) in 2018 as Managing Counsel. At BNY Mellon, Carolyn works on various technology and procurement transactions. Prior to her role as Managing Counsel at BNY Mellon, Carolyn worked as Vice President and Legal Counsel for Estee Lauder Companies. Carolyn led the Estee Lauder legal team in negotiating agreements. Additionally, she advised its board, Chief Information Officer, and executive leadership team on issues of intellectual property, technology, and cybersecurity. Carolyn began her legal career at Kirkland & Ellis LLP and was named to the partnership in 2002.

Carolyn earned her BA from the University of Michigan and her JD from Harvard Law School. Additionally, Carolyn is currently pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the City University of New York City College. Carolyn is not only a published writer on popular culture and socioeconomic issues and sought-after speaker and lecturer but was also one of the lawyers who coined the term 'emotional tax' for women of color. Carolyn is on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Black Bar Association and received its Corporate Counsel of the Year award in 2012, as well as the NOW-NYC's Women of Power and Influence Award.

Interview by Trinny Terrazas, Raisa Masud, Sara Shayanian, Jessica Shieh, and Kimberly Kelly

T. Terrazas: One of the questions I'd like to start off with, especially as I myself am a woman of Hispanic origin, is how you approach a room or a situation in which you want to voice your opinion or concern, but you feel by doing so you would fall into the stereotypical speech pattern of aggression and hostility that often-times is placed on women of color?

C. Edgar: That's a great question and the answer is going to change as you go throughout your career. If you are a first year associate at a major law firm and you're invited to a meeting with a partner and you know your role in that meeting is primarily to observe and to learn more about the transaction, then I think that your answer doesn't have to do with your role as a woman of color in that room but more to do with your role as an associate in that situation. In that situation you should observe, and you should take notes, but you should be aware about how your particular perspective might add to the overall discussion. If you have been invited to participate in the meeting by a partner or associate, then there will be break times, where you can pull aside the partner or associate and share your thoughts.

Fast forward in your career where you're in a more senior position, maybe you're a mid-level or senior associate, and you're the only person of color in a meeting and you are trying to demonstrate to the leadership of your firm your own leadership. Then you can't really take a passive role and you can't really worry that someone will see you as being aggressive.

There's a way of being assertive without being unpleasant about it, but it depends on where you are. I think one of the mistakes we make as women of color is that we are so stymied by the notion that we can't come off as 'the angry black woman' or 'the angry Latina' or 'the ice lady,' whatever the stereotype may be, that we fail to assert ourselves and we fail to demonstrate our leadership and it gets held against us. "Well you're too passive, well you didn't speak up, well you know this other person took over the meeting and was more impressive." You have to read the situation, read the room, and if you're in a position to take advantage of why you were there, then you should. You shouldn't let your personal diverse culture or background stop you from asserting yourself where that's appropriate for the situation.

"You should not let your personal diverse culture or background stop you from asserting yourself where that's appropriate for the situation."

R. Masud: In addition to your role at the Bank of New York Mellon, you held leadership roles at Estee Lauder Companies and a law firm. First, I am curious to know how these places supported you to grow as a lawyer leader? Second, what career advice would you give your younger self?

C. Edgar: I will take the second question first. The career advice I would give my younger self is to not be passive in a situation where passiveness can be read as disinterested, not wanting the promotion, not wanting the leadership position, or not having the leadership skill. There were circumstances along the way in my law firm, in particular, when I tended to sit back and wait for the moment to present itself when I could speak up. That is probably the biggest advice I would give my younger self.

In the organizations I have been fortunate to be a part of, I have been supported in a number of ways. Every organization that appears on my resume has had formal diversity and mentorship programs, and informally I was supported through getting to know people and serving on committees. For example, at one of my organizations, I was the leader of its black employees' affinity network that was a way for me to get to know senior executives in the organization, other associates, and other diverse people in the organization from a broad variety of practice areas. Those are ways I was able to, outside of my particular role in legal, demonstrate that I had leadership abilities.

I was also always interested in other organizations. I am currently on the board of the Metropolitan Black Bar Association, which is another way I have continued to give back to the community and the legal profession and also demonstrate leadership capabilities both within my company and outside of my company. It is a great way to get to know my fellow professionals in New York and outside of New York legal markets. At the junior level, you can seek out bar memberships especially in New York and Philadelphia. There are many opportunities that you can find as a member of the profession even from a very young age. Even if you cannot demonstrate leadership capabilities at a law firm as a junior associate or within the company as a junior lawyer of a large legal team, taking part in other organizations is a great way to get to know people outside of your company to network and to demonstrate you do have those skills to the people who are still within your organization.

“Do not be passive in a situation where passiveness can be read as disinterested, not wanting the promotion, not wanting the leadership position, or not have the leadership skill.”

S. Shayanian: In a 2015 Washington Post article addressing diversity and women in the law, managing partners of top law firms were quoted attributing a lack of women in the law to disproportionate family responsibilities. They noted that mothers, even those working full time, are assumed to be less available and committed to their positions. As a lawyer and a mother who has worked both in a law firm setting and in-house, what advice would you give to women who are navigating and trying to balance both family/motherhood with their work responsibilities and in what ways could firms and businesses do better to reduce the bias against working mothers?

C. Edgar: That’s a great question, and there is so much work still to be done. I think this affects women in a very unfair way. The guys at the firm can leave to go to their son’s football or baseball game and are perceived as such a great dad. However, if women have to go to a parent teacher conference or their child has a doctor’s appointment, they’re not given that same pearls clutch as being such a great mom. I remember especially as a single mother, in particular, never feeling like the sacrifices that I made to make sure things were being done - such as sitting in the doctor’s office still typing up emails, or reading documents from home, or getting on a conference call at five in the morning – were necessarily appreciated at the level that they should’ve.

What can companies and firms do? I think that, and I think this would benefit the entire workplace, it’s not really a woman’s issue or a man’s issue. There are plenty of men who have sole or primary childcare responsibilities. There are all kinds of compositions of families that don’t fit into the one wife, one husband model. There are people who have elderly parents to take care of. I think we have to first expand our notion of family to allow for the broad variety of human relationships we find ourselves in and the life events that happen over the natural course of a person’s lifetime while they are also a working person. You can have people, who as I did, have elderly parents and young children. That is a very tough thing to navigate.

I think by recognizing and expanding what family obligations really look like, then it doesn’t become a women’s issue, but a people issue. It’s a people issue that I think could be solved, for one, by recognizing that a lot of the work we do within the workplace doesn’t have to be done in the workplace. There is a lot you can do from home, there is a lot you can do from outside of the office; getting away from the idea of facetime or the idea that you have to show up at a certain place and demonstrate your loyalty to the firm or the company by physically being present. I think the more we can get away from that notion, the more people will just be able to manage their lives around what’s happening. As long as the works getting done who cares where you are doing it from? That’s probably the biggest thing people can do.

Beyond that there obviously should be appropriate family leave policies and there should be appropriate medical coverage. But I think one of the biggest challenges that still exists is the notion that you have to physically be present in order to demonstrate that you are dedicated and that’s just something that really needs to change.

“By recognizing and expanding what family obligations really look like, [childcare obligations] do not become a women’s issue, but a people issue.”

J. Shieh: You discussed in your keynote address how employees of color have to carry the emotional tax at work and constantly be on guard against discrimination, and you mentioned specifically how minority women employees are often subject to their work being unfairly viewed through a harsher and more critical lens. In your opinion, what are some effective, concrete strategies that minority women can use to alleviate and also overcome this emotional tax and the unfair expectations that are placed upon them against them?

C. Edgar: If I had the diamond answer to that question, I would be a billionaire. I don’t know that there’s one thing that women of color can do, but I think one of the most important things women of color can do in the workplace and that can help you is establishing your support network, both within your organization and outside your organization. That might be a network of women, a network of people who you know have your back, who may not necessarily look like you, or share your gender, or your race, or your background, but people who you know understand and care. Your network of people from outside the organization—one of the things that I think really helped me early on in my career is that I had great mentors, people that I established relationships with from the earlier parts of my summer associate time, who I still call upon, who are outside my ballpark, who I can bounce ideas off of and say, “this thing just happened; am I crazy to think that there’s something off with this?”—and they weren’t biased in favor of the law firm, so they could give me their read on the situation based on their experience, which was really helpful.

I think the other thing you can do in terms of making sure that your work is judged fairly is—there’s a part of it that’s personal. Obviously, it’s important for you to do the best work you absolutely can do, understanding things like there’s no such thing as a first draft when you’re sending it to a partner—it needs to be as polished as you are able to make it before you let anybody else look at it, little tips like that. If you know you are not the best speller, or you are not the best at punctuation, or you can never get “which” and “that” right, or whatever your little quirk may be, have somebody who you trust proofread the important documents before you send it on to either the senior associate or the partner. Proofread, proofread, proofread every email you send. I think one of the problems we have with our technology is it’s easy to get careless about an email, it’s easy to let something go, and forget to go back, and then send out things with typos. While one or two typos are forgiven, if it’s a pattern, then that indicates a level of sloppiness.

Those are things you can personally do, but in terms of what happens when you submit your draft of a contract, and you get criticized for things that are just not your fault, or they’re just really being nitpicky with the drafting, it goes back to what I said about how it depends on where you are in your career. Early on in your career, you have to take some of that, because some of it is just personal style and learning from the different ways different people have to do things, and you can learn a lot from absorbing how different people do different things, but once you’ve established your career and you know what you’re doing and someone’s still nitpicking you, then

I think it's fair to appropriately pushback and challenge them: "well, I'm not sure I agree." You can say that to a senior partner or senior manager as long as it's done respectfully, and you have a real opinion. You know they're looking at it from a certain way, and you can say "no, my understanding of it is XYZ." I think as long as you approach that respectfully, most of the time, your pushback will be taken, and it will just be a professional discussion.

If you have a management situation going on, and you have someone who's incapable of judging your work fairly, then you have to consider what your options really are. Do you have options within that environment to address the problem, or is it a situation that is so bad, that you need to explore your opportunities outside?

There is no real one magic bullet, but I think over the course of what is hopefully a very long career in the law, you develop a sense of yourself and your ability, and you know when you're having a professional disagreement versus when someone is being unfair. You have options, never forget that.

"One of the most important things women of color can do in the workplace is establish a support network, both within the organization and outside of it."

K. Kelly: We met with a few women who said the biggest mistake they witness other women make in their careers is second guessing their capabilities or selling themselves – whether that is focusing on the one mistake they made in an otherwise impressive presentation or not speaking up about something they believed they did not know enough about when that was not the case. I know that I tend to sell myself short in some situations and, while I recognize I do this, I do not know how to practically overcome it. My question for you is first if you agree with this perspective and also how you personally attained confidence in your career?

C. Edgar: I do agree with that assessment -- it was one of the things I alluded to when I said my advice to my younger self was 'don't be too passive.' Part of it comes from, and I'll keep it personal, I did not come into the law with a lot of experience. I did not come from a family of lawyers; I did not come from a position where I had been around people who were in the law, either as judges or lawyers or in any capacity; I was a first-generation lawyer in my family. Therefore, I was really a bit intimidated by the situation. I did have the benefit of working for three years prior to law school, so once I settled in, I realized that it isn't really that different than the meetings I sat in at IBM. I gained confidence that way, so try to correlate it to something else you did.

There was another situation that I was in, where I did have subject matter expertise, which helped me develop a level of comfort to be able to sit there and recognize that I earned my place. If I was in the room, I had a right to be in the room. If I was invited to be in the room, then somebody wanted me to talk. There was a time when I was a fifth or sixth-year associate at my old law firm, and I was on a deal where our client, who was a venture capitalist fund, was looking to buy the professional hair care products of another company. One of the products they were purchasing was hair relaxers, and nobody in that room understood what a relaxer was. I was the only person who had a relaxer, who ever used the product and knew what it was. Finally, I

got tired of all this misinformation going around and I raised my hand and said, “Guys, can we stop to talk about what we are talking about.” In this room of white men, I then became ‘exhibit A’ for what a relaxer was, what it looked like, and what it did to hair. It was a bit embarrassing, but it was also a bit funny. The partner thanked me afterwards for doing that, because it helped them solve a graphing issue that they could not have otherwise solved if someone with knowledge of what the product was didn’t explain it. That was a situation where, it was not the kind of subject matter expertise that I was expecting to bring into a legal negotiation, but it really helped. I think the partner I was working with gained a lot of respect for me because of the fact that I was willing to put myself out there. He recognized that while it may have been a little personally embarrassing, I did have knowledge that was useful for the deal and I leveraged it for the benefit of the Client – and it helped. You never know if little things from your own personal background might come into play and give you that extra boost of confidence.

“You never know when the little things from your own personal background might come into play and give you that extra boost of confidence.”

K. Kelly: You’ve held leadership positions at three different offices at this point. Have there been any internal policies at the companies or firms that you worked at, that you particularly think helped or enabled you to become a woman leader?

C. Edgar: To be perfectly honest, no. I don’t think there were policies that really made a difference. Although, let me put it this way – I don’t think there are policies that directly affected my ability to be promoted to a leadership role. However, I think the policies that existed, existed because there were people who cared, and who made sure those policies were in place because they wanted to ensure the environment, they were creating for the professionals in the organization was diverse and inclusive.

Policies, in and of themselves, will not do anything if you don’t have supportive leaders supporting those policies, and making sure that behind the policies there are people who are going to enforce the policies and make sure that work gets distributed appropriately, you get appropriate leadership roles, and hiring is diverse. I no longer work for Estee Lauder, but I look at that organization and think it is still a great model for what a diverse legal department looks like. The incoming General Counsel is a Black Woman, the CFO is a Black Woman, there are two Black Professionals on the Board of Directors – Mellody Hobson and Dick Parsons. There are at least one or two Asian Women on the Board of Directors. Estee Lauder is an organization that quietly does the work, without necessarily being one of the companies you always see at the top of the ‘best companies to work for’ lists. I appreciate that more than the companies that go around touting their diversity programs, but their numbers are nowhere.

I would rather have action and proactive work to actually make sure diversity is championed than a bunch of policies that give someone a gold star but does not actually result in any change.

“Policies in and of themselves will not do anything if you do not have leaders supporting and enforcing those policies.”

R. Masud: In a 2014 HuffPost article, you wrote that you had “been inspired to do some things as of late that require courage” and you wrote about cutting your hair and what it meant to you. Clearly, you listen to your inner voice, and I am wondering what drew you to write about your personal experiences?

C. Edgar: I think that is what I am going to hopefully leave you with. I am a writer. I completed a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at the City College of New York. I am still practicing law, but I am currently writing a novel. It is important as you go through this journey to remember you are a whole person. You came to law school as a person with a diverse set of beliefs, interests, and friendships. None of that changes just because you joined the legal profession. As a child, you might have liked playing the piano. You can still play the piano, you can still write, and you can still do whatever it is that fuels your passions, your creativity, and makes you feel like a whole human. Do that. Because that’s where you are going to find your relief. Writing has always made me feel complete. I was driven to write about my experiences and my hair because that is what I do. In continuing my passion for writing, I have also found that I take a more creative approach to problem-solving in my practice of law. I think my writing has made me a better lawyer. There are tons of examples in law and business of people who write, who play music, and who dance. I knew a law professor who was also a ballet dancer.

Never forget there is a whole other side of you that deserves to be fed. I think that will make any challenges you come across in the practice of law easier to deal with because that is where you will find your strength.

“It is important to remember you are a whole person. You came to law school as a person with a diverse set of beliefs, interests, and friendships. None of that changes because you joined the legal profession.”

Elizabeth Pollman

Incoming Professor of Law at the University of Penn Law

Professor Pollman taught Corporations at Penn Law in the Fall of 2018, and we have the pleasure of welcoming her to Penn Law as a member of the faculty in 2020. She was previously a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, and before joining academia, she worked in private practice at Latham & Watkins.

Interview by Damini Kunwar

D. Kunwar: Have you had any mentors that have helped you in your professional life?

E. Pollman: I've been lucky to have lots of people support me in my professional life. Mentors and sponsors who have supported and encouraged me. expanding on the question to include "sponsors" because I think they are really important and play a somewhat different role in helping advance a career. Sponsors help open doors, make introductions, advocate and give endorsements.)

The kind of advice that I've found most helpful is about how to make transitions to new things, such as clerking, switching between different practice areas, and transitioning into legal academia. Specifically, I've benefited from mentors sharing information about the sort of things that I should be doing to build credentials and experiences that will help get these opportunities. And then once in a new position or area, I've been naturally curious to learn from people whom I respect about how to do it well and how to navigate the normal professional pressures that can arise such as how to say no to certain work requests when I get too busy or how to know which sorts of things I should be prioritizing.

D. Kunwar: During your professional experiences, have you faced any sexism in the workplace? If so, how did you manage the situation?

E. Pollman: Yes. Sometimes it is hard to know for sure whether a particular dynamic is driven by sexism and at other times I have felt it is relatively clear. I have not experienced any sexism that I have found physically threatening, degrading, or especially pernicious in the moment. The types of sexism I have experienced that come to mind are things like being in the room during an inappropriate or sexist remark or observing a dynamic in which it seems a man might have been more likely to have gotten an opportunity or been encouraged to seek an opportunity (mostly, systemic issues or unconscious bias).

Oftentimes, I have done nothing in response, just continue striving to act professionally and to do excellent work. In some instances, I have made a remark that aims to create awareness without being awkward. In one situation I can recall, after talking it over with a mentor and a couple close friends, I decided to address directly some behavior that I perceived as sexist by talking with the person about the behaviors, explaining how I perceived them, and how I wanted the

person to act differently. I believed the person had generally good intentions, but it was still a difficult conversation and one that I approached with great care. The person ended up thanking me for bringing it to his attention and taking the time to create awareness and make an ally.

Although in some ways I think it has been perhaps more challenging to succeed professionally as a woman, I should note that there have also been a number of instances in which I believe I have benefited from being a woman. With greater attention to gender equality, I have participated in initiatives related to women in law, senior colleagues have invited me to work on a project or co-author, to do a speaking engagement, etc. Again, it is hard to know how gender might factor into this sort of thing, but it seems to me that there are still real challenges and inequities but there have also been great opportunities.

“Working long hours can be tough, but it’s also a big positive—you’re building experience! But keep an eye out to make sure you’re building the set of skills that you want for becoming the kind of lawyer you want to be.”

D. Kunwar: Since our class consists of a lot of women who are entering big law, do you have any specific advice for young female attorneys (especially if a young woman feels that she is being undermined at work due to her gender)?

E. Pollman: I have a few thoughts to offer – these were probably shared with me; I can’t remember who should get credit for these and I don’t know if they’ll be helpful to you.

You’re in charge of your own career advancement. Some firms will have a formal review or training structure, and those can be good, but don’t let that fool you – you need to own your career. Figure out what sorts of skills you should be building as you go along, whether in litigation or transactional work or whatnot, and make sure you’re doing what you can to get those opportunities. Sometimes it’s as small as mentioning to a certain partner that you’d love to work with them on X kind of deal or case, or that you’d really appreciate having an opportunity to try doing Y when the time is right (e.g., getting drafting experience on an important deal document, first chairing a deposition, etc.). Working long hours can be tough, but it’s also a big positive—you’re building experience! But keep an eye out to make sure you’re building the set of skills that you want for becoming the kind of lawyer you want to be.

Every workplace has its own power structure and social dynamic. Over time, try to figure out how your office and firm work, without being gossip-y or overly strategic. Figure out how the business of the law practice works (\$), who does what kind of work for which clients, who is managing partner of various practice areas, which offices are known for what kind of work, etc. It’s also good to get a sense of the law practice landscape more generally in your city of choice – which firms are known for the kind of work you’re interested in, etc.

You'll probably be busy in your first couple of years just figuring out how to do your work, but do your best as you get beyond the early stage to maintain and build your professional network (keeping in touch with former classmates, bar associations or professional organizations, etc.). You might benefit from this over time in unexpected ways—lateral opportunities, client referrals, etc.

Mentors and sponsors can be male or female, junior or senior. I've had valuable professional relationships with all of these combinations – relatively junior male and female colleagues and senior ones too.

It's often helpful to have a good relationship with someone in your own firm who is just a little bit ahead of you professionally and who is successfully doing similar work – that's a person you can call to walk you through how to do something the first time. This can be a huge time saver and help you avoid mistakes. For example, when you're a first year, you could have a third-year friend who gives great mentoring help. Remember they won't know everything either, there are limits and it's always important to be respectful of a busy friend's time.

For bigger picture career guidance and lessons, a more senior mentor is valuable – or a sponsor who looks out for you and gives you opportunities or boosts you within the firm. This doesn't have to be a person formally assigned to you as a mentor in some kind of firm program. It can develop organically by doing great work for someone whom you have a good professional rapport with.

It can also be useful to have a mentor whom you can talk with outside of your firm, not about client matters or the specifics of how to do certain work (be careful about client confidentiality and firm documents!) – but about potential lateral moves or transitions to other practice settings, or difficult work dynamics. Be mindful to act kindly and not overshare...it's a small world.

Developing these relationships takes time and you might not always feel like you have the perfect person to go to with questions or for advice. Just do your best.

“Developing these relationships takes time and you might not always feel like you have the perfect person to go to with questions or for advice. Just do your best.”

D. Kunwar: Have you felt that your experiences working as a woman in academia and a woman in a corporate firm have been different? If so, how?

E. Pollman: At a high level, the good parts and challenges have been quite similar. Above all, I've loved the places I've worked in both practice and academia. I've been very lucky and worked with wonderful people whom I've learned from and enjoyed. And, I've been fortunate to work in places that I feel have high

standards and integrity. Practice and academia have also had some similar challenges—long hours (sometimes, not always), a range of skills to learn and improve upon, the stress of a long to-do list and the feeling that there is always something more to do or a bigger success to achieve.

As far as differences, I'll note at the outset that I don't have kids, but my sense is that having kids can be quite different in a big law firm vs. academic setting and the latter is often said to be considerably more flexible. Speaking from my own experience, some other differences also come to mind—the caveat here is that it's a difficult question and these are just my thoughts in this moment.

It seems to me that in some ways, practicing law and finding success as a corporate lawyer in a big firm was challenging but relatively straightforward. In the office where I spent the most time in practice, I felt appreciated for both my lawyering and people skills. Partners and other supervising attorneys invested in me in various ways and gave great feedback and reviews. I enjoyed helping clients and had good professional relationships. There were only a very small number of female partners in my office, but there were lots of terrific female associates who seemed to be advancing—and I felt relatively confident that I could make partner at my firm or another or find a job in-house that I would enjoy. This is not to say that these things were guaranteed or that there weren't challenges and frustrations, but this was my general perception of my experience and path, and it is what I've since seen my former co-workers do. I also acknowledge that I think there are still real concerns in corporate law practice about women advancing to the highest levels of prestige, the biggest deals and clients, etc.

By contrast, I think succeeding in academia is even less straightforward. In corporate law teaching, there have only been a few generations of women in the field and there are a relatively small number of senior women. (There's a neat article on this history: Margaret Sachs, *Women incorporate Law Teaching: A Tale of Two Generations*, 65 MD. L. REV. 665 (2006)). In law teaching, there are few tenure-track opportunities each year and the pathway typically involves doing a PhD or a teaching or research fellowship. Once in a program, it can be difficult to figure out how to do the type of work that will be valued. Research suggests there is a fair bit of bias in things such as the frequency of female-authored publications being cited, scores and comments in teaching evaluations, etc. More generally, a lot is subjective—what is good scholarship, what is good teaching. I've personally found corporate law teaching to be incredibly fun and fulfilling. Perhaps because there are so many ways to do the work, there is a lot of freedom and flexibility. It also seems there has been a significant growth in the number of women who have succeeded in entering corporate law teaching in the past decade or so.

Marina Feldman

Chief Legal Counsel of the International Finance Corporation

Marina Feldman an Argentine lawyer and Latina Trailblazer in the legal profession. With law degrees from the University of Buenos Aires (1992) and Harvard Law School (LL.M. 1994), Marina has disrupted boundaries and barriers. From accepting a teaching position in Kansas to working in the M&A and Corporate Finance department of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, primarily in the Latin American region, Marina has been a leader throughout her whole legal career. Currently, Marina is the Chief Legal Counsel of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) since October 2017.

Interview by Eduarda Lague, Paola Valderrama Ortiz, and Brendan Holman

“In New York, I would count the number of women in a conference room; now I count the number of nationalities in one meeting, and each person usually represents a different one.”

E. Lague: Your career looks similar to a career I hope to have as well. How did the transition happen from going from being a Big Law associate to working at an international organization? As a woman and Latina, how did you stay true to your culture?

M. Feldman: Honestly, I was very young, and I did not know better. When you are asked to work those grueling hours [at a Big Law Firm] and you are in a conference room forever and pulling all-nighters, we were very proud. When you are 27, you think it's very important to be at that all-nighter. However, people also do not do the tasks I mentioned anymore - we used to print prospectuses for IPOs at printers because this was before the SEC had digital submissions. I remember staying up so late that a partner would arrive and say, “Marina you are wearing the same dress.” And I would start crying! That was what we used to do at this law firm. The truth is that I don't see those years with resentment. I learned so much about resilience and about learning to negotiate, accommodate different views, and it gave me such a wonderful background. One day, I ran into someone and told them my story, and the person said let me call you because I think you will be perfect at this [other] place. I sent him my resume. Then, I arrived at IFC and I think I won't provide much value because IFC back then was mostly a Project Finance institution whereas my background was equity and M&A transaction as well as corporate finance. But by coincidence, IFC started to do products of investment and getting more into investments in Latin America. Therefore, I found my niche. I came into IFC with a world of knowledge.

Going back to how things were different, I was very afraid of interviewing with IFC because by the time they gave me the offer, I was four months pregnant with my first child. I was so afraid going into the interview. I remember thinking with my husband that this is an international organization, and it is not subject to US anti-discrimination laws. I did not think they were going to give me the position. I came to the international organization and spoke with my manager whose also Argentine. I told him “I will accept this position, but I am nervous to tell you that I am four months pregnant.” He looked at me like “What's the big deal? It's not going to change anything.” I could not believe this response! I didn't think I would be here that long. Now, it's been 18 years and I've had 3 kids since. I found my calling at IFC because I had all the background from

the international M&A law firm. Again, that experience was invaluable for me and it helped me in so many respects at my current job.

B. Holman: I want to talk a bit about the organization (IFC) specifically and your role in it. One of the key takeaways I had from my own experience at the IFC in South Africa was a better understanding of the fact that economic development can be used to empower women across the globe. Can you speak more about the connection you see between your role and the organization generally and the realization of gender equity internationally?

M. Feldman: I think every day about my transition from a New York law firm to an organization that has a clear mission centered on eradicating poverty through the involvement of the private sector. Two aspects of this mission particularly inspire me: 1) the development impact of what we do on a daily basis, which eluded me when I was living in New York and working on one big merger after another, and 2) the incredible amount of diversity at the IFC. I walk into an elevator and hear 6 languages, and I know people from all over the globe. In New York, I would count the number of women in a conference room; now I count the number of nationalities in one meeting, and each person usually represents a different one.

As for empowering women, I have a great story. We had a client in Mexico, and we were interested in offering an equity investment. The business was a bank run by women for women, apparently set up for women entrepreneurs. They have a system in which they review each other's loans, and these women are so serious about their business such that they have the best rate of returns and are always current on their payments. You don't see this in every country in which you work, but there is increasing interest, especially in Latin America and the Middle East, in women-owned businesses. I have witnessed this powerful trend firsthand.

On the development side, I have another story. When I returned to the IFC after working at an airline in New York, I landed at the airport, and the driver who picked me up said, "Señora, I want to thank you because my house was built with a loan from IFC." He showed me a photo of a row of houses atop a hill, all of which were built with this particular loan. These moments move me; you see firsthand the impact of your efforts.

E. Lague: You have provided us a wealth of knowledge. Something else we discussed in class is the obstacles of finding mentors and sponsors as women lawyers. How did you find mentors, as a Latina woman, at the IFC or your previous law firm?

M. Feldman: It's hard, but there was a partner at Skadden that was Argentine. But he did not do any projects work, he only did arbitration. But he introduced me to other people. Sometimes there's a commonality that brings people together -- whether it is nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc. I was very lucky. I was always invited to very different settings where people wanted to teach you or help you. Don't be shy -- you have to seek those out. I believe a lot in mentorship.

I am going to tell you a story. Apparently over the years, I have mentored people without me knowing that I have mentored those people! I get calls from people that are at different points in their career, whether it is at law firms or international organizations, and they say to me things like “you told me this one day and I remembered that for life.” I didn’t think I was that important in this person’s life! But I remember that same feeling from mentors that I did have in which one thing they did say was so important. You teach by example. When you work together with someone, and you want to learn, that person immediately knows you want to learn. I always say, never pass an opportunity for mentorship either because you are receiving it or in the future because you are giving it, even if you are not realizing that you are doing it.

“I still think that law firms have changed, but a lot of the managing partners at those law firms who make those decisions are still men.”

P. Valderrama: I wanted to ask you, one of our readings was a study from McKinsey, *Women in the Workplace 2017*, and they identified that while most law firms have the right policies to improve gender diversity like offering flexible-work programs, many attorneys still fear that participating in these programs will actually damage their careers and it would not look “good” maybe if they don’t have enough billable hours and things like that. So, in your experience, did you see that? Maybe did you think about it sometimes? And, how do you think that this kind of programs can actually be culturally acceptable in the law firms?

M. Feldman: Well, that’s an excellent question. I just want to say, also on the side, that Colombia of all places is such an exception on many of the things that I have been saying because is the place that I have found the most women in business and the most respect, and I am very impressed with the business environment in your country. So, I don’t want to generalize but it has been a very positive experience. I work a lot in Colombia.

The other thing that I wanted to say is that I am told law firms have changed since the years I was there and they have become more adaptable, and flexible, and letting parents in general take paternity leave or working from home, and this is something that was not available before. I think there is still this presumption because women tend to have obligations in the house, and this is probably very archaic, but it is still a paradigm that people think. What I realize is that we, as women, and for example I always wanted to show that I could be always available; so, I don’t know if it is good or bad, but my clients know where to find me all the time, and sometimes they text me, they WhatsApp me, they find me. And I have the sense that men in general are not that available because sometimes they don’t need to prove anything, because either they are in the office or they are somewhere else. So, I am not giving you an answer of how law firms can improve, but I think the more leaders in those law firms are women, they are going to be able to change those manners. I still think that law firms have changed, but a lot of the managing partners at those law firms who make those decisions are still men. Decisions and policies. So, I think that’s what we should probably look at; but again, it is a constant tension I cannot say that is not there.

Sheena Badani

Sheena Badani is the Senior Director of Marketing at Gong.io in San Francisco, CA. Prior to joining Gong.io, Sheena Badani was VP of Marketing and Head of Commercial Operations at Element Analytics. Previously she was Director of Business Development at MongoDB. She has experience working in many other companies and industries, including Zynga, Groupon, LinkedIn, and Bain & Company. Sheena received her Master's in Business Administration from Harvard Business School and her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Interview by Ravina Gogna

“When new people enter a company, the culture of that company evolves, and you as a human are allowing that cultural evolution to take place. When you are authentic, you are enabling the company to evolve in a more positive way.”

R. Gogna: This year in SALSA (South Asian Law Students Association), we are trying to address how to bridge the gap between the culture of how we were raised at home and the culture of the legal community we are entering. Do you have any advice or life experiences that you would be willing to share with our community?

S. Badani: Initially, when you first enter the workplace, you feel that you have to mold into and become the culture of where you're going to work, and that you cannot be yourself. Over time, I realized when you just be your true self, it pays off in many ways. First, and most importantly, it is more natural, authentic, and healthy to be you. This authenticity leads you to build stronger bonds with people. Also, there is not just one culture across all businesses, firms, and companies. There are so many places of work, and they are always evolving. When new people enter a company, the culture of that company evolves, and you as a human are allowing that cultural evolution to take place. When you are authentic, you are enabling the company to evolve in a more positive way.

R. Gogna: This course was designed as an opportunity to learn from female trailblazers. Can you please describe to us some of the barriers prevent women's advancement into leadership positions and if you have you encountered or observed any of these barriers yourself, how did you deal with them?

S. Badani: I have worked in many male heavy companies and industries, even within the technology industry. The software, industrial analytics, and database analytics companies are especially male dominated. Some of the biggest barriers I have encountered are other people's perception of my knowledge as a woman. For some people, when they see a woman working in a leadership role in some of these industries, they either don't believe that we know what we're talking about or they believe that someone else has better industry knowledge. For example, I am required to travel a lot for work with my current role and with many of my

previous roles. Often times, I'll need to attend a convention and represent my company at a booth. Once I was at a booth, and someone came up to me and asked if another employee was around to answer his question. I asked him what his question was and told him that I could do my best to answer his question. In that moment, I could have blown up, but I didn't. I stayed calm, and I knew the answer to his question. It is important to feel confident and to understand that you belong. Unfortunately, you are always going to come across ignorant people, so do your best to maintain your composure.

Also, there are hidden barriers in the advancement of a woman's career that she might not even know about. For example, you might continuously get good feedback, have positive conversations with your boss, and overall be good at what you do. However, that progress might not be enough. You could be overlooked for promotions or special assignments, or maybe a male counterpart is getting more shares in the company compared to you.

R. Gogna: I really admire your amazing ability to balance being a professional female leader, raising three children under the age of seven, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. How have you been able to do it all?

S. Badani: For me, I have tried to go to family-friendly companies, where the boss has kids. This is important because they understand that family is important, and you have a life outside of work. I am also very clear up front that I have to leave work at a certain time, I have to relieve the nanny, and I have to spend time with my kids and put them to bed. I can log back in for work after that, but I need to have that block of time for myself. It is important to me that when I am at work, I am fully present at work, and when I home with family, I am able to give them that same undivided attention.

It's also important to work in a family-friendly company because there are many surprises about motherhood that I did not expect. For example, I might need to leave work briefly to take my kid to the doctor, or I might need to work from home to stay with the baby because the nanny is sick. I've also had days where I can leave at lunch to see a parade or show at the kids' school. It is also increasingly hard to work on the weekend with three kids at home, so it has been great to have an accommodating culture at work. Ultimately, I have had to prioritize what is important to me.

R. Gogna: I reflected on my own experiences with leadership in school both as a student and years later, as a teacher. In middle and high school, we were presented with many leadership opportunities, as club leaders, student government positions, and honor roll students. Without fail, the majority of leadership roles were held by young women and girls. However, as soon as these young women (people my age and older) reach adulthood and enter the workforce, the percentage of women in leadership roles drops significantly. What do you think causes this drop off? And what can we as leaders in this course do as we embark on our careers to remain leaders and stay strong?

R. Badani: For some women, their place of work unfortunately does not allow them to balance motherhood with work. As I mentioned before, I try to find companies that are family friendly. With that being said, I am having to do that work on my own and advocate for my own needs as a mother. It isn't something that is just assumed, that I can have the flexibility to be a mother and also be a leader in the workplace. There is a lot of work to be done in that area, but it is nice to know that more and more companies are allowing flexibility like working from home or adjusted hours in order to accommodate everyone's busy lives.

Another part of it is familiarity and comfort. When you think about school leadership committees and roles, the young women and girls generally are more comfortable in that setting and surrounded by friends and caring teachers. They are able to raise their hand to volunteer and to position themselves to be leaders. However, when you get into the workforce, there is no more familiarity. The people around you at work might be intimidating because they are older and more experienced. Also, there's no more volunteering to be a leader or to get promoted. Often times you have to be picked and there are many factors that go into how someone is picked. I do notice that at work when we have volunteering events and committees, the majority of people involved are women.

R. Gogna: Could you please speak to how your personal values are intertwined with your own professional philosophy? How does this influence the decisions you make in your role?

S. Badani: I definitely bring my personal values into the company I work for and into the position that I have. Right now, I work in marketing, and we constantly go to trade shows. When I attended the shows, I always looked around and noticed how people would just bring junk as giveaways to these events. The trash cans would be filled with useless trinkets, and I couldn't help but think how it all was such a waste. Since I was raised to care about the environment and what we're putting into the landfill, I had an idea and decided to make a change. Instead of giving away junk, we told our visitors at the booth that if they gave us their information, we would make a five-dollar donation to one of the four charities we had chosen. It was a win-win solution. Not only were we able to reduce waste and consumption, but we were also able to make a positive contribution to the community. It actually had a really positive impact for the company because people left our booth with a very positive memory of that experience and of our company as a whole.

R. Gogna: What has been your experience with mentorship?

S. Badani: It is extremely important to find mentors and build relationships with people you meet along the way. These people can be male or female; they can be much older than you or even your same age. It is important to learn both from anybody who has experiences that are different from your own, and people that you aspire to be one day. It can feel overwhelming to maintain relationships with some people, but all it takes is an occasional email update, or even a coffee once a year. You can always learn from everybody around you, and you never know where a relationship may take you.

Also, you can do the opposite, and everyone in your class can be mentors right now too. You could mentor people in high school or college, people applying to law school right now, and people that are in the first year of law school right now. That can go far in your career, and you never know how you will grow when you are a mentor for other people.

R. Gogna: Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I am very proud of all of your accomplishments so far, and I am lucky to call you my sister. You are a mother of three beautiful, children, a dominant woman of color in the Bay Area, and you are a trailblazer.

Hannah Gordon

San Francisco 49ers

Chief Administrative Officer & General Counsel

Hannah Gordon is the Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel of the San Francisco 49ers. Gordon joined the 49ers in 2011. In her current role, Ms. Gordon oversees Legal, Public Affairs and Strategic Communications, Risk Management, Community Relations, the 49ers Foundation, Fan Engagement, and the 49ers Museum. Gordon advises on all legal issues involving both the football team and Levi's Stadium. She is the Secretary of the Bay Area Host Committee and has been involved with events such as Super Bowl 50, WrestleMania31, Beyoncé's Formation World Tour, the Copa America Centenario, and the 2019 College Football Playoff National Championship. In 2019, Ms. Gordon was named to the Silicon Valley Business Journal's 100 Women of Influence. In 2017, she received the Silicon Valley Business Journal and San Francisco Business Times' Corporate Counsel Diversity Champion of the Year Award for the work she did along with 49ers ownership on restructuring the 49ers Denise DeBartolo York Fellowship and implementing a diverse-slate interviewing policy, making the 49ers the first team in the NFL to commit to interviewing at least one woman and at least one person of color for every business opening. In 2015, Ms. Gordon was named to the Legal 500's GC Powerlist U.S. Rising Stars. Ms. Gordon also serves on the Advisory Board of San Jose State's Institute for the Study of Sport, Society, and Social Change and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group Foundation Board.

Ms. Gordon holds a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles and a J.D. from Stanford University, where she has served as a Lecturer in Law.

A Summary of a Conversation with Hannah Gordon

By Jessie Sarkis

J. Sarkis: Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I am so grateful. To begin, what made you want to pursue a career path in the sports industry? Was working for an NFL team a long-held dream or one that arose later in life?

While Ms. Gordon is now a passionate sports fan, she didn't grow up watching or playing sports. In fact, she was a dancer with a childhood dream of becoming the Editor and Chief of Vogue Magazine. It was not until Ms. Gordon began her undergraduate studies at UCLA that she started watching sports regularly.

Ms. Gordon's interest in pursuing a career in the sports industry was piqued while watching Hannah Storm host the halftime show during a L.A. Laker playoff game in 2000: "She was so intelligent and funny. I loved that she was the conductor of this witty repartee around this game." It seemed like a great job. Ms. Gordon began to research sports journalism and soon joined the Daily Bruin, UCLA's student newspaper. During her sophomore year, Ms. Gordon covered women's tennis. Her junior year, she became the first woman to write for the "Football Beat," which had a daily circulation of 50,000!

The two years that Ms. Gordon spent covering the UCLA football team “solidified for me that I wanted to work in sports.” As a sociology major, she enjoyed the “organizational behavior” aspect of sports and it became almost a “second area of study.” She explained, “I loved studying the game, learning the game, and the people.” As a junior, Ms. Gordon interned in public relations at the Oakland Raiders and as a senior, she interned in sports television at Fox Sports West.

While she was confident that sports was the correct career field, at the time Ms. Gordon was undecided as to whether she wanted to specialize in sports media or public relations because in the early 2000s, with the expansion of the Internet, it was uncertain what media would look like in the future. She decided to test out both fields. First, Ms. Gordon worked as an intern at the NFL Players Association writing website content during the 2003 football season, during which time she doubled the NFLPA’s online engagement. Then, after the internship ended, she accepted a full-time position at the University of California, Berkeley where she worked in media relations for football, track, and swimming.

While “bouncing” between positions in media and PR, Ms. Gordon started to consider pursuing a graduate degree. She thought a law degree, in particular, would provide her with the background and tools necessary to succeed in the sports field. She recalled, “I had only recently graduated from college myself, but I felt like I had something to add to that industry.” She enrolled in Stanford Law School. Fun fact: she told UC Berkeley that she was leaving to go to law school the same day that Aaron Rodgers, the then Cal-quarterback, declared early for the NFL Draft.

“You need to know who is going to stand on the table when they decide to let every corporate associate go and say, “No, I need this person.”

J. Sarkis: How did you maximize your time in law school to prepare for a post-graduation career in sports law?

At the time, Ms. Gordon was interested in becoming a sports agent. She used the 6 months before law school to work at Octagon, a global sports and entertainment agency, doing PR for their rookie class of clients. She had the opportunity to learn from the company’s agents and work in client services. However, she was disappointed to learn that much of the job centered around recruiting clients rather than negotiating player contracts. She decided that she would no longer pursue a career in sports agency following law school.

Once she arrived at Stanford, Ms. Gordon was focused on determining how she would use her law degree in sports after she graduated. Her new goal was to become the general counsel of an NFL team. Her 1L summer she served as a law clerk for the Oakland Raiders, where she had previously worked in PR. “It was really nice to go back in a different role. Amy Trask [former CEO of the Oakland Raiders] is still a mentor to this day.” During her 2L summer, Ms. Gordon worked for the law firm Akin Gump in their labor and employment practice – of whom the NFL was a client. “I went there to work for Dan Nash who I have the upmost respect for.” However, at the end of the summer, she was nervous about limiting her focus to labor and employment.

In her research, she found that most general counsels of professional sports teams previously worked in corporate or, less frequently, litigation – but very rarely in labor and employment. Even though she “loved Dan Nash and Akin Gump,” she chose to take an offer at Latham and Watkins in their San Francisco office. Latham offered an unassigned associate system during an associate’s first two years. Through this system, Ms. Gordon had the opportunity to gain experience in practice areas “across the board.” Unfortunately, she was laid off in 2009, along with 20% of her fellow associates, following the 2008 Financial Crisis.

J. Sarkis: That must have been very frightening. How did you navigate such uncertain times while also continuing to focus on pursuing a career in sports law?

“It had some really good lessons,” Ms. Gordon said. She often tells young lawyers interested in working for a firm that “the world of business is made up of people.” At a law firm without an assigned system, associates don’t necessarily have a “boss,” and therefore, a senior person committed to that associate’s job security. “You need to know who is going to stand on the table when they decide to let every corporate associate go and say, ‘No, I need this person.’” Because Ms. Gordon had not spent her 2L summer at Latham, she had not yet developed deep connections with senior people at the firm. Thus, she had little protection against the firm-wide layoffs of corporate associates in 2009. She would not work for another 6 months. Reflecting upon that experience, she remarked, “it was a business lesson to be learned. Living through challenges and adversity is so important.”

While looking to return to practice, Ms. Gordon still aimed to find a position in an area of law she was passionate about. Dan Nash, her former boss, “being the incredible, generous mentor that he is,” offered her a position at Akin Gump – but she turned it down. She learned during her time at Latham that working for a firm was “a great life for someone, but not for me.” She wanted to find the right fit, “so I waited till I found the right job.”

Later that year, Ms. Gordon accepted the position of Manager of Labor Operations for the National Football League’s Management Council, “the labor arm of the NFL’s legal department.” There, she dealt with player contracts and salary cap issues. She arrived at the NFL at an especially interesting time. The NFL’s prior Collective Bargaining Agreement expired in the spring of 2011, leading to a player lock-out that spring and summer. During the previous two years of CBA negotiations that began when she first arrived in 2009, Ms. Gordon had the “privilege” of being the most junior person on the NFL’s team, through which she gained “tremendous exposure” and experience that she could not have acquired as an associate at a law firm. “I was dealing directly with the most senior partners at the law firms that we worked with and working with the most senior executives at the NFL.” She attributes much of her legal education to the NFL’s “thoughtful and meticulous” attorneys from whom “I learned so much from in my time there.”

“I reminded myself that I had never met all of the qualifications of any job that I had previously worked in.”

J. Sarkis: Your former position at the NFL sounds both incredibly challenging and exciting. How did you end up moving to the San Francisco 49ers organization?

Ms. Gordon recalled that during the 2011 player lockout, Paraag Marathe, President of 49ers Enterprises and Executive Vice President of Football Operations, called her and asked, “is your door closed?” She joked that her first thought was that the 49ers had broken a lockout rule. To her surprise, Mr. Marathe asked if she would be interested in interviewing for a new position of Director of Legal Affairs of the San Francisco 49ers. “I said ‘Yes, of course.’” As a Bay Area-native excited to return home who had been striving to eventually work for an NFL team, this seemed like the perfect opportunity. While she was at the NFL, Ms. Gordon had seen a number of people in her position go on to teams and she hoped such an opportunity would arise for her as well. Looking back on the interview process she remarked that while she did not meet all of the qualifications or experiences the 49ers were looking for, “I reminded myself that I had never met all of the qualifications of any job that I had previously worked in (other than being a first year associate at a law firm). And I got the position by some blessing.” She has now been with the 49ers for over eight years, this fall marking her ninth season with the team.

J. Sarkis: How did you advance from Director of Legal Affairs to become the 49ers’ Chief Administrative Officer & General Counsel?

Ms. Gordon urged that, “when you go to a new workplace, you want to be clear about what the opportunities for advancement look like.” She expressed that she was fortunate that the 49ers already had a clear path for her – the Executive Vice President, the CFO, and Paraag Marathe (EVP of Football Operations) had hired her with the intent that she become the team’s General Counsel within 5 years. “I was incredibly fortunate in my career to be at the right place at the right time.”

When she first started, Ms. Gordon mainly focused on the 49ers’ day-to-day legal affairs. However, her role quickly evolved as the team’s plans to build a new stadium gained momentum. When she arrived, the City of Santa Clara had just passed the stadium ballot initiative, allowing the project to go forward. Ms. Gordon ultimately became heavily involved in the legal work associated with the new Levi’s Stadium. In particular, she worked on the Stadium’s seat license contract, the suite license agreement, the naming rights contract, and the Stadium’s first sponsorship agreement. She recalled, “It was the most intense, but wonderful, learning experience.”

As she progressed towards becoming the 49ers’ General Counsel, Ms. Gordon was asked to take on some additional responsibilities. The team’s CFO asked her to lead the team’s Public Affairs practice after seeing her work with a number of elected officials throughout the Stadium negotiations. Ms. Gordon expanded the department into what is now the team’s External Affairs and Strategic Communications Department. A few years later, she led the effort to create a risk management division by hiring the team’s first-ever risk manager. Three years ago, Ms. Gordon also took over all of the 49ers’ community-facing work, including all philanthropic efforts and those involving community relations, the team’s museum, and fan engagement. She explained, “As a sports team, you are a public asset that is different from any other kind of business. Those

relationships with the community – whether it’s through the nonprofits we support or through our youth football programming – are very important.”

“When you go to a new workplace, you want to be clear about what the opportunities for advancement look like.”

J. Sarkis: Were you involved in the preparations for Superbowl 50, which was held at Levi’s Stadium in 2016?

Ms. Gordon was “deeply involved” in the lead up to Superbowl 50. She explained that hosting a Superbowl requires significant coordination with both the home city’s Host Committee and the NFL. She highlighted that the 49ers provided a number of marketing activations in San Francisco, in addition to having game played at Levi’s Stadium. Upon reflection, the organization received immensely positive feedback, concluding “it was totally worth it and really fun!”

J. Sarkis: How is social media transforming how the 49ers engage with fans? Also, to what extent, if any, are the 49ers using social media to connect with a younger fanbase?

Ms. Gordon emphasized that social media has become a preeminent marketing tool and avenue to connect with fans. She explained that “fan engagement” encompasses “all of our platforms that engage specific demographics of fans,” including women, youth, and the LGBTQ+ community. In fact, this year the 49ers became the first team to launch a platform specifically geared towards LGBTQ+ fans and allies.

Ms. Gordon noted that the 49ers have a “very strong social presence” across multiple platforms – including Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat (which, she added, is especially fitting for a team based in Silicon Valley). The 49ers seek to ensure that their players, in particular, are present in their digital media. She explained that as the players build and expand their own personal brands, “we, as the team, look to maximize that cross-over and to provide the players with quality content.” As content production is both time consuming and expensive, it is mutually beneficial for both the team and the players to have the opportunity to share high quality content.

Ms. Gordon highlighted the 49ers’ extensive charitable work is the team’s main avenue to connect with youth in the local community. Through its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) program, the team brings 60,000 students, teachers, and parents each year into Levi’s Stadium for a field trip program which connects STEAM concepts with football. In addition, the 49ers are the only NFL team that runs its own flag football league – 49ers Prep Flag Football. 49ers PREP partners with community-based organizations including Police Activities Leagues (PALs) and Boys & Girls Clubs to provide a free co-ed youth flag football programs and first-class youth sports opportunities to children in the Bay Area, ages seven through 14. 49ers PREP provides all of the necessary equipment and structure to the partner organizations. “It’s really about developing both physical skills and then learning character building lessons along the way.”

J. Sarkis: Like you, I am passionate about the game of football. However, in my experience, I have found that many women – especially, college-educated women – don’t understand the most fundamental concepts of the game because they didn’t watch it growing up. How are the 49ers seeking to connect with demographics that are underrepresented in terms of viewership?

Ms. Gordon affirmed that “there must be multiple approaches” to expand outreach to new demographics. In terms of female viewership, she noted that almost 50% of NFL fans and 50% of 49ers fans are women. The 49ers even have a women’s fan club – Women of the Niners. However, she noted that Women of the Niners generally attracts the team’s “most avid fans,” that already knowledgeable about football. For instance, the attendees of the 49ers’ Women’s Football Clinic “want to get deep into the X’s and O’s and are asking our scouts really difficult questions.” However, Ms. Gordon also stressed that it is equally important to connect with women that did not grow up watching the game and other niche demographics. Ms. Gordon herself did not watch football in her home growing up and “had to learn the game later.” She noted that because football can appear particularly complex, in terms of downs and yards, it can be more difficult for spectators to learn. She continued that expanding outreach efforts, including educational initiatives, to get new untapped fans excited about the game remains an important goal for the 49ers and the League, generally.

Aria Finger

Aria Finger is the CEO of DoSomething.org, the largest non-profit tech organization for young people and social change, as well as President of DoSomething Strategic, a social impact consultancy agency that helps organizations navigate the nexus of youth, technology, and social change. Since joining DoSomething.org in 2005 as an entry-level associate, Aria has dedicated her career to equipping young people with the tools to get involved and take action in support of causes that they care about within their communities. While DoSomething.org is an online platform, Aria and her team have successfully mobilized millions of young adults in every U.S. area code, and in over 131 countries to take direct action pertaining to causes such as mental health and bullying, LGBTQ+ initiatives, and gun violence prevention programs. Aria earned her degree from Washington University in St. Louis in economics and political science and completed the Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business. In addition to her work at DoSomething.org, Aria also taught the Business of Non-Profit Management as an adjunct professor at New York University.

Interview by Sarah Heberlig

“My philosophy on leadership is that everyone should be a different leader—everyone should be the best version of who they are as individuals. Everyone is going to be a different leader because everyone should focus on their own strengths.”

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much, and I am so excited to speak with you and hear more about your narrative for our database. Our class is focused on reconceptualizing leadership for women and reimagining the workplace, whether that is at an academic or corporate level, or in public life. I would love to speak with you about your personal narrative and leadership style, as well as the very pertinent insights that you have regarding young adults—giving them the space and platform to make a productive impact.

So, to get started. You are genuinely a trailblazer and are living the dream that many young workers, and young women specifically, aspire to. You have literally trailblazed from an entry-level associate to the CEO of a not-for-profit organization. I wonder if you might share more about a mantra, perspective, or a guiding principle that you adhere to, or that has propelled you forward in these pursuits?

A. Finger: Definitely no mantra. I definitely would not say that I had a guiding principle, so I have not thought about it in that way. I would say two things: one is that I try to prioritize happiness very highly. Not everyone in the world is in such a privileged position that they get to have happiness as one of their things, and I do. I am enormously lucky. So, I say that I prioritize happiness and make sure that I am happy as much as possible. I am lucky that I am, and always have been, a genuinely happy person. That was always very important to me. The second thing is that I got pretty lucky. I had a boss that prioritized me, recognized me, believed in me, and gave me all of the opportunities that I needed to get to where I am. So, the guiding principle is to find people who believe in you because that is very important.

S. Heberlig: I love that you shared that, thank you. In our course, so many women have highlighted the same thing—find mentors and more importantly, sponsorship. The fact that you have isolated that you found a boss that believed in you really resonated with me. Do you feel that any of the investment that you received had to do with your boss's gender? If your boss was a male or female investing in your development? Or, was it just a very open and supportive working culture, combined with a boss who had a specific supportive personality or interest in contributing to your development?

A. Finger: I do not know. I have never had a male boss, so I could not tell you from that regard. I will say this though, Nancy [Referring to Nancy Lublin, CEO and Founder of Crisis Text Line] and I both have some characteristics that some people would cite as stereotypically “male” such as our outspokenness, our bluntness, etc. I do not know how, or if that plays into anything. Obviously, when people look at us, they see us as women, and they may treat us differently as women because discrimination exists.

S. Heberlig: Going off those traits, do you have a philosophy of leadership? Would you say that those usually male-characterized traits have shaped your philosophy of leadership, or informed what you view as your style of effective leadership?

A. Finger: No, not necessarily. That is who I am as a person. That is my personality. My philosophy on leadership is that it is okay that everyone is a different type of leader. There is no one model —everyone should be the best version of who they are as individuals. Everyone is going to be a different leader because everyone should focus on their own strengths. Minimize your own weaknesses and play up your strengths. I am not saying that you cannot improve, you can. Yet, year after year, I get my review and my strengths are the same and my weaknesses are the same. So, focus on your strengths and put yourself in a position where your strengths are incredibly valued. Focus on your strengths is one of my leadership tenets. The other is that no one gives or gets enough feedback. We probably give and get only 1% of the feedback that we should be giving and getting. I am no expert at it, but I try to create a culture where feedback is encouraged, expected, wanted and given. I think that is very critical to success.

“I had a boss that prioritized me, recognized me, believed in me, and gave me all of the opportunities that I needed to get to where I am. So, the guiding principle is to find people who believe in you because that is very important.”

S. Heberlig: Thank you. I have a question about your experience in the not-for-profit space. There is a misnomer that the not-for-profit space is predominantly dominated by women. I think I read a statistic that 75% of the space is female identifying. That said, like other industries, it faces the same drop-off rate when you look at women at the helm of not-for-profits and in senior leadership roles. Can you share about any barriers you have faced being a very prominent leader in the not-for-profit space?

A. Finger: This is an aside, but I would not use the word drop-off because that seems to suggest that women drop out, and for the most part, I do not think they do. I think that they are not groomed or positioned or given the opportunities they need. Back to your question, I do not think that I personally have faced any barriers in the non-profit space. I actually think that I have faced stuff in the for-profit space. Examples like people assuming, “You do not understand finance,” or “Oh that is really kind of nice that you are working for a non-profit.” I think that me being a woman running a non-profit really fits into everyone’s stereotype. If you are a man running a non-profit, you can counter that narrative. The narrative becomes, “You are so smart and so ambitious, yet you are giving back. You could do a million other things, but you chose to give back.” I do think that discrimination occurs in the non-profit space, I just have not faced it as much, but I have found that I have faced it more in the for-profit space.

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much for sharing that very important distinction on correcting against using the term, “drop-off.” The term drop-off is such a negative connotation that puts the onus on women, when in fact, they might not be given the appropriate opportunities to opt in. Something that we have discussed in our class has been Sheryl Sandberg’s lean in concept. We have highlighted that the reality is that not every woman can lean in without repercussions—this concept is really only for a select few women. So, I appreciate that you have pointed out this distinction.

Regarding Sheryl Sandberg, something from our course that is very interesting is that a lot of the leaders when asked what their number one piece of advice is—and they have so much expertise in their respective fields, are all feminists, and like you, are accomplished and trailblazing CEOs and Presidents of organizations. Yet, their crucial piece of advice is to “pick the right partner.” I am curious what your thoughts are on that? Do you find that to be an accurate representation?

A. Finger: I couldn’t agree more. Sheryl, and everyone else, is one-hundred-percent right. If you are not married and do not have kids, you just cannot understand. Having the right partner is literally the most critical thing you can do—and doubly so for women. Men are not expected to do the things that women need to do to get ahead. I have these discussions with my husband all the time. If you do not have a partner who is willing to do the work, you cannot travel, go places early, or stay places late. It sounds antifeminist, but I do not think that it is. It is just real. Every woman that I know who is in a senior, super powerful position, has either a stay-at-home husband, or a husband who is willing to look after the kids.

S. Heberlig: So, when you, Sheryl, and so many of the women leaders say, “pick the right partner,” what does that even mean? Is it just related to equally sharing labor?

A. Finger: Part of it, yes. Shared labor and a willingness to let you shine. A willingness to let you be the Rockstar in the relationship. Some men are not okay with that. Taking care of the kids and taking time off. Doing the doctor’s appointments. Women doing more mental labor is

so real. So real. No matter what, you are at a disadvantage, but at least you can have a husband who is willing to step in and do what he needs to do. He cannot do half. He needs to do more if you are a high-powered leader. Our world is not set up for two high powered leaders, or you would never see your kids. I think it is critical, and I think that she is right.

“This is an aside, but I would not use the word drop-off because that seems to suggest that women drop out, and for the most part, I do not think they do. I think that they are not groomed or positioned or given the opportunities they need.”

S. Heberlig: Speaking of children, we have spoken to many women who are both mothers and leaders. Something that they have conveyed has been the idea of imparting a “legacy” onto the next generation. Thus far, this theme has come up unprompted—this is the first time that I am directly asking about it. You are in such a unique position because I know that you are both a mother, and you also directly engage with over 5 Million young people, the next generation of change agents. I am curious what you see to be an important message, or the legacy, to convey to the next generation?

A. Finger: Again, it is not something that I think about. I most likely would not have brought that up. I want my kids to be good kids. Something that I see that saddens me, and I do not think that it is unique to this generation, but I work with this generation—I see this insane imposter-syndrome really debilitating people. That makes me really sad. I do not experience imposter syndrome in quite the same way, so I cannot relate as well as I should, and I know that saying that is not helpful because it makes people feel worse.

People experiencing imposter syndrome is really unfortunate because I’m sure they’re doing great work and that they are much more capable than they think! One piece of this, and by no means all, is that for some reason in this society that we have created, people think that rich people are smart or smarter than them at least. I have encountered enough rich people to know that some are not so smart. I am not scared of them, and I do not respect them more than anyone else because of their status. I respect them because I respect people. I think giving people confidence is important. Confidence is critical, and it is a shame that many people do not have it, especially if it limits them from experiencing their full potential.

S. Heberlig: How do we invest or operationalize giving people confidence? Do you think that this is a policy question, like education reform? Or do we accomplish this in a more day- to-day fashion through direct and on-the-ground interactions with others?

A. Finger: I doubt it. I do not know what the government can do as far as policy is concerned. I do not have the faintest idea. One thing that do think is important, and that perhaps can factor in here, is people do not place enough emphasis on luck. No matter what, no matter how rich or poor you are—even if you are the poorest person in the world, but you have worked hard to get to Harvard, you have experienced some amount of luck. The world is luck. I think that people think that somehow saying luck devalues your hard work, but we need to all accept that so much of this is luck. That is one of the reasons why we should treat everyone well. If you know that it is luck, then you will do unto others as you want them to do unto you.

“Shared labor and a willingness to let you shine. A willingness to let you be the Rockstar in the relationship. Some men are not okay with that.”

S. Heberlig: Thank you. This is great. We get to highlight certain quotes and thoughts in these interviews, and I have a feeling that much of what you have shared is worth spotlighting. Thank you so much.

I would like to shift to DoSomething.org. Please correct me if I get something wrong. DoSomething.org is such an intersectional organization. It not only celebrates the individual identities of diverse staff members and community members, but also actively advocates for a range of different causes pertaining to discrimination, LGBTQ+ rights, immigration issues, gun safety, and bullying. That said, I have noticed that there are not too many campaigns structured solely around female empowerment, or just pertaining to women’s rights. Is this a fair statement?

A. Finger: There are no fewer campaigns on women’s rights than there are on any other cause that has the same level of interest for young people. Statistically, it does not under index. I can think of three campaigns in my mind that focus on women’s rights, but it is not a huge focus area in the same way that gun violence prevention is, or bullying and mental health often are. So, no, I would not correct you on that.

S. Heberlig: This is very helpful and leads into my next question because I know DoSomething.org is at the forefront of addressing societal issues that are most pertinent to young adults—you listen to what young adults want. Do you see a trend of young adults prioritizing other issues? Or, viewing such issues as intersectional and compounding, and therefore addressing them in a broader context? Viewing women’s rights from a more comprehensive standpoint?

A. Finger: I think you are actually overthinking it. I think the reason is that for women’s rights generally, in a vacuum—what do you do? There is just nothing directly to do. But if you tell me, women’s rights and education, I can think of something to do. Or, if you talk about women’s rights as it relates to homelessness, I can tell you what to do. So, I actually think that when it is presented in a silo, there is just nothing to do. Also, just to be clear— at DoSomething.org, what we focus on is not necessarily just an accurate representation of our values. It is an accurate representation of our values, the values of our members, plus what we are able to change and directly do. So, I always use this example—the refugee crisis in Syria. One of the most important Human Rights causes of our time. You can raise money, of course, but there is not much that you can do. We only added advocacy as part of the toolbox two years ago. So outside of advocacy and raising money, what do you want people to do? So, we do not cover it in a massive way—not because we think that it is not important—we are just not uniquely positioned to make an impact.

S. Heberlig: On making an impact, I listened to an interview you did with Slate, and you highlighted an important strategy in reaching young people. You shared that there is this misconception that everyone is on social media and if you want to make change, you need to head to social media. You valuably highlighted that a lot of impact comes from SMS, or text messages. In essence, this simulation of a more personalized and high-touch conversation. I am curious how we leverage this high-touch authenticity on a larger scale?

A. Finger: Who is we?

S. Heberlig: I suppose society at large. The idea is to get people in the world to care, similar to how the community at DoSomething.org cares about making a positive impact. I am thinking from a systematic and societal perspective.

A. Finger: I do not know if this answers your question, but I think that one of the problems is that when you are doing anything—think of texting a group and asking them if they want to do A or B. Let's say that you get 60% A, and 40% B. Naturally you think that that is a clear signal to do thing A. No, that is not the solution! You need to figure out what the demographics or characteristics are that separate those two groups, and work to understand and figure out who is in group B. You need to work to give them the thing that they want. So often, we say that all young people want this. No, they are not a monolith. I actually think that some of the identity movements have made this worse because we say, “as a woman, this is what I believe.” For example, as me, I have to be a woman—and this is what I believe. But I am not speaking for all women. I am certainly not speaking for all white people. Identity movements make us pretend that we are speaking for these large swaths of people, and it is actually not true. Even if it is all white women, or all Latinx men. I think that is an increasing problem. You need to treat individuals as individuals. It is difficult, but it is easier with technology.

S. Heberlig: I like that. You provide the platform for an individual to raise their voice as who they are as a person, rather than who they are as a characteristic or descriptor.

A. Finger: Yes, I think that is gold. Like I said, we are not amazing at it, but we strive to be.

S. Heberlig: I have two questions left. What do you feel society's biggest call to action is right now? I know that this is a very general question, but you see this stuff day-in and day-out in terms of which causes people are getting most involved in.

A. Finger: We have some data, and we see more young people getting involved in climate issues. Number two is gun violence prevention. I think those are actually pretty solid across the board. Here is the thing—my general rule is that everything is selfish, and that is fine. We should not feel bad about that. For instance, the Vietnam War. People were protesting in the streets because they did not want to get drafted. The Civil Rights Movement. People were protesting because we were treating African Americans horribly. When you think about what is going on in Hong Kong right now, what actually gets people into the streets is that they are worried that China will have extradition rights, so that they will go to Chinese prisons. So, they are worried about their own self-interests. Again, people are wonderful, and people are selfless, and people are great, but what motivates them first is if

their lives and livelihoods will be taken away. So, I actually think that that is the number one thing that gets people in the streets—when their life and livelihood is threatened. People do it on behalf of other people, and that is beautiful, but I think that is probably the most critical.

S. Heberlig: So, can we translate that to bringing the cause to the person, and then working to get the person's buy-in? Is that harder to do if they are not directly impacted? I am thinking in regard to men getting on board with women's rights.

A. Finger: Sure. For instance, I think that climate and gun control prevention are the two biggest causes for young people right now, but that is not actually because they are necessarily the most important. Are they any less important than they were ten years ago? Ten years ago, no one was talking about climate control and gun violence prevention as frequently. The media has a huge impact on what the top causes are because you are much more likely to volunteer for a cause that a friend thinks is important, than your personal top cause. So again, the most important causes, you think that you have decided upon on your own—no way! Society has decided for you, and you are joining because of that.

S. Heberlig: [Laughing] But we are not cogs in the wheel. We are still individuals, right?!

A. Finger: [Laughing] Yes, yes, yes. Of course, we are individuals! Social norms are real, though. FOMO [Fear of Missing Out] is actually a psychological principle and that is important to note.

S. Heberlig: So, my last question. Is there anything that you feel should be discussed in terms of young women hoping to have their voice heard—whether that is in the career space or leadership space? Is there something that is not discussed enough that should be raised?

A. Finger: I am a bad example because my voice has always been heard. I have worked at one company, and I have either had a female boss who was a phenomenal boss, or I have been the boss. I operate in a very female-centric environment, so it is sort of hard for me to know. I do not know because I have never been in a situation where I have felt that my voice was not heard, so I feel like I should not give that advice.

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much for your candidness and taking time to speak with me. Your insights are very helpful in contributing to the next generation of women leaders and change agents.

“The world is luck. I think that people think that somehow saying luck devalues your hard work, but we need to all accept that so much of this is luck. That is one of the reasons why we should treat everyone well. If you know that it is luck, then you will do unto others as you want them to do unto you.”

Gretchen Myers

Gretchen Myers is the founding principal of The Law Offices of Gretchen Myers, P.C. in St. Louis, Missouri where she concentrates her practice in the areas of catastrophic trucking accident cases, product liability, wrongful death, medical negligence, sexual harassment and general personal injury law. She is the recipient of two top trial advocacy awards in Missouri: the Lon O. Hocker Award from the Missouri Bar and the Honorary Order of the Barristers Award from the University of Missouri. Both awards were given for her outstanding trial work and trial excellence. Gretchen was recently chosen as President-Elect of APITLA (The Association of Plaintiff Interstate Trucking Lawyers of America), a national organization whose mission is to dramatically reduce the number of traffic accidents, injuries and deaths across America caused by unsafe trucking corporation practices. As a consequence of this selection, Gretchen will serve next year as the first woman President in that association's history. Gretchen is also the first woman trial lawyer in the United States selected to serve on APITLA's National Advisory Board. She is past President of the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys (the first woman to have been elected by her peers to that post) and a past President of the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis. Gretchen Myers graduated from the University of Missouri Columbia with a BA in Honors Economics and Political Science in 1981 and JD degree in 1984.

Interviewed by Katherine Godar, Gretchen Myers' youngest child of three.

"Don't worry about emulating men. Don't worry about emulating anyone. Be yourself and go out and boldly assert what you think is right because I think the world is ready for that."

K. Godar: Thanks, mom, for taking the time to talk with me. You truly are a trailblazer – I have always admired how you fearlessly pursue whatever you put your mind to. We have talked a lot over the years about your time as a female, but I'm so excited to be able to sit down with you and talk about your experiences in greater depth. I sent you a list of questions and topics that I'm hoping to discuss with you. Have you had a chance to take a look?

G. Myers: Yes. When you say external barriers, I get that. In terms of internal barriers, I'm assuming you're meaning something internal that's held you back?

K. Godar: We've talked a lot with the women we've met with about external barriers, biases, and boundaries they've faced in their career as women. We've also talked with those women about how they have handled those external barriers internally. A theme that's arisen with the women we've spoken with is that many of them have had to overcome is self-doubt and imposter syndrome. Are you familiar with imposter syndrome?

G. Myers: I have but remind me what it is.

K. Godar: Imposter syndrome is the feeling that you aren't as smart or as competent as every else in the room thinks that you are. You're essentially questioning why you're in the room, if you have a right to be in the room, or if you have anything as meaningful to contribute. This has also led a lot of the women to second guess their decisions.

G. Myers: That's really interesting because I would totally agree with that in terms of feeling that way, but I've always thought that everyone felt that way. I never considered that a woman thing.

The people I work with are very well-known in the trial arena and so to do that for trial work you have to build a reputation of this bigger than life persona. When you do that, I was just assuming that everyone felt that it's smoke and mirrors. I've talked to your dad before that I feel like I'm smoke and mirrors because I had to build it on my own and no one was going to do this for me. I had to build my reputation. I came from a small town, as you know, and I didn't know anyone here except for some people from Mizzou and your dad's family, so I had to build this reputation in a field of men that didn't want women to have a reputation for good trial work. It was okay if we were behind the scenes and really good at the law or really good at appellate work but trying cases wasn't supposed to be a woman thing, so developing a reputation in that arena you have to find a way to sell yourself or to get articles about yourself or to be put in positions where people would get to know your name. I had to do a lot of that, which came very unnaturally for me and I think it comes very unnaturally to most women. Maybe all women. You're not really comfortable touting your own horn, or saying how great you are, or trying to put things in places to advance your career because you feel like someone else should be doing that – someone else should recognize and do that because that's the way it's been done for men, but that was never going to happen to me by anyone. That's not to say people haven't helped me along the way, absolutely they have. But in terms of getting where I am, it's been from sheer determination, creativity, and I think I have some sort of sense for PR – how to build a critical mass of information where when people keep seeing your name they begin to think there's something to it and that helps.

But back to your point, I never felt like I didn't have as good of ideas – I think sometimes I have better ideas. I've never felt that I was not deserving of being certain places, but I did think some people were smarter than me and I did think that someone was maybe more talented than me, even though I thought I was talented. In my era, if you were in the room as a woman, you had to prove double over that you belonged in the room or no other woman was ever going to get in that room again, so everything you did reflected on every other woman behind you. For that matter, people in my generation worked doubly hard to make sure they appeared to be and were worthy of being in the room. That doesn't mean to say, though, that you felt internally that you did.

“In my era, if you were in the room as a woman, you had to prove double over that you belonged in the room or no other woman was ever going to get in that room again.”

K. Godar: I want to touch on something you just mentioned. You said that you sometimes felt that you have better ideas than your male counterparts. Going back to your childhood, do you think that's something that was fostered in you as a little girl or something that's innately you? From your stories, I know watching your dad as lawyer influenced you and he seemed to really take you under his wing, so I'm curious how much you think your confidence is tied to that childhood experience?

G. Myers: I think it is a combination. I think part of that is innately who I am, but there is something that if you look at my sisters that our parents gave all of us, which is a confidence about our ideas and our abilities that is probably outsized for our ideas or our abilities. But they gave it to all of us. I don't know what they did, but I think it's apparent in that we're all fearless. I think that comes with parents telling you all of the time that you can do anything you want to do. But at the same time, interestingly enough, I look at my childhood compared to yours and my parents weren't at everything. My parents didn't watch half of the things that I did. They never saw me debate, I don't think. They never saw me in a speech tournament. They never saw me cheerlead. They saw some swim meets and my mom I know saw some tennis. But it was just a different era, parents didn't go to everything. So how I got that encouragement, other than just positive reinforcement through words, I'm not sure. Maybe it was the way they treated us and how we all sat at a dinner table and talked about politics and were all equally listened to no matter our age or our position on an issue. When I'd come home and I'd say something that I thought my dad would really like, he wouldn't respond the way I'd thought he would, I'd say: "I thought you'd really like this". He would respond: "I'm not really as concerned about what you think, as I am about why you think it. I want you to think through the process and know why you think something and for you to think about what's behind it." Absolutely, my dad was a huge part of who I am and how I think through things and am able to feel empowered that those ideas are worth being heard. Watching him, I so admired what he did for people and who he was as a person, which obviously influenced why I went into law. I saw how much he helped people and his community, and I wanted to do that.

But as much as I respected my dad, I also saw two very strong women, my mom and my grandmother, push back and have their own ideas. They were never afraid to speak their mind and I am sure that had a great influence on me as well. They were feminists before that was a word.

I was also influenced by recognizing that I had a talent for public speaking early on. I remember in 5th grade sitting there trying to evaluate what talent God gave me and what I should do with it – I thought, well, I'm really intelligent, but I'm not the most intelligent, I'm a good writer, but I'm not the best writer, and I really love to stand up and speak in front of people. That was the first year we started doing poetry in front of the class for extra credit. I even wrote some of my own. Even though I didn't need the extra credit, I would do it as often as I could because I loved it, and eventually I realized my brain worked better when I stood up and spoke in front of people. Something clicked and things would come out that I didn't even know were up there. I remember thinking that this is the gift that God gave me, and this is how I want to use it. It was the best way I could figure as to how to use my God-given talent to help people.

K. Godar: Did gender ever cross your mind when you thought about wanting to become a lawyer? In other words, did you ever think that you maybe wouldn't ever be able to reach that goal or that it'd be a lot more difficult to reach because you're a woman? Relatedly, you grew up watching your dad as this successful lawyer – did you ever think that your path may be different because you're a woman?

G. Myers: I can tell you that 100% it never crossed my mind until I was in law school. And then later when I heard that my oldest sister had wanted to go to law school, but that dad had dissuaded her from that idea because, at that point, he thought her road would be too hard. By the time I came along, he thought that things had progressed enough, and he didn't have that conversation with me, but I didn't know that he'd had that conversation with my sister until later.

K. Godar: You've talked about being one of the few females in law school and the lack of females in the legal profession when you began your career. After law school, you clerked and worked at a plaintiff firm. What were some of the external barriers you faced entering a male-dominated profession and were those barriers different as a law student, clerk, and then an associate?

G. Myers: In law school, I felt for the first time in my life, whether it was true or not, that I had to prove my intelligence as a woman. Before that time, school had been relatively easy for me. If anything, I was trying to appear not as smart to men in order to get dates. When I got to law school, it was really hard for my brain to flip to another mode because I had been able to skate by with making straight As and not putting that much work into it. So that I could have fun and have dates, I had spent the last part of my college years going on dates with a male and I remember saying to myself "don't think" because otherwise I would start talking about things they didn't want to hear from a woman or things they didn't want to talk about. That could've been the school that I went to or it could've been the era or a whole host of things. It could've been me. Going to law school, I really had to clean the cobwebs out of my brain. It was also an era where people would actually say to you "why are you here because you're taking a male's seat." You had to prove that you were there because you were intelligent and that you belonged there. I worked really hard and I had a professor who started out our first-year property class by saying "back in the good old days, when property was property and women were property." The whole class laughed, including me, because back then if you wanted to get anywhere, well it's still not that different, you had to go along to get along and if you were going to be upset and uptight about everything that happened to you then you weren't going anywhere. I had professors that hit on me. My biggest mentor who I thought liked me for my intelligence, by my third year, made a pass at me. That's really disheartening. One of my best friends in study group made a pass at me who I thought just liked me because we were friends.

The clerkship was nothing like any of that. I had the most fabulous judge. Back in the day when it was never done, way before me, he'd hire a woman one year and a man the next. He was like my dad. My dad had died by then and he treated me so well. He was a wonderful human being and he gave me so much autonomy. He was incredible to me.

Then I go to a plaintiff firm. I could go on for years about going into a law firm.

K. Godar: How was your experience starting at the law firm as a woman and did that experience change throughout the 10 years you were there?

G. Myers: My first week, I was sent to a doctor's deposition. No one gave me any guidance on how to do it. They had a pretty decent library and they said look in the library. I go to the doctor's deposition and I'm doing what they call a pre-deposition with the doctor – talking about the treatment he gave to our client, what he thinks, what he plans to say about various things. The defense lawyer comes in, and the defense lawyer and the doctor start talking about how they both went to the same high school and how their reunion was coming. The lawyer asked the doctor if he was going. The doctor puffed up and you could tell that he was so excited that the lawyer had even asked if he was going to the reunion. It went downhill from there. The deposition was a total disaster. I felt it was a disaster anyway. I probably got what I needed to get or was going to get anyway, but it felt terrible because the doctor was so deferential to the defense lawyer. It was so bad that by the end of the deposition you're always supposed to ask, (if you're the one taking the deposition, which was me), the deponent if they want to read the deposition or if they want to do what's called a "waive signature". I'm explaining this to the doctor, and typically the deponent will turn to the person that asked the question and ask what they think they should do if they aren't sure. This doctor, instead of turning to me and asking what I think, he turned to the defense lawyer, his high school buddy, who clearly really wasn't a high school buddy, and asked him what he thinks he should do. I go back to the law firm and tell the story and the guys are laughing hysterically. They think it's the funniest thing – almost as if they knew it was a set up or that this would eventually happen to me. I wasn't tearful, I was angry. I was hopping mad because the only stupid thing I could say in response to them going to high school together was "oh, my husband went to that high school." I felt like an idiot saying it, but at that point I was ready to say anything to get the train back on the tracks. It made me feel like, how do I fight that, there's no way to fight that.

That's a good metaphor for what a lot of women feel throughout their careers. There are some things that there are no ways to combat. That's the good ol' boys club that drinks together, golfs together, sends cases to each other, helps each other form firms, decides hey we're such good friends from high school or college or law school, let's start a firm together or do this together or I'll send you all my cases, you send me all yours. Those things don't happen for women. At least they didn't when I started out and still don't to my knowledge. Women are trying to refer to more women but even that's hard because there still aren't that many women trial lawyers, much less women Plaintiff's personal injury trial lawyers, which narrows the field even further.

K. Godar: How did you respond to the good ol' boys club dynamics internally? Were you mostly angry, frustrated, or did you ever internalize it in a way that made you doubt your skills, yourself, or your worth?

G. Myers: I don't think I ever had doubt about my skills or myself or my worth. I think for me it was mostly anger or frustration. I live my life with a thought that "where there's a will, there's a way". I'm always looking for ways around an obstacle because I always feel like there's a way, you just have to find it. I think I deployed that thought. I think, though, your dad would probably be better at telling you whether it affected me in other ways but looking back I don't feel that it did. It's hard, because now I've come to a place in my life where I know how I do cases and what I think and how I build them up and maybe even how I do a deposition is unique.

Back then, I didn't know that because you don't know what everyone else is doing. There's a thing in trial law where they say don't try and emulate anyone else, just be you. Well, when you start out as a trial lawyer you don't know who you are, so every young trial lawyer is frustrated by that, but it's so true. When I was in this firm, I saw really good trial lawyers that were probably equally talented and equally as good try cases totally different ways. One wasn't better than the other, they were just different. They were just who they were. What I was doing as a young lawyer was developing all of that and having developed it now, I'm very happy with how it developed and very positive that I give my clients the best quality they could get.

Maybe not the fastest, but the best.

K. Godar: I want to shift to starting your own law firm in your mid-30s. For the first five years, you built your firm with a male attorney from the firm you were leaving. What led you to start your own firm and start the firm with this male lawyer? What was the impetus for starting the law firm with him and were there any gender considerations in recognizing the difficulty in starting a law firm as a woman and the capital there may be with having a male partner?

G. Myers: You have to understand what life was like at the current law firm. It was an environment where I had a boss that was flirting with me that was clearly the level of sexual harassment. I had another male attorney looking through my files – we shared a secretary – trying to find something I had done wrong to show to the boss because I was winning cases and he was losing cases. I had gone through secretaries who didn't want to do my work because I was a woman, so I had to do some of that on my own. I had a secretary who would get one letter out a day for me and get out everything the male she was doing her work for and when I reported that to the hierarchy, I almost got fired versus the secretary getting reprimanded. I had gone on three maternity leaves. Back then, this firm gave three weeks for maternity leave. I would save up my sick days and vacation days so I could be off and because I didn't want any woman in this position coming after me to be thought of as a burden to the firm. I didn't hand my cases over to anyone to do while I was away. I continued to have the secretary come to my house. I would do letters, settle cases, and I would continue to work, obviously not at the same pace, but I would continue to handle my cases and do everything besides walk into the courtroom. I would normally take six weeks off. I took six weeks for your brother. I can't remember with your sister if I took six or eight weeks off. With you, I know I took eight weeks. You were sick, we were trying to find a nanny and were having a hard time. I took eight weeks off, which I had accumulated between sick days and vacation days. That year, the year I had you, I'd also tried six cases and I'd brought in more money to the firm than I'd ever brought in and more than every other associate, or non-named partner. I get back to work and I hear from the office manager that I'm not going to be paid for eight weeks, I'm going to be paid for six weeks because one of the head partners had decided that no woman needed more than six weeks off to have a baby.

It was soon after that, I tried a case, got a great verdict, and your dad and I were out celebrating, we started talking about me opening my own office. We were talking about the pros and cons and he knew I was really miserable where I was. There were a whole lot of other things that happened in this firm. They were never going to really build my career. I was building it on my own. The Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys (MATA), which I eventually became president of, was an organization that was really near and dear to my heart because I grew up going to it and my

dad was a president. MATA had asked me to be on the board and to be voted on the board, I had to attend this meeting. The executive director told me: “you can’t tell your firm that you’re coming because then they won’t let you on the board. They don’t want you on the board.” That Saturday, I had to drive down to the Lake of the Ozarks without telling anyone. I appeared at this board meeting, where there was another guy at the firm there who was totally shocked that I was there. I was then put on the board because at that point he couldn’t say anything. Then they wanted to put me on the executive board of MATA, but the heads of my firm told MATA no. Other past presidents then came to talk to the heads of my firm to say “no, she’s on the board and she’s going to be our first woman president, and you can’t stop it.” I didn’t know about the executive board thing until later when the guy who went down told me about it. It was those things that lead me to think that it’s got to be better if I’m on my own. Maybe I won’t make as much money, but my life will be better, and it’ll be much more balanced in terms of handling the kids and it’s going to be really hard in the beginning having three little kids and starting a firm. You were really a newborn then, but I thought it would ultimately give me more time with you all and more flexibility.

I left this firm with the male attorney who became my partner. He was the nicest guy who didn’t have a sexist or discriminatory bone in his body. He also didn’t have a big male ego – he wasn’t arrogant and was an excellent lawyer with a lot of talent who didn’t need the puffery type things. He also wasn’t a person that knew how to sell himself or do PR or any of those kinds of things. We were a good combination because I liked going to a lot of the lawyer stuff and he hated and there had to be someone in the firm to do those things to build the firm’s reputation. This was about the time where I had enough of a reputation that I was bringing a lot of cases in on my own that I felt that we were going to be fine. Then it came to whose name was coming first. It was Myers & Kordenbrach, which was really unheard of at the time for the woman’s name to come first, particularly because he was older than I was. It was something we’d talked about because of the kinds of cases I was bringing in and because we wanted people who wanted a female lawyer and to build a reputation that this is a firm that you can go to for a female trial attorney and so that was a consideration.

“I live my life with the thought that “where there’s a will, there’s a way.” I am always looking for ways around an obstacle because I always feel that there is a way, you just have to find it.”

K. Godar: How did you all get to the point where you knew you were starting a firm together and did you ever think about starting the firm on your own without a partner?

G. Myers: Yes, I did think about starting the firm on my own without a partner, but he and I had been talking about how both of us were fed up with the firm for different reasons and we both knew that if you didn’t have the last name, which was the family name of that firm, you could make a really good living but you were never going to be recognized to the level which you maybe should be. We had two different kinds of work that we were doing in the plaintiff personal injury world. I was doing more high-end plaintiffs personal injury work – medical malpractice, big auto cases, big trucking cases, those types of cases. He was doing worker’s compensation and he really liked doing that and what’s great about doing that type of work is that they’re typically smaller cases and they turn over quickly. It’s a great combination where you have someone constantly bringing in money to the firm and keeping it going and then you have someone like me doing the bigger cases and bringing in more money to generate salaries for both of us. It was really a great combination, particularly when you’re starting out. Otherwise, if you just had big cases, you may be starving for years before you hit your first big one and get paid because it’s all on contingency fees.

K. Godar: Do you feel that there were any specific barriers you faced to starting a business that were unique to a female business owner rather than your practice as a female lawyer?

G. Myers: The biggest barrier was the lack of help in that there was no one to turn to. The good ol' boys club. If I were a guy starting my own firm I'd be flooded with people saying "here's the bank I use" or "here's the accountant I use" or "here's where how you set this up" or "let me hand you all of my forms". There was just this network for guys that if you were going to open a firm, other guys would be excited, and they would be lending a helping hand to put it together or formulate it.

There was none of that for me. I had no idea how to do it, where to start, there was no one really to reach out to. There weren't any other women who owned their own law firms except for one. That was a group of women who had left law school and had formed a total women's law firm and that was really cool. They didn't reach out to me and I didn't reach out to them.

K. Godar: Two questions from that then. Did you notice any of that type of help – the good ol' boys club help – being offered to your male partner? Why do you think that neither you nor the women's law firm reached out to one another?

G. Myers: I do know that some people reached out to my partner but maybe not in the same way they would have if it'd been two guys. There may have been more that I didn't know about, but him and I were trying to figure it out. It's hard for me to even remember now, but I have a vague recollection of people somewhat helping him out in that way. Maybe because my name was coming first that we were seen differently in terms of being given help. I don't know that it was anything intentional by the guys out there. I don't think they weren't doing it as a mean thing I just don't think they thought about doing it as a proactive thing, whereas they would've done it for men. I'm sure there were some people who didn't want to see us succeed, but I don't think it was for that reason. I think it just wasn't a thought in their head to do.

I don't know why the women's law firm didn't reach out to me. Maybe they didn't think I needed any help in that regard because I've always tried to project this very confident and self-assured demeanor, but I think the reason I didn't reach out to them was because I probably wanted to appear as if I got this but they were also doing a different kind of law than me. They were doing totally employment law and nothing else. In those days, it's a little different now, but then that type of law was thought of as totally different. We didn't even run in the same circles back then. I was mostly in state court. They were mostly in federal court. They saw different defense attorneys. I guess I didn't see the overlap because I probably wasn't looking at it as the type of business and I probably should have but I wasn't.

K. Godar: Moving to your experience in the courtroom, you have a unique perspective as a trial attorney who's been in the courtroom over the course of a time in history when gender dynamics have so drastically in society. The dynamics have changed in some really positive ways and stayed stagnant in others. Can you describe some of the gender dynamics you've witnessed in the courtroom and how it has and hasn't changed over the last 30 years?

G. Myers: Some of it has clearly changed. For example, I remember driving to out-state Missouri for a courtroom appearance and having pants on. I panicked because I had not checked that particular court to see if it was ok for women to wear pants. It was back in the day where there were some courts where women had to wear skirts or dresses. When I got to that courtroom, I was the only woman lawyer in the courtroom. It wasn't unusual in the courtroom, particularly in out-state Missouri, to be called "honey" or "babe" or "sweetie" and this judge was like "oh, sweetie, we're so happy to see you, you can come here anytime." At that point, is it uncomfortable? Yes, it's uncomfortable. But at the same time, I was brought up in a time where if that's what gets you a ruling, I'm not going to do anything offensive to that judge or say anything back to that judge. I'm just going to smile. You go along to get along. That's changed. Obviously, women can wear pants in the courtroom. I think any judge now in the courtroom would never call me "sweetie" or "honey" or "babe" or single me out in that way. I will say there's a difference in interacting with the judges in the courtroom who would never do that but in a social situation still would.

There were also judges back then who would work hard to intimate you as a woman lawyer. I remember walking into a notorious judge's chambers where all I was going to do was have him sign off on an amended petition, which was a very perfunctory exercise. You take the petition in and they sign the bottom of it and say, "so ordered" and that's it. The secretary tells me to go in. I walk in and I'm standing in front of the judge's desk and he's looking down. He doesn't look up, and there's a long, awkward silence where nothing is happening. I'm thinking he's intending me to tell him what I'm there for, so I start saying "judge, I'm here for ..." and he looks up at me and says, "did I even ask you to speak?" It was that kind of treatment – would he have been like that to a male? I don't know, but it was just bizarre.

I had another judge where after I tried the case I felt very beaten down because everything I'd been taught to do in trial, he'd yell at me for. You do a motion of limine so you don't say certain things in front of the jury. Then what you're supposed to do is instead of saying something in front of the jury that the judge has just ruled that you can't say, you're supposed to say "judge, may we approach" and talk about it off the record. You say: "at this point, I would ask this witness XYZ, but you've ruled that I can't. I need to make a record of it." I would do that and ask to approach, and he'd say: "no, you cannot approach." I was left choosing between disobeying his order, which could land me in jail for contempt, or protecting my client's record about something that I would have asked but for his ruling. The trial went on like this for a week.

"If I were to give advice to young female lawyers today it would be to embrace who you are, embrace your instincts, and know that you may be the one who can change the world."

K. Godar: How did you then go about making those decisions and what did you end up deciding?

G. Myers: I later found out that that particular judge respected me more by ignoring his rulings. It was bizarre. I had a job to do for my client, so I went ahead and asked the question and the other lawyer would object and the judge would sometimes rule on my side and overrule his previous ruling. It was just bizarre. It was an emotional rollercoaster. The interesting thing was

that we finished the trial and the jury was out on a Friday night and your dad and I were going to have a date night that night. I told him to come over to the courthouse while we wait for the jury and then we can go out. The judge is talking to your dad, who's also a lawyer, and is telling him what a good lawyer I am, which was crazy because you never would have guessed it from the entire week I was in the courtroom with this judge. He'd never said that to me, and I probably never would have heard it or thought it or felt it but for your dad, a male lawyer, sitting there shooting the breeze with this judge.

Going back to your question on courtroom dynamics, one thing also is that if you walk into a deposition or a courtroom, early on, if you were a woman you were always mistaken for the court reporter. You weren't a lawyer. You would get: "you're the court reporter, go stand over there." Interestingly enough, you'd think that that would have changed, but I was talking to some women lawyers who are younger than I am, and they still occasionally get that. But probably not as much as we did back then.

Another thing that's changed is that, while I used to be the only female lawyer in the courtroom, now there are some cases where the judge and the defense attorney are both female. I tried cases through all three pregnancies and there was never a female judge or female defense attorney during that. That was difficult because there was no one who understood when you have morning sickness, or you have to go to the bathroom or any of the things that happened throughout pregnancy. Now, there are enough female judges who I'd probably feel comfortable discussing what's going on and say "judge, I can't help it if I have to do xyz..." and there'd be some accommodation. That would have never happened back then.

K. Godar: Do you feel that you've ever had to adjust or change your presentation of a case at trial because of your gender or awareness of the double standards that are oftentimes placed on women?

We've talked a lot in our appellate advocacy class about how oral speaking tips tend to come from old men and how a lot of that advice isn't transferrable to a woman giving that same presentation because of gender biases. For example, we've witnessed male lawyers, who are giving oral arguments, act very casually with the judge or panel of judges and make jokes. When the man does it, this demeanor seems to be well-received by the judge or judges, but female lawyers we've spoken with have pointed out that that type of technique isn't well-received when women implore it.

I'm curious if you've ever had to think about how your style and presentation in the courtroom would be received because you're a woman?

G. Myers: Absolutely. In fact, it's really interesting because I have a case that I tried that really made it apparent. In this malpractice case, I put the defense doctors on the stand first and cross-examined them with their own deposition, which essentially means they said something on the stand different than what they said in their deposition. I impeached them. You don't always get to do that as a lawyer. It's a very fun thing to do because you're basically showing the jury that

they're just lying. I did that with not only the defendant doctors but with all of their experts. It was the most joyful, fun thing you get to do as a trial lawyer, and it came back with a hung jury. Talking to the jurors after – which I always do because win or lose I want to learn about what they thought in terms of how I did – half of the jurors were like “oh you go girl, you were just fabulous. I loved the way you called them out. It was obvious that they were lying”. I was doing it the way most men would do it – being aggressive and confrontational in the way that you're taught to do it. But the other half of the jury were like “oh you were just too much of a bitch, that was too much for me.” With a hung jury, you go back and try the case again.

Fast forward six months later and I'm trying the same case. Interestingly enough, the experts and the defendant didn't change their testimony at all. I didn't change my cross-examination at all either because my crosses are always tied into deposition lines and pages so they can't get out of it. What I had to tell myself the whole time I was cross-examining them and calling them out on how they were lying was pull it back, Gretchen. Talk more slowly and more quietly. And we got a great verdict. It was the most boring, unexciting, depressing, cross-examination I've ever done from my perspective. There was nothing fun about it because I had to pull back on all of my instincts and all of the things that makes that part of trial work fun in order to not appear as a “bitch”. In contrast to that, I've tried cases with really good trial lawyers, co-counseling, where literally my co-counsel is raising his voice and his voice is booming so loudly that it's scaring me. I could never do that in a million years because half of the jury would think I was a bitch.

I will say that think there's an advantage in trial work if you're a woman. You don't come with the same baggage that male trial lawyers come with. Lawyers get a bad reputation, which drives me nuts. All of those bad, stereotypical things that are put on trial lawyers are mainly associated with men, so I think most jurors think women are more sincere, it's not a trial trick, and if you're doing it that you really believe in it because you don't come with the same baggage because you're not even really seen as a real trial lawyer.

Another thing that's changed is that I used to really think about older women being on my jury because back when I started older women thought that they could only really take advice from men – they were the smart ones and if it came between deciding if you believed a man or a woman, it would always be the man. Now, I don't have that as much and I think that there are some women and maybe men, who really want to embrace and empower other women and that's different.

K. Godar: I have one more question for you. What advice would you give to young female lawyers today and what advice would you give to young females looking to one-day start their own firm or business?

G. Myers: I would say that if I were to give advice to young female lawyers today it would be embrace who you are, embrace your instincts, and know that you may be the one who can change the world. We need to embrace that and not think that we have to do anything because it came before us. I'd say, don't worry about emulating the men, don't worry about emulating anyone. Be yourself and go out and boldly assert what you think is right because I think the world's ready for that.

Judy Kluger

Judy Kluger is the current Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families, a nonprofit organization that provides resources to victims of gender violence, including both sex trafficking and domestic violence. Prior to joining Sanctuary, Judy served on the New York State Bench, on to which she was appointed in 1988. She became a judge after working for many years as a prosecutor. She attended St. John's University School of Law.

Interviewed by Lauren Altus and Katherine Godar

L. Altus: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. My time as an intern at Sanctuary for Families was so influential to me, I find that the experiences I had there are relevant in almost all of my classes. So, thank you so much for all that you do and for such an incredible experience.

Katherine and I are enrolled in a class called Women, Law and Leadership that looks at different leadership theories and questions why there are no leadership theories from a feminist perspective. One of the goals of the class is to interview different women leaders about their careers and their own theories of leadership in order to create a database consisting of a feminist leadership theory.

K. Godar: We've talked a lot in class and with women we've interviewed at what point in their life/career that they self-identified as a leader and what lead to that point. Did you always see yourself in a position of leadership or as a leader or do you feel that there was a turning point?

J. Kluger: In high school I always felt like I wanted to be the voice of the class advocating for shorter school days and I became very comfortable in that position. Around that same time, I became a head counselor in a sleepaway camp and really loved it and felt energized by leadership managed. I would say it started in my teenage years. I always ran for office, I didn't always win, but I was always running. I was Senior Class President and it whet my appetite for leadership.

L. Altus: What was it like becoming one of the likely few female judges in 1989, did your gender approach the way you managed your responsibilities?

J. Kluger: There were certainly fewer women in the legal profession. When I entered law school, only fifteen percent of my class were women, but when I graduated, the incoming class was fifty percent women. I went to the DA's office, and there were very few women prosecutors there. I benefitted, I think, because at that time institutions were feeling pressure to hire women and promote women to leadership positions. I like to think that it was based on my qualifications, of course, but it was also based on the fact that it was time. As a judge, I had a very different style, I think, from a lot of the male judges. You didn't have to be a bombastic authority or leader in the courtroom. You could just be calm and professional and firm, and I think women generally have a little less ego than men.

As time wore on and I was a judge and got into leadership positions there I think the style of inclusion and not being very top down in the way I managed certainly helped me.

“You didn’t have to be a bombastic authority or leader in the courtroom. You could just be calm and professional and firm.”

K. Godar: What were some of the gender dynamics you witnessed in the courtroom as a judge and as a prosecutor, especially during a time where gender dynamics changed so drastically in society and how did that change over the course of 25 years?

J. Kluger: Any woman working in the 80’s had any number of “Me Too” moments. Of course, not anything as bad as Harvey Weinstein but supervisors saying crude things to me, judges calling me “sweetheart” or “sweetie”. When I look back on it is absolutely shocking. We had some detectives working for us in an office adjacent to mine who had lewd calendar pictures on the wall. Often, I was the only woman in a particular setting. When I became a judge in 1988 there were still not a lot of women on the bench, there was a little bit of a curiosity by jurors even, by clerks. There was a sense, I think, that even though that as a judge there is a level of authority in a courtroom, there is an attitude saying, “maybe she doesn’t belong here.” Again, that evolved, but certainly in my early years on the bench that was embedded in the system. That began to change around the 90’s, and I left the bench in 2013, so there was really a sea-change.

L. Altus: How has your time as a prosecutor and as a judge influenced the way you’ve approached your position at Sanctuary for Families?

J. Kluger: As a judge, I never yelled at lawyers, I never lost my temper, I just didn’t think that was an effective way of communicating or expressing what could have been volatile issues even with litigants. I have the same style as a leader here. I try and be calm, inclusive, I try to get other people’s opinions. When I started at Sanctuary, I told the senior team that my management style is: I will listen to what you have to say, I will take your opinions, I will hear them, I want to hear opinions that are different than mine. But once we make the decision together, I expect you to support that throughout the agency. It’s been a system that has worked well for me. A consultant for us who has had a lot of interactions with me said to me recently, “you know, you really don’t have any ego.” She said that’s really unusual in a leader. She didn’t specify female or male. I took it as a compliment, because I think it was. I think that it is true. I am not easily wounded--people can disagree with me. I have the benefit of years of experience and I have a lot of self-confidence and I am open to listening to what other people have to say.

K. Godar: Lauren has told me a great deal about Sanctuary, and I’ve read a great deal about it myself. It seems that Sanctuary is an organization that not only employs many women but empowers its predominantly female clients. How have you viewed your role at Sanctuary empowering both your clients and your employees?

J. Kluger: This is the first time that I've worked anywhere that's so many more women staff and clients, and it's kind of wonderful. I think there's a level of role-modeling that I can do. Lauren, you know, we have a job training program, an economic empowerment program, and the person that runs that is very clear about what a professional look should be and the idea is that we try and give people training so they can have career track jobs and be independent and safe and really start new lives after experiencing domestic violence. So, any time he sees me dressed in a way he thinks a role-model should be he asks me to come in saying "you see, Judy's wearing a suit." I think it's empowering for the clients to see a woman in a special position leading an organization. I'm happy to be that to the extent that I can be that for clients and staff. I'm the only one who has that role. There are a lot of terrific leaders at Sanctuary.

L. Altus: I definitely think that your role is unique and exciting particularly because of the economic empowerment program. It's empowering on two levels in that it encompasses women working together to help empower other women and I found that energy very exciting while I had the opportunity to be there. With that in mind, as a class, we consider ourselves to be young leaders excited to take on the world. What advice do you have for young law students who may hope to one day have a position such as Executive Director at a nonprofit?

J. Kluger: A couple of things. Develop your own style. There are many more women leaders in the world now. When you go to a law firm, you'll see that many of the leaders are still men. I think that young women should feel that they can develop their own style and they don't need to emulate the male leaders. And find something you're passionate about. I really think that while there are obviously still limits in life to what people can accomplish based on gender, I think for young women leaders today that they should feel that the walls are breaking down and that you can push through.

"I think that young women should feel that they can develop their own style and they don't need to emulate the male leaders."

L. Altus: That's a great piece of advice. That feels very exciting and enlightening to hear.

K. Godar: You have alluded to this in the earlier part of our conversation, but do you feel that you have faced many obstacles in your career? What do you think is the biggest obstacle you have faced in your career in using your voice in terms of internal and external challenges?

J. Kluger: I think that in the beginning of my career and probably well into it, there was this sense of "am I really good enough?" There was a fair amount of second-guessing with decisions I made. I think women tend to do that more than men and that can be very paralyzing. It's certainly something I had to overcome as a judge because you have to make decisions all of the time. So that was my internal obstacle - insecurity about why I'd gotten as far as I had gotten. People talk about the imposter syndrome, like someone's going to find me out. I'm really not as good as people think I am at what I do. Experience and time helps that. But I think that the world out there still second guesses women and I've learned not to second guess myself. I try to be thoughtful and introspective and I really think early on in my career I was so afraid I'd be making

a mistake and that mistake would have ramifications on others and myself. Then you realize that everyone makes mistakes. The goal is to correct them as you can and admit that you've made a mistake and acknowledge it and I think women do that better than men and I think that's a good quality. I often say the three phrases of words in management that go so far are "please," "thank you," "I made a mistake," and "I'm sorry." I think women do that better than men, but you can do that to a fault. You have to do it when the time is right.

K. Godar: It's interesting that you talk about that as your internal challenge. Many of the women we've talked with throughout the time in this class have talked about self-doubt as their primary internal challenge. As a young woman, it's very encouraging to hear that this is something that a lot of very accomplished women have struggled with and hopefully this understanding can help make Lauren and I more confident in making our own decisions in the professional realm.

L. Altus: It's so true because it doesn't show from the outside at all, so it is encouraging to hear that no matter how successful we become it's something that many people experience from within.

J. Kluger: It's interesting, my husband when I was home and would be aggravated by something and, this is a male perspective, he'd say: "you know, Judy, you should give ulcers, you shouldn't get them." I would say, "I don't want to give them, and I don't want to get them."

L. Altus: We have one more question, which is that in our class we were speaking about the idea that as women have more opportunities opened up for them, we have a seat at the table but do we have a voice at that table. What do you think are some ways in which young women who, as we have space in these more elite spaces and have those doors opened to us to have a seat at the table, can make sure that our voices are heard and listened to?

J. Kluger: I think the most important thing to know is you're at that table because you belong there. And don't let self-doubt or fear that you're going to appear as someone who doesn't know enough to have an opinion because, believe me, young men who don't know enough to have an opinion will have no problem expressing it. I think that that's something that's still an issue, particularly in fields where the higher echelons are still male-dominant. We have one man on our senior staff. It's kind of interesting because I've never had that dynamic in a management position that I've had. So, it's interesting being in a group of all women, except one, and again the senior team is people who are professionally more mature.

We have one young member, she's probably in her mid-30's, but everyone else is in their 40's and everyone has had a pretty long and robust professional career so you're more confident anyway. But when you're in a group with just women there is, I think, a greater ease with communicating.

Regina Austin, L'73

Regina Austin is the William A. Schander Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, as well as a member of the law school's class of 1973. Her scholarship focuses on the impact of law on social conflicts that result from race, gender, and socioeconomic inequality. Much of her work revolves around critical analysis of ethnographies and law related documentary films and photography. She directs the trailblazing "Penn Program on Documentaries & the Law," which hosts screenings of law related documentaries. Austin uses nonfiction film when teaching doctrinal torts classes in an effort to teach students to use digital video technology as a tool for legal argument and persuasion. Austin teaches visual advocacy and teaches students to employ these methods in social justice advocacy efforts. The videos are streamed on the Program's website, as well as on YouTube.

Interview by Chukwufumnanya Ekhatior

"That is the thing I find most disturbing—you all will have to go through this all over again and fight the fights we thought we already won."

C. Ekhatior: Can you start by speaking, very high level, about the educational and professional path that brought you to where you are now? What were the defining moments that led you to this point?

R. Austin: ...I came to the law school in 1970 as a first-year student. I wanted to be a lawyer because I love Perry Mason. I had a job as a junior high school teacher in Washington, D.C...Then I got an offer from NYU and my cousin was going to NYU social work school and I thought I don't necessarily want to be in the same place as my cousin. So I got more money from Penn because they were recruiting minority students aggressively at the time...And that was a very good decision, I loved law school...I didn't know much about the law, my mother found a job for me between my first and second years with a solo practitioner in Washington, D.C...Between the second and third year, I worked at a job that the dean basically got for me...So I got an offer to go back and before going back I clerked for Judge Bathe who was a wonderful man. I went to Schnader for three years and then I came here. They needed a torts teacher and so I started teaching torts. ...I like teaching torts, but I teach torts in a different way. I am not enamored with the economics of torts; I like teaching torts because it is a social justice issue. I am interested in the way in which torts is a mechanism for inner group and intra group conflict so it has a lot more to do with status and the way in which our society stratifies groups and the mechanisms by which the law can be used to either solidify that status hierarchy or open it up. That is why I really like torts and all the writing that I have done in torts has to do with the intentional torts and issues of status.

C. Ekhtor: I always think about the experiences of people who went to law school around the time of the civil rights era—how did your identity as a woman of color inform your decision to go to law school, and in which ways did this identity shape your experience once you arrived?

R. Austin: That is an interesting question because I think of myself as being black before I think of myself as being a woman—at least that is how I came to law school. When I was in college, we got really upset about the lack of diversity in the student body and the lack of courses for those of us who wanted to know more about black history literature and social science. So, we took over the faculty club...of course, we got brought up on charges and I acted as one of the spokespeople. I didn't think of myself, at least in that context, as being at a disadvantage because I was a black woman. We [the black community] were cohesive and gender didn't make any difference...

When I got to the law school [gender] mattered because there were about 14 of us—3 women and the rest were male—and the males were older. I went to law school during the Vietnam war so most of the males had been in the military or had done alternate service. When I got to law school, I realized that I really had to buckle down with the books. We were the first [significantly sized] class of minority students and the prospects of our flunking out were pretty high. I don't think there was a real expectation that we would succeed and do all that well, so I had to say [to myself] "I have to do this." I think the males expected me to follow them, but I decided I had to do the academic thing because otherwise this is not going to work. That put a lot of pressure on me because I was a female and thought I could do pretty well in law school. It was at that point that I felt gender made a difference—there were very few women in the class, black [or] white. After that it became more of a concern...To a certain extent, it is being a female who is working class, from a poor background, [that added] another layer of complexity to what it is that I do. And I find that is still true. Those things really impacted [me].

To a certain extent you just turn your back on all that stuff because if you pay too much attention to it, you will never get anything done. You will always be following someone else's agenda for you, so I think I sublimated it by writing about things I cared about—domestic workers, workplace culture. Then I got interested in ethnographies, from there I got interested in documentaries, and from there I decided "well, maybe we should be making documentaries." So, you reinvent yourself, and that's one of the nice things about being an academic...

C. Ekhtor: During the Women Law and Leadership Lab, we spoke to women from a wide range of professional backgrounds. We focused on the stories of these women—the paths they chose and the formative experiences along the way. In a way, the interview database will function as a written documentary—a time capsule of leadership and innovation. Can you talk a little more about the content of your own documentaries, how you started, and what led you down that path?

R. Austin: I got interested in documentaries because I was interested in ethnographies, and ethnographic filmmaking is the basis for documentary filmmaking. The first nonfiction films were ethnographic. And then I said [to myself], lawyers are making films—plaintiffs’ lawyers are making settlement brochures, criminal defense lawyers are making clemency and death penalty litigation videos...maybe we should think about doing video work in law school. The ethics of making video advocacy are somewhat different than the ethics of doing traditional advocacy—[in the form of] oral arguments and writing briefs. I just found it fascinating.

We got the equipment [and] we got a grant from the Vice Provost of research. I don’t think anyone in the law school had ever applied for one, so we got a nice chunk of money to start the media lab. The students who were interested were students who had done [video work] before. I had some familiarity with the process...so it just went from there. The thing that I most appreciate about what we do is that we work with public interest organizations and their clients, and most of the people who appear in our videos are Black or Hispanic. We try to portray people as agents rather than as poor pathetic souls begging for justice—these are people who attempt to solve their problems through requests for social justice. It makes me proud...that is not necessarily the way in which documentary films in general portray black and brown people. We get results [addressing the social concerns of the people we feature]—that’s the most important thing.

C. Ekhtor: Even within the same racial group, there are often differences in the amount of social capital men and women can acquire and exchange. In your experience, has this always been the case or are those differences newer stratifications within groups?

R. Austin: It is so tough to talk about these issues because I always talk about it in terms of domestic relations and foreign affairs—what goes on within the group is one thing, but then interacting as a group with other groups is something else. To a certain extent, black women have a power and capital that black men don’t have because...there are so many stereotypes about black men that contradict stereotypes about who lawyers are and what it is that they do. That’s part of it. When we are talking about academic [matters] I think there is some sense that black women [perform] better than black men.

On the other side, there is a notion that black women are emasculating and bossy—so there are stereotypes on both sides...those stereotypes impact our relationship with each other and our ability to navigate the wider world.

...I am interested in hierarchies and the ways in which groups compete with each other. There are a tremendous number of possible divisions...Folks who are first generation Americans may not have [the same] understanding of the historical baggage and legacy...that kids whose parents [trace] back generations to slavery might have. It is more a question of actually learning to negotiate that diversity, which is something that my generation did not have to do. Maybe we had to negotiate the gender divide, maybe there were some differences between folks whose families were rooted in the South versus folks whose families were rooted in the North. But you guys, I suspect, have many more differences in terms of class...[and] national origin and identity...So I think it's important to think about domestic relations and building cohesiveness through some of the mechanisms by which we talk about achieving diversity in the large society.

C. Ekhtor: Could you unpack what you mean when you say, “domestic relations” and also explore the implications of that idea?

R. Austin: Think about the students who comprise the BLSA [Black Law Student Association] now. I thought about it when we were trying to find a caterer for the...[BLSA] luncheon [held recently]...The question of food is one of internal relations...we were trying to do something for our group, [while] recognizing that our group is diverse and there are differences that we need to negotiate. And we need to find mechanisms for doing that...I don't think we work hard enough to do that. Nor do I think there is any space in [the law school] where the issues that I call “domestic relations” can be addressed as an academic matter. This is a failing...culture is sort of viewed as being not worth dealing with...almost everything we do here deals with culture, just that it is the culture of the white men who run large corporations, or white men who run the government, or white men who run non-profits...and by the same token, we don't deal with the culture of white women who run corporations or the culture of white women who run nonprofits. We tend to underplay culture altogether and that is one of the weaknesses of contemporary legal academy. We just can't seem to see how these things relate to the job that we are theoretically training you to take.

C. Ekhtor: At BLSAs annual Sadie Alexander conference last year, a professor on one of the panels spoke about mainstream expectations of a woman's timeline in terms of how she balances her career and personal life goals. This professor argued that mainstream culture has charted a certain specific sequence for life events: first school, then marriage, then career. She then said that black women typically do not follow this order. In light of these comments on the differences between black culture and that of the majority, what is your view on Sheryl Sandberg's assertion that the most important decision a woman will make is who she marries?

R. Austin: Culture is dialectically interacting with the material conditions that people experience, and culture is bombard by other cultures: you have a mix of the material world and the cultural world operating on different levels and bombarding one another. Black women's culture choices are to a certain extent ingrained and socialized [within] them, but they are also a response to material conditions.

Sometimes people do not adequately assess what their material conditions are, and the material conditions may have changed or may have gotten worse, so it takes a little time for culture to catch up.

The notion that the most important choice is the person you marry...that certainly wasn't how I was raised. I assume there are a lot of black women who were raised like me. And there are a lot of black women for whom the material world would not have provided much opportunity to do anything other than what they did.

One of the consequences of mass incarceration is that the number of people you could marry is not exactly the same as it would be without [mass incarceration]. So that clearly impacted people's choices with regard to personal relationships and reproduction. When we went through periods when women were having children "out of wedlock," and at an early age, that was due to the fact that if you wanted a healthy, male, black spouse you had to get him early.

Maybe [Sandberg] is right if she is talking about black women whose material world and...cultures are compatible with [those] she has in mind when she talks about women and their choices in marital partners. I think as a general matter, all women ought to think about the people that they marry. But at the same time the conditions of black people are different...it's not only culture, the material conditions are different. Some of it is a matter of choice and some of it is simply responding to what your material options are.

C. Ekhtor: What about the idea of "leaning in"? One common critique is that it is excessively normative and fails to answer for particular experiences of black women compared to their similarly situated white, female counterparts. One common defense against this critique is that the book is not meant to answer for social inequality, but rather to support the advancement of women by acting as a blueprint for women who want to stop holding themselves back. What role do you think intersectionality plays in "leaning in"?

R. Austin: I never quite understood what intersectionality was about, I don't think about it in those terms because I think about people as belonging to groups in which they have internal affairs and formulations. The notion of intersectionality in some ways sounds...like it's more a question of [saying], "you need to take me into account." And I am not sure that provides a blueprint for black women's agency...if you are dependent on someone recognizing the "intersection," or [think] that your job is to make people see the "intersection." My sense is that we have something good and we ought to sell it.

C. Ekhtor: "We" being who?

R. Austin: Black women...the notion that you could separate those two things—[social inequality and the advancement of women], that it is not about social inequality but about helping women get ahead...I think that there is [a notion] in black culture that those two things are intertwined...that is an intersection that I am not sure other folks [understand].

I think that is an area where there may be differences between and among various groups of black people in professional school because of their heritage. But I just wouldn't buy [the idea that social inequality can be separated from efforts towards the advancement of women]. There is nothing about my upbringing that would suggest that those two things are separate. And there is a whole lot in black culture that suggests that they are not.

C. Ekhtor: Many black women share that institutionalized professional reviews at law firms or other workplaces often veer into the realm of personality evaluations—in reviews, supervisors tell black women that we could be “more deferential,” “upbeat,” or “enthusiastic.” How would you advise black women who are going to work for organizations that are historically white, masculine spaces?

R. Austin: Persevere. This is where intersectionality begins to seem a bit hollow to me. That is a stereotype. My favorite book is called “Black and White Styles in Conflict.” We live in a time where femininity is confused with feminism. And [black women] don't fit the model. I just think you have to keep doing what you are doing. That is a real profound cultural difference and people need to accept us [black women] on our terms with regard to that. You think of yourself as competent, but you also recognize that you have to stand up for yourself and cannot be happy all the time when you deal with situations that obliterate your values, who you are, and your connections to other women. You just have to keep going...

C. Ekhtor: Literature on law firm recruiting talks about how it has become increasingly mechanical. Firms are looking for signals like top grades, law review participation, and notable extracurriculars to help them cut down the abundant applicant pool. From that point, firms are evaluating applicants for “fit”—in other words, firms are evaluating how a given applicant will assimilate to firm culture. This second part of the review process is where minorities tend to suffer because there is more concern around fit when talking about candidates of color, especially when it comes to black women. Worry over which practice group a black woman would fit into, and how she would handle the culture, often weigh against her candidacy. How can we increase diversity in the legal profession when “fit” plays a major role in the way firms recruit talent?

R. Austin: If you look at some of the careers of people who are a little younger than me...[to see] how they managed to wind up at some of these big law firms, you will find the trajectory has not been a straight line. They have found ways to increase their capital, and not by the usual path. Some of them were involved with minority firms that get bought out by the big firm...Or they have gone to smaller firms where they distinguished themselves...Or they...went into government work and then from government work they have gone into these big firms. Once again, our trajectory is different and that's important.

I also think that you will find that their commitment to the group never waned. And that it was of at peace with their own individual ambitions...when they got to the spot in the big law firm, they have used that as a springboard for bringing in other people and getting the firm to engage in certain activities they otherwise would not have. It is a different trajectory...otherwise you just have to be yourself, there is no getting around that.

You have to fight...The battle has not been won...It is not going to be as easy for you as my generation might have thought it would be...

C. Ekhtor: How early in her career can a woman start to be a gatekeeper and changemaker for the women who come after her? How can she calculate how much capital she has to expend, and know when to expend it?

R. Austin: ...Part of it is having people who support you. You are limited in what you can do the first 2-3 years, and after that you have more capital...but look around and see who is doing good stuff. [Ask yourself], “if I did something would they have my back? Can I join them in doing this?” All along the line you look for people who are good allies for what it is you’re doing, and if they have some clout then that helps a lot.

C. Ekhtor: Once we get women of color into these spaces what can we do to increase retention? Do you think the lack of retention with regards to black women is a sign of pathology in a given firm, or just a difference in priorities? Many black women express that the plan is to go to a firm for a few years before inevitably leaving to do what they came to law school to do. But for the women who plan to stay and up leaving, what can firms do to increase the retention of black women?

R. Austin: [Black women] have to have people who support [them] and [firms] have to show [that they] want people to stick around and are willing to do what it takes to get people to stick around. Some firms, like law schools, are not willing to pay the price to get people to come and keep them on staff...If [firms] wanted to find the top money maker or someone who is well connected, they would pay that person. So, if you are talking about a hot house plant, you pay more for a hot house plant than you would for one you find on the street...get that person opportunities to grow and acquire skills.

By the same token people have to decide if this is what they want to do with their lives. Sometimes taking a leave and doing something else [before] coming back may be the wiser choice. There are other trajectories, so people should think about that going in...Make certain the firm knows, “I might stick around if I am allowed to do this, that, and the other.” Figure out what it is that you want to do and make certain that the firm provides the opportunity for you to do it.

C. Ekhtor: Finally, one thing we have been trying to get at is the heart of leadership: its moral compass and its objectives, as well as the means it employs to achieve those goals. Can you summarize your own leadership philosophy?

R. Austin: No...As I said, you reinvent yourself all the time. It is not just that people are apolitical, [it is that] they don't know the history. Some of the history from my formative years has not been told in a way that is useful for today's up and coming legal professionals. I despair that you are going to have to reinvent the wheel. I see this push for social entrepreneurship, and I think back to the struggles of black women and white women in the civil rights movement, which you probably don't know anything about. We were there.

So, I guess [your generation] will have to learn the lesson again. Maybe when you begin to see the analogies to what went on before, [these analogies] will help you...but I don't know that there is anything that [my generation] can do to spare [yours]. We can't make our fights your fights—that's not healthy. So, we just have to wait until [your fights] come up.

That is the thing I find most disturbing—...you all will have to go through this all over again and fight the fights we thought we already won.

Ophelia Dahl

Ophelia Dahl, the daughter of two exceptionally artistic parents, actress Patricia Neal and writer Roald Dahl, grew up in the English countryside of Buckinghamshire, England, in a cottage her parents termed “Gipsy House.” As a young child, Ophelia was surrounded by her father’s stories—stories that bolstered her own imagination and desire to seek out interesting and meaningful narratives, “I often chose my friends for their moms, these warm, interesting moms, and I would drive over to these peoples’ houses, and, even if my friend wasn’t there, I’d stop in for a cup of tea and a chat.”¹ At eighteen, unsure of her next steps, and heeding her father’s advice to “go do something worthwhile, have an adventure, see a different part of the world, “she decided to volunteer at the Eye Care Haiti clinic. That decision would be instrumental in launching her 30-year journey of advocating for the health and rights of the poor. “Those were some of my earliest memories, being confronted very starkly with these terrible conditions and realizing, even as a 19-year-old with no skills, that something could be done. Which is not to say I could suddenly become an expert, but just making common cause and deciding that I would bring the fruits of my own privilege to a place where there was not enough.”² Channeling this desire to do more and alongside work partner, Dr. Paul Farmer, they founded Partners In Health, or Zanmi Lasante in Haitian Creole; an organization dedicated to delivering high-quality healthcare to the destitute sick and strengthening health systems around the world. Ophelia has dedicated her life to advocating for social justice and healthcare equity. Aside from being a trailblazer in the global and public health realm, she is a graduate of Wellesley College, serves as the vice president on the board of Roald Dahl’s Museum and Story Centre, and is chairman of Dahl & Dahl LLP, which manages the literary estate of her late father³.

Interview by Amy Woodward and Sarah Heberlig

“We realized that we did not have the answers. We were far too young to have the answers, and as you are suggesting, the community had the answers.”

R. de Silva de Alwis: We have Ophelia Dahl with us who has bent the arc of justice. Her movie, *Bending the Arc*, the documentary sharing her story, chronicles the life of three revolutionaries. The arc of the model universe has grown, but it bends towards justice. These three revolutionaries have bent it faster, accelerating the growth of the first global public health movement. Ophelia, we have twenty minutes to speak with you and two students, Sarah and Amy, who are going to interview you. They are looking at you as a trailblazer, movement-builder, history maker, and as a woman who continues to write history. We want you to tell us the story of how you went on to build the world’s leading public health movement.

¹ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/18/ophelia-dahls-national-health-service>

² <https://medium.com/partnersinhealth/not-just-one-persons-quest-8227dfe15771>

³ <https://www.pih.org/pages/our-founders>

O. Dahl: Well, I have to start by saying thank you very much, Rangita. You are giving me far too much credit. As you know, and as anyone in the room knows, anything that any of us does is because we are a part of a team. A big team, and not just us three. I love being called a revolutionary, by the way. It is a big team of people. I am so delighted to be with you all this evening.

S. Heberlig: Hi Ophelia, thank you so much for joining us this evening. You are an inspiration. I have read *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, *Pathologies of Power*, and have spent a great deal of time studying how to deconstruct structural violence. It is an honor to be able to speak with you.

My first question concerns how you have implemented community-run health initiatives. Something that I have always valued about Partners In Health is the dedication to dismantling large-scale structural violence through a grassroots approach—giving credence to community narratives and lived experiences and using these as the ultimate compass to delivering effective healthcare, rather than going into a community with preconceived solutions. I am wondering if you might share a little more about that approach of elevating community voices in an effort to address large-scale social inequality, and any barriers or rewards that you have encountered by taking this approach?

O. Dahl: Thank you for the question, Sarah. We learned most of this early on, and very organically. I was not an academic. I was side-by-side with two aspiring academics, so I learned a lot in the field from being invited into a community and being able to talk together as a team. We realized that we did not have the answers. We were far too young to have the answers, and as you are suggesting, the community had the answers. This is for a longer conversation, but a lot of the time, the idea that it was us that had the answers—it really was the communities that knew their diagnoses. Whenever you talked to a community about what the issues were, many of them would say poverty is our issue, or a lack of access, or the system. There was no shortage of complex diagnoses and analysis from community members who were from deep rural communities with no access to a formal education of any type, yet they knew their diagnosis better than we did. We realized pretty early on that we needed to team up with the community and be guided by the community. At PIH, we refer to it as accompaniment.

We knew that we could bring the experience perhaps, and the access to resources to a group in Central Haiti and be able to say, “You guide us. You tell us what you need. We will be by your side, and we will raise resources for it.” The community diagnosis was not that we needed one well, or that we needed one this or one that. The community diagnosis was that we needed a new system—the community told us that they needed a way to make money, a school for their kids, and a clinic to be able to have access to healthcare. I think partly because we were relatively young, and partly because we had been socialized for success, we felt that we did not know how to do all of these things, but we knew we could go back to people and raise resources to be able to do it. Then, we knew that we would have a team in the community that would help us build it. So, bringing the community in very early.

A quick story, Sarah. When we built the clinic— by we, I mean the whole community built the clinic—we opened the doors and people came and were very sick. We then quickly realized that there were a number of patients who were not coming. When we looked at why that was, we saw that some people were too sick to even make the hour-long walk to the clinic. That was when Paul—my colleague, Paul Farmer—and my Haitian colleagues, who were treating tuberculosis, noticed that a number of them were not getting better. We had made the clinic open and the medicines free, and still some of them were saying that they could not make it to the clinic. It was reasonable to us. They were too poor, too sick, and could not leave their kids at home. That is when we had this epiphany that we could not just open a clinic, even if the clinic was good. We had to make sure that we brought the medicine itself, and the healthcare, to the community. That is when we started employing community health workers.

“The community diagnosis was not that we needed one well, or that we needed one this or one that. The community diagnosis was that we needed a new system.”

R. de Silva de Alwis: This is a very important leadership lesson. One that we have been addressing and engaging with since the beginning of the class. The importance of learning from the context that we are in, rather than superimposing either a medical worldview or a western worldview. We must really learn from the context and from the geopolitics of the community with which we are engaging. That is really one of the most powerful lessons, and the hardest lesson.

Here we have Paul Farmer, a celebrated medical doctor and graduate of Harvard Medical School, going to Haiti with all of the answers. No. He was really listening, and then addressing those problems. I think that is a very important lesson.

I also would like to take a moment to remind our scholars here who have told me, many of them have written to me, and have said that their first engagement with the imagination came out of their engagement with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory or James and the Giant Peach. It is really a privilege for them to be speaking with the daughter of the author, Roald Dahl. You also head his foundation.

Their first engagement and experience with that part of the imagination was their exposure to Roald Dahl. I think that their first leadership lessons came out of their engagement with Mountains Beyond Mountains.

You, Ophelia, continue to build on their imagination and their inspiration. Thank you.

A. Woodward: Hi Ophelia, thank you for joining us and for your inspiration and work. During your Baccalaureate speech at Williams College last year, you contrasted the 7.0 magnitude earthquake in 2010 that completely devastated Haiti with a similar magnitude earthquake in Los Angeles just a few months later. The earthquake in Los Angeles barely disrupted the operations of the hospital you were visiting at the time. The United States had the money and the systems in place to withstand the earthquake and Haiti did not. In an interview with the New Yorker in 2017 you spoke of your father as an example of transcending training and about your own realization that there were ways to aid poor countries in global health besides becoming a physician, and you relate this to the “poetry of systems”. How do the local and national systems in the countries where your organization works and collaborate allow or disallow your success? Where have you felt that you have been able to have the most success in remaking health care organizations, and how have their systems - whether structural, governmental, educational, patronage or legal contributed to that?

O. Dahl: Thank you, Amy. One of the things that I have often thought about, and it did not occur to me for a long time, was that we think about systems, (and certainly governments), as barriers to being able to do this work—as monoliths. And one of the epiphanies for me was being able to see this on a local level. We knew as a group that at a certain point we would have to deal with the systems, although we started as a charity hospital. We built the first clinic for \$35,000 on church land with a church group—with friends we had made, and we knew we could get the thing done there. Then after a little period of time we thought, “oh my god, everyone is coming to this clinic. What do the public clinics look like?” And we looked around and it became clear to us that those public clinics were bereft of any medicine or lab tests or even minor things. We looked at each other and we knew at that moment that “oh man, this is going to so complicate our lives, but it is the right thing to do—we have to find a way to work within the system”.

But to your question, Amy, once we knew we needed to do that (I remember turning to Paul and saying “we have to work with a whole government?”) and he said, “governments are people, they are just people, they are civil servants, they got into this not to be part of some enormous system that does not work well but because they actually care about how things work”. So, one of the most important lessons to me at that point was actually making connections with people in public office, and we were out in rural areas, we were not spending our time in Port-au-Prince trying to convince governments, we were really making common cause with local officials and the local health district person. Often he or she would say, “Oh gosh, it would be great to get some help, and could you help me build a wall and could you help me build a lab” and that was really the connection—the connection was often in this very personal way with public officials and civil servants who really want to make a difference in these different areas.

R. de Silva de Alwis: So how we build common cause—how we build those personal connections, that is really the key to making change—to being change agents. How do we transform this idea that somehow has become part of the DNA of leadership that networking is important? There is no word that I hate more than networking because it is so transactional, and instrumentalizes the relationship, while building a relationship on the common cause is really what this is all about. And that is how you have changed the world Ophelia.

O. Dahl: Well, no we have not changed the world. My goodness, I sure wish the world had been changed. But, understanding and getting back to imagination, and understanding the small changes that we can make that are perhaps a part of the bigger incremental system. But Amy, did I answer specifically your question because it was a good and complex question and I wanted to make sure I got to the heart of it?

“We looked at each other and we knew at that moment that, “oh man, this is going to so complicate our lives, but it is the right thing to do—we have to find a way to work within the system.”

A. Woodward: Yes, you did but I have a follow up question if you do not mind. Have you been able to work with or enhance Rwanda or different countries’ healthcare systems more or less thoroughly or successfully — than perhaps Haiti’s or Mexico’s or West Africa’s (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and why?

O. Dahl: Yes, no question. It feels good that we have been able to do that in Rwanda, but actually we had twenty years of experience before we were invited to Rwanda to work. I do think that looking at political will and a robust government makes a big difference. When we were invited to Rwanda in 2005, eleven years after the genocide; we were invited by a government who had very, very specific instruction for us. That had never happened before. Most of the time PIH was invited to a place where they would say, “please make yourself at home and do anything you can do,” and we would say, “well we are guided by our own MO which is we work in the most remote areas, so we are going to go there because we think the services are far less there. We are not going to work in a capital city, et cetera et cetera”.

The Rwandan government said very, very clearly, “this is what we want NGOs to do. We do not want NGOs to come in and tell us what they think is necessary”. They were so clear. When we were there, there were a ton of NGOs helping to rebuild, each with their own set of rules and regulations and loads of money coming from the beltway in Washington. The administrative health government in Rwanda said, “actually, we do not need a couple hundred organizations all giving money from the US to treat HIV stationed in Kigali. Here is where we need you, and if you are willing to do that and take our advice then that is great. If not, the airport is over there”. I am telling you, NGOs were not used to that. There were at least 11,000 NGOs in Haiti at last count, and probably more, absolutely unregulated, untethered, unconnected, certainly unconnected to the government, because it is hard to work with the government. And I do not doubt that 99-percent of those NGOs in Haiti want to do a good job, no one chooses to do charitable work and think that they will spin their wheels and not try and make contributions.

So yes, is the answer. It has been much, much easier to make a difference and to work in a place where there is political will, accountability, a way to work, and clear instructions. At one point we said we think we are going to put more money in this district and the administration of health said, “no thank you, we are actually going to spread this around the country. Thank you very much for your suggestion,” and we said, “great, this is really important.” I say it with a heavy heart because sometimes those kinds of governments are not in place, or those ministries are not in place, so that is why we work sometimes at a local level more robustly, although we do not in any way, in any place, cut out the government, the natural government.

S. Heberlig: I know that something that Partners in Health considers in administering its programs is social determinants of disease—building a whole platform to address the confluence of factors that impact patients beyond a diagnosis slip. I think that there are a lot of similarities in the legal field. A lot of us aspire to eventually make an impact in the social justice realm. That said, once we graduate, we might feel as if we are leaving as specialists. We have these very specific tools of being a lawyer in a narrow sense, without the ability to simultaneously tackle the multitude of social determinants that would allow us to make a broader impact. How do we utilize our training to tackle these social determinants of inequality, health, injustice?

O. Dahl: What an interesting question. I think, Sarah, that this was an epiphany for me early on. You think that you have put into place these pieces—you say, we have built our clinic, we have our physicians, we have a supply chain, and we even have a lab. We have all of these things, but when the patients come in—and this was shared very poignantly to me by a clinician, a friend of mine who had gone to medical school here in Boston and then had gone to Haiti to work there for a little bit and spoke Creole and was a newly minted clinician—he sat in his office and was so excited to be connected to a system. He thought that if a patient came in and they said that they had a complex medical issue, he could point them to labs and the rest of it. He said what happened instead is that families would come in, and he would ask how he could help, and they would say, “My kids are not in school. I do not have a roof over my house. I am sleeping in the mud. I am hungry.” The problem was of poverty, destitution, and the social determinants of disease.

We realized that as a group we could not keep discounting this and saying that we were only interested in treating broken arms and malaria. The only way that we could address this is to say that we, PIH, do not have to be the ones that address it, but it must be addressed. So, if you keep pushing on that and saying, “We see that our clients, the people that are coming to us for legal help, they are coming to us with very specific issues and they are connected to the way these people are being forced to live. Domestic violence, drug addiction, etc.”

The most powerful thing that we—the people who have been trained here, who have a voice, and who have some muscle—is to say that it is not enough to do just this. That is what I have learned. It would be easier to treat clients in a legal clinic or a medical clinic and say, “Sorry, I wish I could help you with this,” but not actually address why they are coming here. Their sickness is because of poverty. Their legal issues are because of the ways they are forced to live. Shining a light on it is the way to do it. Then, offer a way to say that we cannot just be doing this. The complexity of these issues is why we are all here together.

A. Woodward: You have spoken in the past about life being a series of small choices rather than a one or two or a few major choices. What are some of the small choices that you have made that brought you to where you are today?

O. Dahl: I met my work partner early on, and then other friends that I feel inseparable from. Anything difficult that you do, really, anything difficult, it is important to find other like-minded people—people you trust, people you love, to be able to grapple with these things with you. I do think that anything worth doing is usually pretty complicated. I was lucky enough to meet someone who felt pretty visionary early on and I remember he was five years older than I, and I was sitting there looking at what felt like a morass of issues and I would literally hold my head in my hands and say, “I know I cannot go back to England now and rest easy, I have seen something that will never leave me if we do not find a way,” but I did not think for a second that I would be able to have all the answers. I just thought we will be grappling with this for a long time, but maybe what we can do is use our privilege in some sort of way to address this.

The reason I am bringing this up, Amy, is that Paul had a pretty clear way of thinking ahead and I felt as though maybe if we could get to this point and not think of this as alleviating poverty, not think about this in grandiose terms, maybe if we could think of it in small non-grandiose ways. Maybe think of it as solving this issue, and then this issue, and then this — that would be helpful. For example, I thought I had to go to medical school to be able to be part of this kind of a movement and to have real validity; it took me a while to realize no, I did not have to do this. I could actually roll up my sleeves in a different way. I would start off by doing an undergraduate degree and then I would do this. Then, I found out that I was actually pretty good at connecting people— this is too short of an opportunity to be able to talk about this—but I remember at my undergraduate college (Wellesley College), I thought I was doing pre- medicine, but then they forced us back into the classroom to do important things like English and languages. It was while I was in English class studying a specific sonnet by Milton that was about how he as a gifted poet would be able to address the issues around republican cause with Oliver Cromwell against the king. This feels far afield but it is really not. I remember thinking how does a poet like Milton who feels like his gift is to write poetry, but feels passionately about a political cause, work for that cause? It was really that that drew me in. I thought, “Can I do this without being a doctor...what is it that I can bring to this?”

At some point I thought, “I can bring an ability to connect, to communicate, to talk about this work, to use those connections that I have and to be able to incrementally bring people on this journey. I think this is what I have been able to do without saying I am a PhD, an MD/PhD, and a this and that, because I decided not to do that. To be honest with you, Amy, I still feel like I am doing that even right now— addressing a problem, but not having made much incremental progress, but more leaps and bounds.

Now we have twenty-five or thirty years of experience to build on in terms of the lessons we learned in Haiti, and the lessons we learned in Rwanda. Now, in a place like West Africa where being convincing about why it is most important not to just treat Ebola, but to treat and build the system that will actually prevent Ebola from happening in the first place. I feel pretty confident about my ability to do that, certainly not alone, but as part of a team.

R. de Silva de Alwis: Listening to you has been very magical for the students, and for me. The ways in which you connect Milton to social justice shows the power of the imagination which is a leadership characteristic; your idealism when you said, “I could not go back to England after what I had seen.” The way in which you use strategy, the way you say social change is an incremental approach and you cannot go back, you have to keep going. Then finally, what I think is the key to social change is the imagination. The vision in the leader where we imagine what can be, and what could be—the possibilities. Thank you so, so much Ophelia. You continue to give back in so many ways.

O. Dahl: Thank you. It has been a pleasure. I wish I could see the students. I feel like I am there with you, and I am grateful to be able to speak with you. It can be an ongoing discussion. Thank you, Sarah and Amy.

“The most powerful thing that we—the people who have been trained here, who have a voice, and who have some muscle—is to say is that it is not enough to do just this.”

Silda Wall Spitzer

Silda is a lawyer, entrepreneur, and former first lady of the state of New York. In 1996, she co-founded Children for Children (CFC), a not-for-profit organization, to engage children from an early age in volunteering and service. She served as President and Chair until 2007. CFC has become the youth service division of Points of Light. She was Managing Director at Metropolitan Capital Advisors, a woman-owned hedge fund. Currently, she is Director and Principal at New World Capital Group, a private equity firm, investing in growth, equity, infrastructure, project finance, and environmental opportunities, including energy efficiency, clean energy, water, waste-to-value, and environmental products and services. She is also co-founder and CEO of woman-owned New York Makers, a digital magazine and marketplace covering New York state.

Interview by Katherine Schroeder, Sarah Heberlig, Raisa Masud, and Katherine Gardner

“I look at this from a woman's point of view: I want more women-owned firms. So, it is important to me for women to get there. The hardest thing is to make the decision to do it. Pull the cord, hang up your shingles, and do it.”

K. Schroeder: One issue companies experience is an unequal distribution of recruiting efforts between men and women. For instance, women are often pulled in to do administrative tasks related to recruiting or interviewing. While it is very important for candidates to identify with their interviewers, this process means that women often have less time to develop their business portfolios. How do we ensure a more equal balance?

S. Wall Spitzer: Well, usually when this sort of thing happens it is because of a problem with upper-level management. Obviously, we need to make sure that women are part of recruiting because that is how we ensure that women keep getting hired and have a seat at the table. A better way to look at this might be to ask what women can do to support other women move up the corporate ladder. Programs like mentorships are incredibly helpful at getting around some of the barriers in place.

K. Gardner: What is it like for women in finance, as you are a preeminent woman in the industry?

S. Wall Spitzer: I often say I faked it until I made it here! Many women enter finance in the investor relations category, which, unlike in law, which really thinks the business development side is the most important, doesn't view this as important as it isn't the arm of the business that makes the money.

K. Gardner: What differences did you see at a hedge fund founded by a woman, and what lessons should other businesses take from this? I've read about studies done on hedge funds, how fewer females survive in the space but those that do have higher returns, and that often funders don't put as much money in ones run by women. What advice do you have for women in the space?

S. Wall Spitzer: More women need to be dealing with the assets and doing the financial analysis. This gets people a seat at the table. I often say you don't make money to make money but when you bring money to the table that is power. It allows you to do more. Companies are starting to look more at ESG (environment, social, and governance) metrics. I worked at a value-oriented hedge fund, which in general don't perform as well as they can. I started to look at investing in the green space. Karen Finerman, who is the host of CNBC's "Fast Money," ran the fund I worked at. She was a character I noticed even at small group events, if there was even one man in the room, the conversation was lackluster. However, when that one man left the room, the conversation became more comfortable, and people felt it was okay questions, from more basic ones to sophisticated questions.

Women have been trained to not ask about money. Discussions don't happen, as often women have been trained to "let your husband take care of the money." However, one-third of women in their forties have dealt with one of the "Three D's: Death, Divorce, Disease." Women are more likely to be impoverished in older age.

Women should think about investing now, in their 20's, at your all's age. There are many basic sites, such as Vanguard and LearnVest. Men will buy one pair of shoes and put the rest into the market. Women put a lot of money out of school into clothes and not into hard assets. Men statistically put more money into hard assets. Women need to prepare for these; we don't have a choice and delude ourselves that we do.

K. Gardner: How did you discover yourself as a leader or how did you plan to get to this point?

S. Wall Spitzer: Well, I'm from North Carolina originally. I loved to learn, and I loved challenges and working. I loved art and wanted to do art restoration. This didn't fit, as I took many art classes in undergraduate and found it was too easy. I wanted a challenge and more substance. I wanted to problem-solve. The law was a natural fit. I originally wanted to be a paralegal. A lawyer for my dad talked to me when I was thinking about this career choice. He said he trained his secretary Rosemary to be a paralegal. She did the same things he did, but he was paid three times more. He recommended I study and apply to law school, and if couldn't get in, then become a paralegal. This was one of the crucial points in my life as I had wise leadership and mentoring. Be yourself and find your passion and your motivation for moving forward.

K. Gardner: You are also very literary; you have been a part of two book clubs your entire adult life and are a fan of the classics.

S. Wall Spitzer: Yes, I have sustained this throughout this time. I strongly believe in lifelong learning. I recommend taking the most challenging classes with the hardest professors. You will be doing the work regardless so you might as well do it for the best and get the best feedback.

K. Gardner: How would you describe your attitude towards mentoring, both in finding mentors and seeking mentorship?

S. Wall Spitzer: Mentors will happen naturally. For me, one of my professors after undergrad, I worked at his firm after I had children. I was part time. I quit as we tried to 50-50 parent, but it ended up not working. So, I stopped working for pay. For other mentors, I asked a woman who worked successfully with a grown daughter, who attended Harvard, to mentor me. I still meet up with her occasionally. You are never too old to have a mentor. It is helpful to have someone who functions in the same environment. I strongly believe in having a strategic plan for life. When I was the First Lady of New York, I had to have a strategic plan, so I co-founded Children for Children. Everyone asks you to do everything. My predecessor said she had a moment when she realized she was doing too much when she was christening a ship, so she largely pulled back to private life.

For your life strategic plan, I believe you should start with what you want on your tombstone, then pull back to goals and objectives. Plan backwards. Look at the whole thing, your whole life: both family and career and life. You can have it all but not at one time, because there are limited hours and how you structure.

K. Gardner: Do you have any career advice for people who switched from law to business or for people who are interested in this in the future?

S. Wall Spitzer: Lots of women are in business development on at the firm side. I highly recommend getting your MBA. This is a great start. I had to learn most of this on my own, taking financial classes and learning by teaching myself. I got into the business side as I wanted to build sustainable communities. I wasn't thinking that I wanted to go into the business side so ended up in business development. I found the hedge fund game not to be satisfying because it was a game. I cared about the companies, so I ended up at New World with the technical and environmental operations. I wanted to work in impact investing and with ESG, and single, bottom-line companies (the public sector) to get the markets to move. After this, then the private sector will buy in.

K. Gardner: How do you get to the primary value driving side of the business? I once heard advise from a woman working at a financial firm to always work in the primary value line of the business as you are the person making money for the firm and will be most valued?

S. Wall Spitzer: Women need to talk to each other and learn, to hear other worlds. Sustainable businesses on the private side will work well, for example, rather than just going and working for Green Peace. For example, getting degrees such as environmental masters and combining with an MBA are valuable. Look and think outside of the box. I wish as a girl I had taken engineering classes and more robotics classes.

R. de Silva de Alwis: Your intellectual curiosity is so refreshing and so inspiring. You are the First Lady of this great city and you are saying, “I wish I had taken the robotics class. I wish I had taken the engineering class. I wish I could do more.” You have done so much. Sarah, I am going to ask you now to moderate the 2Ls. You had a robust bank of questions.

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much, Silda, for sharing your input and for previewing the questions ahead of time. They were put together by Raisa Masud, Jessie Sarkis, Lauren Altus, and me.

My first question regards being seen as a leader. As a class, we have been dedicated to pinpointing the characteristics of what it means to be a good leader, while understanding that such characteristics take on a different light when applied to women. When either given feedback or evaluated on their leadership, women are often told, “do not take it personally.” In reality, it is very personal. A lot of feedback and commentary surrounding women’s leadership has a personal tinge to it—putting the spotlight on micro- analyzing a woman’s appearance, behavior, and how we interact with others and leverage our emotions in times of crisis. It gets to the point where the personal overshadows professional capability, success, and aptitude.

How have you navigated this dynamic? Are there any sets of strategies or approaches that you have employed to keep the spotlight on your identity as a capable leader, businesswoman, and pioneer?

S. Wall Spitzer: Well, it is tough. You have to get in there and do things your way, but stay laser focused on what it is that you are trying to accomplish. It is about being the best that you can be at doing the job that you want to do. You get respect for that. I also think that giving respect to other people when they are doing the best that they can is very important. Again, seeking out those whose leadership is clear in any environment, and putting forth effort to work with them as much as you can, will give you a good role model to look at. You will get very good assignments when you are working with folks that are the leaders in the firm. I think that is important, as well as the culture of wherever place you go. You want to go to a place where you feel that you can thrive – there are some toxic people, as well as some toxic cultures. You want to make sure to check that out before you go into any of these positions. When faced with a toxic culture, you are going to want to leave that as elegantly as you can. In terms of a toxic person in these environments, if you cannot get away from them, then that may be enough to look at going to another place else if you know you cannot get around that.

“It is about being the best that you can be at doing the job that you want to do. You get respect for that.”

R. de Silva de Alwis: It is that elegance that is so inspiring—the elegance that you bring to your personal and professional life. Apart from that, your answer about both doing leadership work and also engaging with leaders is really a cornerstone of this class. Leadership is three-pronged. As a leader, you need to do leadership work, but also engage with leaders. That is why we are here—to engage with, and to be sponsored by leaders. This is the idea—by this engagement, you get sponsored because of your leadership work and not because of any other reason, because of your value add.

S. Wall Spitzer: If there is something that needs to be done, or you can see what the answer is, and you can propose it — that is number one. Number two is being willing to do it. Take it on yourself and do it— and do a great job. That is going to put you leagues ahead of those that are not more proactive.

S. Heberlig: I have a follow-up question on this siphoning out toxic cultures. Navigating toxic environments is something that we as 2Ls have been very aware of as we prepare to work at a firm next summer. Are there any strategies, questions, or ideas that have helped you more effectively pinpoint those questionable environments from the outset?

S. Wall Spitzer: It is hard at that level. I would try to talk to some folks who went to each firm and who are not a part of the interview team. If you have a personal conversation with the person who is being overworked and discuss their experience candidly—whether they feel respected or not. I think that is an important aspect. Sometimes you cannot always tell. Sometimes it can be great, and then a toxic person comes in. You cannot always know.

S. Heberlig: Thank you. On that note, I would now like to turn it to Raisa who had a question regarding how to leverage our time in law school for future success.

R. Masud: After Harvard Law School, you worked in Mergers and Acquisitions at Skadden and later at Chase. What aspects of your legal education prepared you for your leadership roles in the private equity space? Did you take business classes? I know you said, “fake it till you make it” and get an MBA, but is it possible to aspire to your leadership roles without an MBA?

S. Wall Spitzer: Absolutely. Not without doing the work unless you are a particularly gifted person from another planet. There are a lot of different ways in—you can go in as an engineer, accountant, or with a legal background. One of my really good friends from law school became a partner at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, then he became GC at Apple, then he went back to Wilson Sonsini, and now he is at a private equity firm as a GC. He did not go to business school; he had the whole facility from other parts of his life, and he loves it. But he is not one who is starting his own company. I look at this from a woman's point of view: I want more women-owned firms. So, it is important to me for women to get there. The hardest thing is to make the decision to do it. Pull the cord and hang up your shingles and do it. You cannot run a business without a business to run. You have to start living your dream. It's a leap of faith and confidence in yourself that you will be able to land where you want to land.

R. Masud: Professor Rangita de Silva de Alwis shared in class how we respond to and overcome pressure is important to our leadership qualities. You are a "media-storm survivor" and you have faced hardships in your life with "grace" and "bravery." You are a leader, and I am wondering if you would share your theory of leadership?

S. Wall Spitzer: I think one of the gifts I have—when things get really crazy, I really get calm. That is something that has served me well over the years. It is one reason why I did well at Skadden: it was the crazy days of M&A; we were staying up all times of night and day during proxy fights. If you can keep calm, not panic, then you can keep your eye on the ball. Ask yourself: what is it you need to get done? What is important? And stay focused on that. That gives you a sense of balance and resilience, so people can come to you, and you can figure out what is it that you need to do. Getting crazy will never make it better.

"You have to start living your dream. It's a leap of faith and confidence in yourself that you will be able to land where you want to land."

S. Heberlig: In preparing for our discussion, we all read a piece that you recently authored in the Harvard Business Review titled, *What Boards Need to Know About Sustainability Ratings*. I know Jessie wanted to know more about that.

J. Sarkis: What benefits have you found that companies gain by prioritizing sustainable business practices over those companies that have not?

S. Wall Spitzer: The shorthand is that they tend to be better run companies. They keep a long-eye out for the sustainability of their firm and tend to use best-practices. In one study, Harvard Business School found that for one dollar invested over twenty years, if that dollar were invested with a company that had strong Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), practices, the return was on average \$28. For companies that were not strong in ESG, the return was \$14. I think this differential occurs because in companies with strong ESG practices, you're going to have a more enthusiastic work force and you're going to retain talent a result of your more holistic focus. Governance practices will also be better because there will probably be diversity on the board which provides different perspectives for decisions being made at the oversight level of the company. Your management is going to be state-of-the-art because it will be thinking about future risks and opportunities. That is what ESG boils down to – when looking ahead, where are the risks and where are the opportunities? More importantly, looking at those risks and opportunities will lead to the best performance from your company. That's what the different studies have shown – that the ESG firms tend to outperform those that are less focused on ESG.

J. Sarkis: What do you think has been the current Presidential administration's impact on sustainability initiatives in the business world?

(No Recording) Ms. Spitzer explained that political dynamics can change the incentives associated with adopting sustainable business practices. Government policies – such as a carbon tax or changes in environmental regulation – can incentivize or disincentivize a corporate commitment to ESG.

She has found, however, that in spite of the current Presidential Administration's rollback in environmental protections, many companies have nevertheless reaffirmed their commitment to developing strong ESG practices and adhering to the regulations established under the Obama Administration (even if they have since been repealed). Additionally, because some states – particularly California – have adopted stricter environmental regulations relative to the federal government, there is added incentive for companies to continue to improve their practices.

“Governance practices will also be better because there will probably be diversity on the board which provides different perspectives for decisions being made at the oversight level of the company.”

S. Heberlig: In addition to taking an advisory role and offering insights on how companies can become more sustainable and ESG fluent, you yourself are also on the frontlines as an entrepreneur. You have pioneered a magazine and digital marketplace, NewYorkMakers. I know that Lauren was very interested in learning more about that.

L. Altus: NewYorkMakers seems to be a bit of a departure from the financial world. How do your experiences differ with private equity and a company that showcases items crafted by New Yorkers? I come from a creative background myself and would love to hear how your background as a painter may have inspired this work.

S. Wall Spitzer: One of the hardest aspects about doing something is making the decision to do it. You cannot “have run a business” until you have a business to run. NewYorkMakers is a passion project for me. Many other states have private, statewide magazines, but New York is so atomized. It was very important to me to create a publication that could bring New Yorkers together as a state.

When I was young in North Carolina my grandparents used to go around and sell little trinkets that they made. A part of me wonders if NewYorkMakers is just an extension of my Grandma selling the little things that she used to make.

“One of the hardest aspects about doing something is making the decision to do it. You cannot “have run a business” until you have a business to run.”

S. Heberlig: Thank you so much for sharing your narrative with us and for contributing to our own leadership journeys.

S. Wall Spitzer: I would love to share some parting thoughts with you all as you look ahead. I would recommend reading the book *Necessary Dreams: Ambition in Women's Changing Lives* by Anna Fels. It gives an excellent perspective on dreaming big but doing it in a strategic way. In terms of handling the workplace environment, I would recommend studying Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

CBT is something that I have studied and find very helpful in providing tools and strategies for listening and communicating with others. It outlines helpful ways to “feel good together,” by truly hearing others and focusing on listening to others. It gives ways to give others’ experience credence by hearing them, but not always feeling the need to step in and intervene to solve their problems. In terms of developing a long-term strategic plan, work towards understanding yourself now. Love yourself. Value and understand yourself. Learn where your motivations are coming from. Step outside of yourself to identify what is missing, and what you can give to yourself to make yourself feel loved and valued.

Once you capture this piece, remember to always hold resilience as a core value. Last but not least, maintain a fine balance with family, friends, exercising, sleeping, and eating.

“Step outside of yourself to identify what is missing, and what you can give to yourself to make yourself feel loved and valued.”

Tracy Ventling

Vice President of Human Resources, Basin Holdings

Tracy Ventling is the Vice President of Human Resources for Basin Holdings, a global, privately held energy and industrial services holding company. Before joining Basin Holdings, Tracy was an HR consultant for Mercer and has over 20 years of experience leading HR strategy and operations. Ms. Ventling holds a master's in business from Baldwin Wallace University.

Interview by Jessica Shieh

J. Shieh: I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to speak with me today, Tracy! I really appreciate it, and I thought you'd be an ideal person to interview because of your experience and leadership at Basin Holdings. To start off: before joining Basin, you were an HR consultant for Mercer with more than 20 years of experience in human resources leadership. Could you provide some details about your career path, as well as share some important moments in your career?

T. Ventling: Yes, definitely! I've actually done quite a few things in my career—I've done consulting, as well as HR for companies. I liked both of them, but I think it's nice to work for a company and lead your own HR department because you kind of "own" it. This way, you get to make an impact on the company and on the employees, and you're able to see the progress that happens. I also worked for Mercer, where you're more of a consultant, and you call on people that lead HR. That's a little different because they call you and say, "here's the problem we have; can you help us with this problem?" You help them with a project, but then you walk away. You don't really see what the impact is.

I think my preference is running an HR department, but I've kind of gone back and forth between consulting and HR for companies. I think it's interesting that you're talking to women, because women have different needs than men a lot of times—as a consultant, you have a bit more flexibility, so I was able to work from home when I had kids and had other things going on. But when you lead an HR department, you have to really be there for employees. I think that's one thing I did really like about consulting; the flexibility.

J. Shieh: Could you tell me a little bit more about how you came to Basin Holdings? Did you have a particular interest in the energy and industrial services sector?

T. Ventling: I didn't. It's odd—the company that I worked for just before Basin was called Businessolver, and I was in a leadership role in their HR department. It's actually a tech firm, kind of like Google. They had a lot of young people, and it felt like everyone had just gotten out of college. They had a tapped beer keg in the cafeteria, people wore weird clothes, and you'd look up and someone was having a parade for no reason. It was cool, but I felt like I was a little bit too old for that—and actually, they were hiring people that were older so they could calm down the environment. But I ended up leaving because I just felt like I was older than the culture there.

So, I saw an ad for my current position. Basin has about ten different companies, and they wanted to get everybody on the same page from an HR perspective and to put them all on one system. I've done that before, so I felt like I could really add value there. It's been interesting.

J. Shieh: Traditionally, the gender ratio has always leaned heavily toward men in the energy industry. Do you feel like you've faced any obstacles—whether interpersonal or institutional—as a female executive in a male-dominated industry? If so, how did you approach these challenges?

T. Ventling: Yeah. It's interesting—being in HR, I did have an initiative a year or two ago where I was working with a couple of the female leaders. We have two presidents who are women, and a couple of other women leaders across the organization, and I talked to them about this very topic. They all shared similar stories. Even being president of the company, because they're the woman in the room, people look at them and ask them to take notes like they're an administrative person. One of the woman presidents also said that men just treat her differently, whether it's her own employees or her customers, just because she's a woman.

So yes, I think there's definitely room for improvement there. I personally try to approach it as if—you know, you try not to make a big deal out of a lot of it. I think if you do, men almost become kind of afraid of you, if you know what I mean? They don't want to approach you if you're going to challenge them on this kind of thing.

J. Shieh: Did you always envision yourself as a leader, or was there a specific turning point when you began to see yourself as a leader and more actively strive toward a leadership role?

T. Ventling: I think when you start out, if you feel like you could do your boss's job in the role that you're in, then you start thinking "maybe I am more of a leader." That's how I progressed in my career. A lot of people in my generation have stayed at companies for a very long time, but I'm more like a millennial in the sense that I've worked at places for three to five years. Part of that is because I found leadership roles somewhere else and saw them as the next step for me, and I would move on to another company.

"...there's a huge part of leadership that's based on relationship-building. You shouldn't overlook that. The more relationships you have with people, positive relationships, the more you can accomplish."

J. Shieh: What leadership qualities or strategies do you think particularly contributed to your success, and what would you say your overall leadership philosophy is?

T. Ventling: I think a big part of it is being able to effectively communicate, which is really important. I see this a lot—if a leader is not a good communicator, it doesn't matter how good their work is; it gets lost. You need to be able to talk to people one-on-one, talk to people in a group, and be a good speaker. You also need to be able to think on your feet. Things are going to happen that aren't quite right, and if you can figure out a way to make people feel better in those situations, then you're viewed as more of a leader.

As far as a leadership philosophy goes—I think there’s a huge part of leadership that’s based on relationship-building. You shouldn’t overlook that. The more relationships you have with people, positive relationships, the more you can accomplish. If you need to go to someone for a favor, or if you need to influence someone in some way, if you have even just a quick conversation about, for instance, “hey, I heard your daughter is doing tennis,” sometimes that breaks down barriers in surprising ways. It just makes it so much easier to lead when you have personal relationships with people.

J. Shieh: In your opinion, are formal structures in an organization the best way to support women, and are there any policies or programs that you believe are particularly effective in doing so? Or, do you think informal mentorship structures are more effective?

T. Ventling: I think it depends on the organization. If you’re talking about a really large company, like a bank or something of the sort, having a formal structure might be more important. However, Basin, for instance, is not that big, so I think informal mentorship is probably more effective. That said, if you don’t have anything formal at all, these efforts tend to get lost. People forget about it.

J. Shieh: On that note, did you try to cultivate relationships with female mentors in the early stages of your career, or did you also seek out mentorship from men?

T. Ventling: That’s a good question. I think I probably had more female mentors than male mentors. I mean, I worked with, and worked for, a lot of really strong men in leadership roles, but I think the challenge for women is that the expectations are different. For instance, if you’re sitting and crying at your desk, that’s not what’s expected of you; men don’t like that. If a woman gets angry, it’s handled in a completely different way than if a man gets angry. You need to figure out how to navigate all of those differences. There are gender biases, and they’re not right, and hopefully someday people will recognize that. But right now, you need to be aware of these differences and biases and try to minimize them. If you find a strong female mentor who does that well, that can be really helpful.

J. Shieh: How can a young woman demonstrate strong leadership in the workplace when she is still in a more junior position in her career?

T. Ventling: Well, I was actually talking to Ashton [*Ashton Valente, General Counsel of Basin Holdings*] about you, as an example, and I think he was very impressed by you—you carried yourself really well, you speak well, and you’re a good communicator. I think you took on challenges that we may not have seen other interns take on, and you handled it really well. It wasn’t like you needed a lot of direction. Those are all really good qualities for a young woman in the workplace if they want to try to move up.

J. Shieh: In your view, what are the biggest challenges that women face in pursuing a fulfilling and successful career?

T. Ventling: I think that there are actually a lot of opportunities out there for women now that there haven't been in the past, and many of the challenges women face are really more related to their own personal lives. For instance, whether or not you're going to be a mother—those kinds of personal challenges.

I think women are always conflicted by what's traditionally expected of them as a woman and what they choose to do as a career. They feel like it has to be a choice, and a lot of employers kind of put that burden on women—that it does have to be a choice. That's slowly changing over time, but it's probably not changing fast enough.

“Don't let your career completely overshadow anything else in your life. Take time for yourself. Make sure you get that balance, and you're not letting your life pass you by.”

J. Shieh: When looking back, is there anything you wish you had done differently? What advice would you give aspiring female leaders in terms of better preparing themselves for future leadership positions?

T. Ventling: In terms of advice for aspiring female leaders: taking risks is one thing. If you're in a room with the president or a higher-level person, make yourself known and don't be fearful—go up and shake their hand. I also think women apologize a lot. They shouldn't be constantly saying they're sorry—they need to be promoting themselves more. I think women are taught to be quiet and to stay in their place, but they shouldn't let that gender bias hold them back.

As far as what I would do differently looking back—one thing I do like about millennials and this generation is that they value time off. Don't let your career completely overshadow anything else in your life. Take time for yourself. Make sure you get that balance, and you're not letting your life pass you by.

(Interview edited for clarity)

Rhonda Powell

Buzzfeed, Inc.

Rhonda Powell is the General Counsel and Corporate Secretary for BuzzFeed, Inc. Ms. Powell leads a team of attorneys and operations personnel that provides business and legal guidance to the organization on intellectual property protection, transactional matters, compliance, and risk management. Ms. Powell joined BuzzFeed in September 2018 after serving as Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary at Complex Networks, an array of video-first brands designed for young, diverse audiences. Before Complex Networks, Ms. Powell worked for 12 years in the Legal and Business Affairs department at Scripps Networks, overseeing business affairs operations for the Food Network and Cooking Channel. Ms. Powell started her career in the corporate group at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae LLP before joining the corporate transactions group at Proskauer Rose LLP, where she focused on companies with intellectual property assets. She graduated from Harvard University and the University of Michigan School of Law. She serves on the Boards of Directors for PowerMyLearning, an education non-profit, and the Food Education Fund, which supports the Food and Finance High School. Ms. Powell is a mother of three, and a mentor to dozens of students and young professionals throughout the New York City tri-state area.

Interview by Lindsay Holcomb

“I want young people to understand that they are so important to our desired outcomes in this country and this world. If we empower young people to create change and work with care and feeling for the greater good, the world is going to be a better place.”

R. Powell: In between my undergraduate degree and law school, I spent a year working at Bloomingdales in the Buying Department. I was a sociology major at Harvard, and I was interested in social behavior and fashion. I decided on the retail world because I was really fascinated by why people buy what they buy. How much is organic interest, how much is looking at trends, being captivated by certain colors and patterns. Unfortunately, there was not enough in the fashion world to hold my attention for more than a year, so I started to think about law school. I came at the law from a liberal arts perspective as I was mostly interested in going to law school to explore the historical mechanisms of the law, specifically, learning about the law from an anthropological and linguistic perspective and understanding how lawyers use language to distinguish the profession.

L. Holcomb: You started your career at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae and then at Proskauer Rose LLP. When did you decide that you wanted to be in house counsel and how did your work change through that transition?

R. Powell: I was a summer associate at LeBoeuf, and then I went back as an associate. The firm is now defunct, but in my three and a half years there, my work was focused primarily on deals associated with the insurance industry. By the time I got to Proskauer, I was a midlevel associate.

There, I started getting into more intellectual property work as my time at the firm coincided with the first internet boom. I was really focused on intellectual property assets, particularly in the digital space, in connection with any corporate-type work. After four years at Proskauer, I was scouted by a recruiter from Reuters. I was ready for a change, so I took the job.

Even though Reuters is most well known as a news agency, my work there was focused on the data and financial services side, negotiating complex commercial transactions. My work centered around the development of customized data products for investment banking and commercial banks. After four years at Reuters, I joined Scripps Networks, where I transferred my transactional IP experience into more media and entertainment work. I spent 12 years at Scripps, then went to Complex for a little over a year, before joining BuzzFeed. The group of lawyers at BuzzFeed is tremendously talented, and I feel privileged to work with such a wonderful group.

“The idea of work-life balance creates a standard that is impossible to live up to. If you’re trying to devote a certain number of hours per day or per week to your work and the rest to your life, it’s not realistic, and it causes anxiety.”

L. Holcomb: Several top news organizations have had reckoning with sexual misconduct in recent years. How has BuzzFeed made adjustments from an administrative perspective to address this changing culture?

R. Powell: My top priority at BuzzFeed is creating a feeling for all employees that they have a Legal Department who they have access to and who is looking out for them. I am very active, involved, and excited about the company itself, and I am very protective of its culture. I do not take for granted that BuzzFeed has a strong and beneficial culture not just for women but for everyone.

We have to work hard not just to preserve that but to expand upon it. There are still things that we can do to deepen and enhance our culture. From a #MeToo perspective, the ability to have open communication is key. That’s true from a preventative standpoint and as a means of addressing matters as they come up. I’m concerned with men withdrawing from full participation in companies and organizations, not out of anger, but more from fear. They don’t want to put themselves in situations with peers, subordinates, or other colleagues that may be misconstrued. That could have a negative impact on the development of important business relationships -- mentoring, peer support, etc.

Here at BuzzFeed, our People team does an excellent job of making conversations happen, and I hope that in my group, I’m doing a good job of making conversations happen as well. It’s so important to get to know your peers, to understand your peers. When you actually know someone, and you feel like you can have a genuine conversation with someone, you’re less likely to misinterpret something that they might say, and you’re more likely to call them on something that might be errant. I’m very encouraged by my kids’ generation because I do feel that they are very comfortable saying more and sharing more and being assertive.

L. Holcomb: The journalism world seems to be shifting to a model more reliant on the work of freelance journalists – most of whom are women – who don't have access to a structured HR team or lack the support to demand fair compensation, health insurance, etc. How can larger media companies protect these more vulnerable contributors?

R. Powell: I hesitate to call those individuals freelancers because I think that term miscategorizes scores of people. For what you are describing, I prefer the term independent contractor, and at BuzzFeed, there isn't a huge shift toward the independent contractor model. Some of the changes that folks perceive in the media world are in step with the changes that folks have seen sort of generally within the workforce. We need more of a national conversation about what a "work force" means and how to manage that. We also need to make sure that we understand what people want in their work arrangements – what's most useful for and comfortable for them. A lot of assumptions are being made that suggest no one wants to be an independent contractor – I know that not to be true. What we should spend more time on is broadening the opportunities that people have access to. The low national unemployment rate masks some of what is going on in the American workforce, which is often not a dichotomy between independent contractor and employee, but rather between fully employed and underemployed. The rate of underemployment seems to be creeping up; the failure to be able to access sufficient income to meet one's basic needs even while employed is a huge problem. As a country, we need to look holistically at our social contract and ask ourselves what it is that each American citizen or permanent resident should be entitled to as a matter of course in this country. In the 2020 election, that is going to be a core issue, and it will take leadership from our elected officials more so than from individual business organizations.

L. Holcomb: What would you say your leadership philosophy is?

R. Powell: I've been thinking about this a lot recently, and I think it boils down to care and nurturing. You want to rock the baby, don't shake the baby; counsel the baby, don't scold the baby. You want to be the enabler of all things that are good, and you want to be the shield against all things that are bad. From a leadership philosophy standpoint, I want to encourage and empower everyone who works with me to get everything they want out of their careers. That's the viewpoint that over 25 years of practice has given me.

L. Holcomb: You serve on the Board of Directors of PowerMyLearning and the Food Education Fund. Why are these organizations particularly important to you?

R. Powell: I spent almost five years at Scripps overseeing the business affairs group for Food Network and Cooking Channel. We launched Cooking Channel during that time. A woman named Susan Stockton ran Food Network's kitchen, and she became an important mentor to me. She was on the founding board of the Food Education Fund and asked me to join. The fund supports the Food and Finance High School, a public high school in New York City with about 400 students. All of the students can graduate with full culinary preparedness and licensures that allow them to go straight into the work force. Many of the students have personal, economic, or educational challenges, but the rate of success at this school is nothing but amazing. I've spent eight years on the board, and the cause is very dear to me.

As for PowerMyLearning, another mentor of mine, Carolyn Blankenship at Reuters introduced me to the board. The mission of the board is focused on education, specifically the relationship between educators, children and teachers. The idea is to create parity for students by providing teachers, parents, and students, often from challenging economic circumstances or limited educational resources, with a means of connecting to strategize the best means for the student to succeed. Education is incredibly important to me, and I'm especially committed to supporting children and young people.

“One of the most formative moments in my early legal career occurred when a mentor put me on a number of challenging projects, doing things I had never done before, and exhibited so much confidence in me that I came to believe it for myself.”

L. Holcomb: Along your career path, have there been any mentors that you've had that have pushed you to succeed?

R. Powell: I'm so fortunate because I've had a lot of mentors. I'm always talking about how important it is to cultivate mentoring relationships throughout your schooling and throughout your career. My first mentor was my sixth-grade teacher who told me at the beginning of the year that I should be valedictorian of the class. At the time, I was a very good student, but I was not the top student in the class. There was something about what she saw in me that made her make that statement, and I took it up as a challenge and worked really hard. At the end of the year, I did wind up being valedictorian of my sixth-grade class. That was an incredible experience for me because it enabled me to have confidence and security in the fact that the things I set my mind to, I really could do. I wasn't aware until that moment how smart my teacher thought I was. That one experience really carried me through my entire middle school and high school career and really was at the heart of why I chose a lot on my path – why I considered the colleges I considered, why I went to Harvard, and why I felt comfortable that I was going to succeed there even though I was coming out of a public school in Mt. Vernon, NY that was classified as economically disadvantaged.

“It's important to see yourself in the places you want to go, but in terms of mentoring relationships, I think you are more encouraged and more likely to enter into those challenging, competitive spaces if you've made a connection who doesn't look like you.”

R. Powell: Since college, I have had several mentors, both male and female. At LeBoeuf, I met Gordon Davis, one of only a few black partners at major New York law firm, and he gave me a vision of what was possible in my career. At Proskauer, Jack Johnson, who was then the only black partner in the corporate department, took me under his wing as a mid-level associate and shaped my view on what I wanted out of legal practice. He put me on challenging projects doing things I had never done before and exhibited so much confidence in me that I came to believe it for myself. There are many others as well, including Arnie Jacobs (Proskauer), Pat Guy (Scripps), Brooke Johnson (Scripps), Michael Smith (Scripps), my high school English teacher, Rosemary Martino... I could keep going!

L. Holcomb: Do you think that it's more important that young women lawyers are mentored by someone who looks like them and has shared experiences, or do you think mentorship should occur more organically along lines of mutual interests?

R. Powell: I believe that it's really nice to have a broad array of mentors. Just because someone doesn't look like you, doesn't mean you do not have a lot in common. Unbeknownst to you, they might have in their past, or in their cultures, things that connect the two of you very directly. I think the experience of connection when you least expect it is one of the best moments that you can have as a mentee because you feel understood. It's important to see yourself in the places you want to go, but in terms of mentoring relationships, I think you are more encouraged and more likely to enter into those challenging, competitive paces if you've made a connection with someone who doesn't look like you. Over my career, I have felt more confident entering spaces where I will be "the only" when I have a connection in there who looks nothing like me but who I have a relationship

with, and I know is going to look out for me. It indicates that the wall separating me from these spaces might not be as tough to break.

My experiences being mentored impressed upon me the importance of mentoring others. At any given moment, I'm mentoring several people, ranging from high school age to practicing attorneys. I want young people to understand that they are so important to our desired outcomes in this country and this world. If we empower young people to create change and work with care and feeling for the greater good, the world is going to be a better place. It's so important to cultivate personal responsibility.

L. Holcomb: I know that you have kids of your own. How did motherhood impact your career and vice versa?

R. Powell: I was at Reuters for four years and had three kids in that period. That was challenging. I'm a firm believer in "you can have it all," but you just can't have it all at the same time. There is way too much pressure on young people to do everything simultaneously. There is a time and season for everything. The idea of work-life balance creates a standard that is impossible to live up to. If you're trying to devote a certain number of hours per day or per week to your work and the rest to your life, it's not realistic, and it causes anxiety. I tend to look at things from the perspective of trying to be fully present with whatever it is I'm doing. If I'm at work, I'm just thinking about work, and if I'm at home, I'm just thinking about home.

"At this point in my career, I feel that I've gotten where I'm supposed to be in the exact timing that I needed. We live in a time when 25-year-olds are becoming billionaires, and everyone's accomplishments are broadcast all over social media. Young women need to be circumspect about some of these issues and take the pressure off of themselves."

In most cases when folks are discussing work life balance, they begin to discuss working from home and alternative arrangements, and I think a lot of that can create more anxiety than it solves if it's not approached in the right state of mind. If the thing that you think will help you achieve work-life balance is taking work home with you, or bringing your laptop with you on vacation, I'm not sure what type of balance you're achieving, and I don't think that's particularly helpful. I take vacations very seriously. If I'm on vacation or someone on my team is on vacation, I make it a point to not contact that person with business matters unless it is absolutely necessary. I don't expect that person to be checking their emails on a regular basis. I try to model this for my team as well. If I'm on vacation, I'm not checking emails constantly, and I won't respond to anything unless it's completely urgent.

If you try to do everything simultaneously, you're going to burn yourself out. I had no delusions that I was going to have twins and go for partner this same year. It was never in my heart to do things that way. I took a little time off to have my kids but not a lot – just enough so that I went back to work before I made them neurotic. At this point in my career, I feel that I've gotten where I'm supposed to be in the exact timing that I needed. We live in a time when 25-year-olds are becoming billionaires, and everyone's accomplishments are broadcast all over social media. Young women need to be circumspect about some of these issues and take the pressure off of themselves. Thinking about what's really important to you and the type of life that you want to lead both in and out of the workplace can be tremendously helpful.

Vanessa Liu

Vanessa Lieu has a fascinating career being a business builder, a digital media entrepreneur, and a technology innovator. She pursued a non- traditional career path after graduating from Harvard Law School. As a mother of two, she has helped launch six businesses, including a digital media venture fund, Trigger Media, and two portfolio companies. Recently, she is heading the Enterprise Health-Focused Startup Accelerator Program in New York, which focuses on helping B2B startups founded or led by women and diverse entrepreneurs. Previously, Vanessa worked as an Associate Partner at McKinsey & Company's Media and Entertainment Practice, based in Amsterdam, London and New York.

Interview by Charlotte Yin

C. Yin, Penn Law Student: Hi Vanessa, I wanted to thank you again for accepting my interview and agreeing to become a part of the Women Leaders in Business and Law Database at Penn Law. I am very impressed by your vision, your passion, and your incredible time management skills. I am sure many people who read this interview can be inspired by your story.

After you earned your law degree, Cum Laude, from Harvard Law School, I saw you chose a path less traveled by typical law students by beginning your career at McKinsey & Company. What motivated you to begin your journey in consulting, instead of law? What types of impact did you hope to achieve by being a consultant?

V. Liu: I knew I wanted to be a consultant before graduating from law school. After I finished the first year at Harvard Law School, I worked at McKinsey for three years, and then I went back to Harvard to finish my law degree. By that point, McKinsey was paying for law school, so I got a golden hand cup to go back to McKinsey. But it wasn't just that. I summered at Cleary right after my 1L year. I was pretty sure that I was more interested in working at McKinsey than I was working at a law firm. Based on what I was good at, I felt the impact I would have was more suited to management consulting.

“When I decided to start my own companies, I felt like it was now or never.”

I stayed at McKinsey for another six years. I was part of the Media practice, responsible for transforming digital business plans into real businesses for media clients. I felt that this type of work was very operational. I would go in, practice business plans, and then was the person on call to essentially launch businesses. Towards the end of my career at McKinsey, I realized that I didn't want to give good businesses back to clients to run. I really wanted to run them myself. So, when I moved back to New York, I joined a business partner to launch our start up studio, when I started companies from scratch, we founded six companies in six and a half year. After the end of that, I decided that I want to help women and entrepreneurs. When I was thinking to start my own fund, I was called by SAP.iO foundries to do that. I joined in January 2019. There is never a great time. You need to ask yourself: Are you doing something that you really love? Are you really happy about it? I felt like it was something I really wanted to do.

C. Yin: Thank you so much for telling us more about your fabulous career path! I have many questions for you, Vanessa. I am sure many people who want to start their own businesses don't have the courage or the resources to do so. When did you think you were ready?

V. Liu: I was ready to start my own companies at McKinsey after many years. I actually just had kids. When I decided to start my own companies, I felt like it was now or never. When they were younger, I felt like I was able to take more of a chance. I could be more flexible and do the

C. Yin: How is your day different when you worked at McKinsey, at your own firm, and now at SAP.iO Foundries?

V. Liu: McKinsey was very business focused. It's about helping the clients. When you are an entrepreneur and working for yourself, I provided very practical advice for the startups. It was a little bit similar to consulting where I advised the clients. But at the end of the day, I focused on building an ecosystem for startups and seeing how startups can work together. I felt I had a lot more resources to help these companies.

C. Yin: What barriers are significant to women in the technology industry? As the society becomes more aware of these inequality issues, what issues should have had more attention?

V. Liu: When it comes to the tech sector, so much is about making sure you have the opportunities to get in, and once you are in it, to get a support network that is going to sponsor you and lift you up. We just had an Inclusion Breakfast this morning. A lot of times, when women of color go into a tech company—I am thinking more of a corporate tech company, because the number of women is fewer, they don't find there are enough people who are like them. That's a really big issue.

C. Yin: I am also curious about the organization you with right now, the SAP.iO Foundries. Could you tell us a little bit more about it and how does it improve the ecosystem for female entrepreneurs by having a female leader?

V. Liu: Of course. I own the early-stage venture arm for SAP. For startups from seed stage and a little bigger, what we do is all about finding B2B startups to work with and figuring out how they can work with big companies like SAP. I run Foundries, which is an accelerator, in New York and San Francisco. We do two cohorts a year in various locations around a specific theme. This year, we worked with healthcare companies and HR tech companies. I also worked with AI and knowledge companies. It's a very pure way for startups. We provide technology support for companies and help companies integrate.

“There are now so many great resources for female entrepreneurs, from women-focused VCs to accelerators that focus on helping women. But in terms of numbers, VC dollars, as you know, could be a lot more for women and for minority entrepreneurs. That's why I think there is a very special role for corporate VCs to play.”

There are now so many great resources for female entrepreneurs, from women-focused VCs to accelerators that focus on helping women. But in terms of numbers, VC dollars, as you know, could be a lot more for women and for minority entrepreneurs. That's why I think there is a very special role for corporate VCs to play. Like what I do at SAP, 40% of the companies we invest in and accelerate are by women and diverse entrepreneurs.

C. Yin: You mentioned in your bio that you are looking for the next wave of opportunity that will make a big social impact in areas typically underinvested by businesses and governments (such as cleantech, global health, elder market). I am also working for the Wharton Social Impact Initiative here at Penn. What do you hope to see in the next ten years?

V. Liu: We actually did a whole cohort in New York in this frame, where we worked with eight companies in social impact. Four of them are doing diversity and inclusion. The other half are doing sustainability, agriculture, and clean energy.

It's not about driving a large bottom line anymore. It's also about bringing some type of good that benefits the society. That's what people are looking for. If you look at consumer brands, that's what people are demanding nowadays.

C. Yin: Are there any issues women have an advantage to solve for?

V. Liu: It's more about the diversity of thoughts and being able to have differences. One of our founders, Jasmine—her company is called Gooder.co—started a company which is all about food waste management. She directs excess food from universities, communities, and stadiums to local communities' needs. Of course, you can do a lot of one off of this. But she is doing this as a business because of her point of view. Her point of view allows her to identify the problems and find solutions for it. That's why I think it's so important to have diversity and differences in founders. It's about 50/50 everything. I want to see companies founded by all types of people, then you have an inclusive perspective of what being solved for.

“I want to see companies founded by all types of people, then you have an inclusive perspective of what being solved for.”

C. Yin: As a female leader and a high-impact entrepreneur, what one piece of advice would you give someone starting a company?

V. Liu: You should be really focused. The product you sell for is going to be solving something that is a big problem for many companies and customers. It hasn't been focused on before. And then, I think what you need to do is to understand it takes a while to found a company. You need to have folks who support you and lift you up.

So, it's really key to have enough resources—from the funding side, getting mentors, getting sponsors, to getting people to read your pitch deck. This is something I feel like a lot of women hesitate to get help early on, but men don't. The power of network is so important especially you are starting something.

C. Yin: Why would you say women tend to hesitate in networking? What prevents women from success?

V. Liu: It's a little of "Oh, I don't know if I should ..." Networking is like dating. When men are rejected, they will send a message to the next one. Women will be like, "I can't believe that person would turn me down." You are thinking so much about it. It is a fear of rejection. It's not a criticism, but you should embrace it because you can learn so much.

C. Yin: I am the first person in my family to attend law school. I will definitely try this networking technique more. I know you are very successful in your career, but what you wish you would have learned if you could begin your career again?

V. Liu: I really do wish I did the networking thing earlier. I didn't learn it when I was at McKinsey. I wish I would have known that more. What does that mean? It means knowing people and having people to call upon. I wish someone had told me that when I was still in school.

C. Yin: Do you have any advice on how to maintain a good relationship? Students meet numerous people from events and via alumni networks, but how to maintain a meaningful relationship has always been an issue.

V. Liu: There is this one book you should read. It's called Meet 100 People by Pat Hatley.

For me, you will get that from the book I recommend, it's more about: What are they [your mentors] thinking about and how can I help them? You might think that you might not be able to help them but that's not true. You can help them recruit for people who are young or do different things. There are plenty of ways you can help people to keep in touch.

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Former top United Nations official and Bok Visiting International Professor at Penn Law

Radhika Coomaraswamy was the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the first UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women. In 2014, she was appointed as Lead Author on a global study on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, on women, peace and security. In 2017, after atrocities against the Rohingya people, she was appointed a Member of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. In 2019, Radhika Coomaraswamy joined the Penn Law faculty as a Bok Visiting International Professor. Radhika Coomaraswamy earned her B.A. from Yale University, her J.D. from Columbia University, an LLM from Harvard Law School and honorary PhDs from Amherst College, the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Essex, and the CUNY School of Law.

*Interviews by Emi Mitani, Marie-Sophie Revault, and Astrid Lindfelt.
Moderated by Associate Dean Rangita de Silva de Alwis.*

E. Mitani: I understand that you highly value the partnership of men in implementing the women, peace and security agenda as you once said "as an agenda that benefits societies as a whole, men must also increasingly become political advocates and leaders in implementing resolution UN SCR1325. " What would you say are the most important actions that we should take to involve more men in addressing challenges faced by women?

R. Coomaraswamy: Well, I think to some extent, especially in the area of women's peace and security, especially if you look at it from the perspective of the security council, men are very involved in that process. In the counsel, peacekeeping operations, and peacebuilding operations, more men dominate. The key is that they know to let the women in at the table so that women are allowed to become both decision makers and ambassadors in the counsel. We want more women in peacekeeping operations, especially at high levels, we want more women representatives in government. Secondly, they are sure of the protection of civilians during war in zones of conflict and the need to ensure gender sensitivity, to have more women in the military and more women in peacekeeping. Nevertheless, the men are also extremely gender sensitive. In post-conflict situations, it is very important to have women in the decision making.

"For women, education and health are the number one priorities. Thus, one way of making sure that those are involved in the development phase and especially in the emergency phase [in a conflict situation], is to make sure that more women are in the process."

E. Mitani: Education is often given less priority in a post-conflict or an emergency situation. Under such circumstances, how would you advocate for a gender perspective to be integrated into educational development? I would like to hear your advice and ideas as I believe the right to quality education is one of the key elements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

R. Coomaraswamy: In a conflict situation, the whole world, and the countries involved are in emergency mode. The education given in refugee camps for example is primary education. Once conflict stops, you move into development. There, education plays a key role. But you will find—this is not only in the conflict—that there are only male decision makers. Infrastructure will be developed, market economics will be developed, but people will not put facilities into education. But for women, education and health are the number one priorities. Thus, one way of making sure that those are involved in the development phase and especially in the emergency phase, is to make sure that more women are in the process. They will make sure that education is given its emphasis. I think we should persuade men that instead of making roads, transporting, and getting there to export markets, the most important thing is to build the social fabric of your society.

M. Revault: You once said that “there is a significant gap between language inscribed in our security resolutions, our declarations, our actions plans, and the actual reality of women’s participation in decision- making when it comes to peace and security issues.” Indeed, with regards to women’s rights and human rights, in particular, there is often a discrepancy between what is written and what is exactly implemented in practice. What are your views and your ideas on how to bridge that gap?

R. Coomaraswamy: I think one has to look at these issues from a broader perspective. I think a lot of the UN’s aspirations, their norm setting, their framework from which a world can be united, is a good thing and it is important to have. I prefer a hypocrite to someone that has no laws or no standards. Thus, we have all of those laws and standards, we have the international norms. But implementing them, alongside a strong international drive, should be supported by local governments and organizations. It is only when both work together that a difference can be made, and things get implemented. If it is only internationally driven, then things cannot properly happen.

M. Revault: Recently there has been a drive towards the private sector and corporations being involved in the implementation of those international norms, especially in human rights. Do you think that it is useful or is that bypassing the national governments and thereby not creating an actual implementation of such norms?

R. Coomaraswamy: I am not a fan of getting corporations involved in the implementation of international human rights law. But what they can help you do is through PR; they can spread the message about human rights. They can be involved, but they shouldn’t be the decision makers.

M. Revault: Throughout your career, you have visited many conflict areas around the world and have written reports on domestic violence in different countries around the world. You have gained a truly global perspective. What would you say are the most important actions that we should take at a global scale to break the boundaries and barriers that women face to work and to attain leadership?

R. Coomaraswamy: Sally Mary Engels has an interesting angle on how to deal with these issues, especially with regards to violence against women. She says that it is the global duty to make the standards and make the laws, but in the end, what and how it is implemented would differ in different cultural contexts and situations. She did some studies in Hawaii, and some studies elsewhere, and she showed how a lot depended on the social realities in those countries. Thus, I think, especially on issues of violence against women, the international community can set the norms and the standards. But I think a lot of the movement has to come nationally.

A. Lindfelt: Throughout your career you have served as an advocate for persons affected by conflict and persecution, and persons who have suffered human rights violations, especially women and girls. More recently you were part of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. Could you tell us a little bit about how you ended up on this path, and additionally if you have a leadership philosophy?

R. Coomaraswamy: With regard to how I ended up on this path, first my family in Sri Lanka was very close to the Indian independence movement. I grew up with Mahatma Gandhi all around me and the sense of rights. Then I was in the United States during the time of the American civil rights movement and I was deeply influenced by Martin Luther King, the peace movement, the women's human rights movement. So, it was very much my framework of that era, of the late 1960's and 1970's. When I went back home, I took that framework with me. I tried to deal with issues in Sri Lanka and in the region through that framework. I was then honored to serve on the international stage. Human rights came to me when I was quite young, from the independence movement in Sri Lanka and in India onwards.

In relation to the question on if I have a leadership philosophy, I have watched in the private and public sectors, I do think that there is a masculine leadership style and a feminine leadership style. I think the masculine leadership style is very much driven from the top, very much goal oriented. While I think as I have watched, the female leadership style, is more consultative, it is more compromise-oriented—it is based a lot on Carol Gilligan's work—and I have seen this operate. It is not that women are angels, but they prefer to make decisions through consultation rather than to drive it. I have read somewhere that the female leadership style will win out in the long run because people now do not want to be driven, they want to be consulted, they want to be spoken with. It is hard to drive things anymore so clearly. You can have such leadership once decisions are made, to implement them, but the leadership style is based on consultation and compromise, as long as it does not end up in chaos. I prefer the female leadership style.

“There are generally two styles in which leaders can lead: one is to set the goals and drive, everyone must follow, and you drive; the other is more through consultation, compromise and negotiations. [...] I prefer the latter.”

R. de Silva de Alwis: Carol Gilligan was someone who created this kind of dual styles—that men and women have different styles of leadership—but in class we have been talking about that sometimes those are also stereotypes. The fact that men and women have different styles can be an overgeneralized statement and can be essentialist. What you are saying is that you did challenge it at the beginning?

R. Coomaraswamy: Let's take the masculine and feminine out of it. There are generally two styles in which leaders can lead: one is to set the goals and drive, everyone must follow, and you drive; the other is more through consultation, compromise and negotiations. Those are the two frameworks that are possible.

R. de Silva de Alwis: Can you give us an example of how you created this collaborative style of leadership at the UN?

R. Coomaraswamy: Firstly, I think the collaborative style works in small organizations. If you are running a huge bureaucracy, it is difficult, but then you have a collaborative style with your senior leadership. I ran a small division—Children and Armed Conflict—and I think we were quite collaborative, and we made decisions every Monday during our meeting. Most things were discussed as a group and I think we functioned quite well, in the sense that I did not tell them “we will do this, and you have to do that.” But for big organizations, the collaboration has to be among the senior managers.

A. Lindfelt: As someone who is very interested in a career in international human rights, I was wondering what advice you have for young women wishing to pursue this field?

R. Coomaraswamy: I think the first thing is, go to the field, when you are young. My success, if I have some, was because I went back to Sri Lanka and worked twenty years, first at the national level then at the regional level. If you try to go into the UN especially, you will be taken in at the lowest level and you will not rise very fast. But if you have really good work experience and you can come in at different levels into the UN, you will rise fast, especially in human rights. It is best to first go the field with NGOs or something else first.

R. de Silva de Alwis: In the seventy years of the United Nations there has not been a single woman heading the UN, although we saw a whole group of very prominent women running for the highest office in 2016. We still have not been able to break the glass ceiling. Do you have any thoughts on that?

R. Coomaraswamy: Well, it is the Security Council that decides, and it has to get a consensus of the most diverse political opinions. The women were very dynamic; however, I think they wanted someone who will keep the UN going until the climate changes. Guterres has experience having served as the Prime Minister of Portugal, he was also the head of UNHCR and knows how to work with difficult governments and different stakeholders.

R. de Silva de Alwis: That is interesting, Guterres already had a head start. Women are not heads of state, so women have not gotten the experience of working with difficult governments, negotiating and power brokering. It creates an unfair advantage.

“Male mentors are crucial—especially in my generation, if you did not have a male mentor you didn’t have any. [...] There were no role models, you had to create your own role.”

R. de Silva de Alwis: You are somebody who has been mentored by male mentors, so male mentors have a large role to play in sponsoring women.

R. Coomaraswamy: Male mentors are crucial—especially in my generation, if you did not have a male mentor you didn’t have any. There were only men at the time, there weren’t any women working in the same field. There were no role models, you had to create your own role.

R. de Silva de Alwis: What are the challenges you faced as a woman in some of these areas?

R. Coomaraswamy: As you work under the Secretary-General, you also sit on the Secretary-General’s cabinet. And at that time there weren’t many women. There were only two women in fact. And I noticed that we were always sitting at the two ends of the table, far away from the centers of power. You felt totally intimidated. My first two meetings I didn’t say a word. Huge names are sitting around the table, it is very intimidating. One day I said to myself that I just needed to break my silence, break the silence. And so, I worked hard and finally broke my silence. I broke the silence not talking about women and children but broke the silence talking about a political issue. It was strategic, to show that we can talk about anything.

M. Revault: When did you know or decide that it was the moment to break the silence?

R. Coomaraswamy: After two meetings. I know that I can’t go through more than two meetings without saying anything. It was after I was completely prepared and ready to do it.

R. de Silva de Alwis: You have to be the most prepared in the room.

R. Coomaraswamy: Exactly, it was after I was completely prepared and ready to do it.

Maria-Pia Hope

CEO, Vinge

Maria-Pia Hope is CEO and Managing Partner at leading Swedish law firm Vinge since April 2012. She specializes in banking and finance, insolvency and reconstruction. Her excellent work has been recognized in many ways, and that is why she is the Chair Emeritus of Lex Mundi's Managing Partner's Committee, and was on Veckans Afärer's list of the 125 most Powerful Women in Swedish Business in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Additionally, Ms. Hope is selected as IFLR 1000 Women Leaders 2019 and 2018 as well as being ranked as Highly regarded at IFLR 1000 2019. Maria-Pia Hope holds law degrees from Lund University (LL.M. 1993), Edinburgh University (ERASMUS student 1993) and Harvard Law School (LL.M. 1994).

***Interviews by Sophia Gaulkin, Damini Kunwar, Astrid Lindfelt, and Paola Valderrama Ortiz.
Moderated by Associate Dean Rangita de Silva de Alwis.***

"It was actually my male colleagues—partners on the board—that pushed the [diversity] target and wanted us to take this initiative."

A. Lindfelt: To address the gender imbalance at the senior level, Vinge implemented a five-year target of hiring 50% of female new partners. At the end of this initiative, what advice would you like to give to other legal employers in Sweden, in Europe and the world?

M. Hope: Thank you, that's a very good first question. You know when we set this target in 2014, I have to admit that I was personally slightly hesitant. Would a target really make a difference, would it really work? It was actually my male colleagues—partners on the board—that pushed the target and wanted us to take this initiative. Their argument was well we have a number of successful senior lawyers within the firm, partners, but we would like to have more. We're not mirroring at senior level what it looks like when we recruit, where it's been essentially 50-50—the percentage women, the percentage men—that's not mirrored at senior level and so the argument went we have to do something proactively in order to make that change. And as for the target, I have to admit myself, slightly uncertain as to whether as aggressive of a target as 50% would be right because frankly I thought it was quite aggressive and I had to think "will this work?".

I have over the years that have passed since 2014 been persuaded that it was actually a really, really good idea to set, I wouldn't say aggressive but ambitious target because I have seen first-hand quite a few things that it has brought about. For instance, I have seen that more women have raised their hand and said, "so I would like to become partner, what do I do?" I think that's on the basis that the perception is the firm is really committed, which we have been, to making sure that we have better diversity at senior level. And so more women colleagues have felt—well the firm's committed, it's clearly a wish to make sure that diversity is at the forefront—"I would quite like to be partner".

I think it's quite as simple as that, that the commitment of the firm has meant that more people, more women, have actually considered the partner career. And so that's really been, I think actually the most persuasive thing for me when it comes to thinking about targets. I think that has been really, really helpful. We haven't actually done all that much more in terms of coaching, mentoring initiatives than we did before but the target itself has been useful. And I think you know on your question— "what advice do I have?" —I think actually to do something that's measurable, to make sure that you actually do follow up and have a conversation. That's the other thing that the targets have led to, we have been able to have much more lucid conversations in connection with partner intakes as to how we should be thinking. Not to say that that has meant that we have had a skewed thinking about how we should progress women. Our thought for the game at the outset was, this is obviously stating the obvious, we have a lot of talented women. We have an extraordinary talent pool, we know that women can succeed, we just have to make sure that we are more diverse at senior level, that we're really, really making use of the talent pool that we might have, cultivate that, make sure it's still around at the time when partnership is on the cards. I think the target has been very good, it has been focusing everybody's mind. I would recommend it, I know however from experience that quite a few shy away from it because they view it as quite an aggressive thing, it's quite a difficult thing to achieve. Then again perhaps start somewhere—I think to start with something relatively concrete—that's actually normally quite a thing in my experience.

D. Kunwar: I know that the banking and finance side tends to have an unbalanced number of men involved, on both the leadership side of the client and the law firm itself. So, I was wondering how you navigated this challenging dynamic, and I was wondering if you found any challenges in being a woman in a male- dominant practice area, and if so, how you overcame any stereotypes you faced from either your clients or your supervisors.

M. Hope: Well, thank you, again, that's a very good question. I think my own personal experiences have been naturally quite a relatively happy one, in the sense that I—and maybe that's the Scandinavian experience—we have quite a lot of women lawyer principals with the banks, and clients are also women...That is marginally helpful in the sense that it means that we are more diverse. And that was also the case when I used to work in London and I had continued to work with women in the market and again, met quite a lot of really, quite successful women lawyers in the large U.K. firms in the banking and finance field. And certainly of course the finance sector is male dominated. I think...I don't want to exaggerate...but in the end of the day, my experience has been a positive one. I have felt that by and large I have been in an environment where competence is the focus—you know, that you know what you're doing, you know how to negotiate, you know the set-up, you know the culture. To be honest, I have not felt that my gender had—not necessarily been too much of an issue. It actually sometimes has been a good thing in the sense that I felt, more often than not, that through my firm I was a more junior lawyer, and they were pretty desperate

to just make sure that there were women who succeeded, who sort of raised through the ranks, became partner in the course, and so on. I think, on the slightly more negative and challenging experience, there have been a few of those I suppose. I worked with banks in their private equity world, advising clients and financing deals in that world, and that is, I think one of the most male-dominated areas that you can still find.

I suppose there it is more a question of feeling that you are perhaps not entirely part of the world that you are representing as an advisor. But then again, I think that to approach that sort of situation from a professional perspective about your own capability and competence, and that you are just as well placed as any male colleague in terms of advising because you know the stuff you are advising on. I think if I found situations that were more challenging, more awkward, and I have to say those have been relatively free— not very many of them. I think I have always had the benefit of having, when I was younger in the firm, more senior people I have been able to turn to and speak to. Sometimes it's been just a question of just well— this is what the world is like and you just sort of have to embrace it in a way and get on with it. And I think I've felt excited to say that things change relatively quickly. I was talking to an old school friend of mine today who is now working at a major Swedish company, and we were both saying that we both didn't really feel when we were young that we were necessarily discriminated against, that we felt that because we were women, we had many more challenges to face than men. But it's interesting to reflect that 25 years on, there are huge amounts of change since our time in business, in a professional career, and that things are just more professional in the environment, in terms of how we treat each other. Though there is the expectation that the workplace will be diverse, it is much more prevalent now than obviously 10-15, 20 years ago from when we started before. So maybe I've been lucky, but then again, I think that I certainly have felt that I have had support from the situations where they were a little challenging, and I am very grateful for that. And certainly makes me want to also contribute to make sure—to the extent that there are such things, and of course they are, even in a relatively moderate frequency—that such things are changed and it's great to be able to devote some kind of thought to how to go about changing that.

S. Gaulkin: In class we've discussed the importance of building bridges and supporting male allyship in breaking down gender-based barriers. You said that male colleagues pushed for your law firm's 5-year goal that at least 50% of new partners would be women, which is truly remarkable. I was wondering how the firm cultivated a culture in which male colleagues would advocate for gender equality not only in principle but also in practice. What advice do you have for young leaders to recruit male allies or create a similar culture in which male colleagues feel motivated—or perhaps even ethically obligated—to think about strategies for gender equality?

M. Hope: First, it is important to discuss the Swedish society and Scandinavian society. These countries are close together both culturally and geographically, but they are different in terms of law firms or the legal market. Generally, Scandinavian societies are relatively equal in the sense that we have almost 50-50 governance in terms of gender equality; Parliament is also very equal. In business life, it's slightly less so, but there have been developments over decades, and things are certainly heading in the right direction. The whole societal set-up is beneficial to creating a culture where men support women. To some extent, law firms have actually been the last bastions of old-fashionedness, and we lag behind, for instance, compared to the judiciary, where there are lots of women—I heard someone saying that the average Swedish judge today is a woman aged 37. So, it's important to remember the context in which we operate as law firms: we help our society based on an expectation of things being relatively equal all over. That's modeled to some extent in what my male partners carry into the boardroom. They certainly are generally influenced by this whole context.

Having said that, we have also been helped a lot by the media here. To give you a bit of reference, in Norway, which is the next-door country to Sweden and a very similar country in a lot of respects, there hasn't been the same media attention over why there aren't as many women partners in law firms. We've been having that conversation for well over a decade, with harsh headlines questioning what firms are doing about this. There are also a lot of questions from clients and from the younger generations as well, from the people we would like to recruit: what we do in relation to equality, diversity, and so on, and I think all of those factors influence my male partners and myself as well. I think it's that and culture—we haven't, I think, had much more than a general ambition to make sure that we're a meritocracy in the sense that if you're good at your job you should be able to move ahead at your firm. We've been pushing things in the right direction and inspiring my male partners, who say that we're not doing well enough: we ought to have at least 50% women partners because, frankly, look at the women at the firm: they are rainmakers, they contribute massively to the practice and internally, they are very popular with clients, and they are good leaders.

“I can see a direct link between an increase in diversity and better financial results and better profitability [...].”

P. Valderrama: As one of my classmates mentioned, you were included in the list of the Sweden's most powerful businesswomen this year. Congratulations for that. When talking about this, you said, and I quote: “We have never had more women and never had a higher turnover. Women stay at Vinge—you can see that it pays off—”. In practice, how do you see that gender diversity actually pays off for law firms?

M. Hope: In terms of the way that we at Vinge see diversity and equality, I seriously think—and I can see— teams that are diverse often work better, the whole environment, the whole way of working together comes better. We get more perspectives and better forth and backs, it is more constructive, and that again makes for better and happy clients. On the topic of change, I think it is being pleasant to see that we have women in really all our practice areas, in many of our important functions, while we are contributing to the firm. I think of the perspectives that my female colleagues have brought in, and I do remember a time where we were much more male-dominated, and I was the first woman board member ever in the firm. It was a totally different time 14 years ago, and you know, it was still a very successful firm, but a slightly different environment and perspectives were different, and it was also of course a different generation which ran the firm. But I certainly can see the different perspectives and focus that women bring in, and I hesitate, I don't want to generalize too much, but I do think that the capabilities that women often directly represent are important in making sure that we have multiple ways in which we will provide services to our clients and develop as a firm. I think that has been actually hugely important to us as a firm over the past few years and the past decades in Sweden. So, I think, and my experience says that I can see a direct link between an increase in diversity and better financial results and better profitability too, which is again broadly researched by McKinsey and they look at this in various studies. And yes, I can see parallels on my own and obviously this is relatively limited, but it nevertheless worked, so I can see that these different perspectives really help to contribute into financial success.

A. Lindfelt: My question relates to the Diversity Project which Vinge started in 2002 to encourage diversity in the legal profession and to accurately reflect the composition of the Swedish society. I was just wondering how do you envision this project in the future with the increase in recent years of migratory flows to Sweden. And also, what challenges to you see in bringing diversity to the management of Vinge?

M. Hope: We want to continue to make sure that we remain focused on equality and diversity, but diversity generally, absolutely is a very major point for us. As you pointed out, we have had a diversity project because we would like to see generally more diversity. Because 20% of the population in Sweden has at least one parent from outside the country so it's quite a diverse country. That is not at all reflected in the legal profession generally, or in the legal world generally. We struggle, I have to say, it's difficult to make sure that students from a slightly different background actually choose law school. I think it's still thought of to be a fairly Swedish profession where you need to know Swedish well and so on and so forth. We have had this initiative for many, many years, trying to talk to people early on—already when they are in school—we would like to see more diversity generally in terms of background in our own ranks. When we can, we certainly recruit, and we have a large number of success internally. But it's harder, also because actually we don't measure things because of integrity concerns and so on, for instance the universities can't or don't look at people's backgrounds so we don't actually know what the talent pool at university looks like and it's difficult therefore to set a diversity target. But we speak to universities about that a lot because we would like to have more diverse teams and also because we work a lot internationally—40% of our turnover is from different types of cross-border work—and of course if you have a diverse team that understands culture, that's itself hugely beneficial to a firm. Again, that's a more slow process, we are constantly talking about what else we could do to make sure that we are able to recruit in a more diverse manner. We are focused on that currently and we will see what concrete measures will result from it.

Jodi Schwartz

Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz

Jodi Schwartz is no stranger to the University of Pennsylvania. She graduated with a B.S., magna cum laude, before attaining her M.B.A and J.D. here as well. Jodi subsequently went onto NYU School of Law, where she completed her LL.M degree. Today, she is well-regarded for serving as a woman leader in various capacities, whether as a partner at renowned law firm Wachtell Lipton or as the trailblazer behind various philanthropic organizations and causes.

Interview by Katherine Schroeder and Michael Machado

“The critical thing women leaders can do for minority women is to be the squeaky wheel.”

K. Schroeder: Most of us, either in the next year or in two years, are going to be starting at large law firms in areas where women have traditionally been excluded. Do you have any advice for when we start at these firms for how we can position ourselves for leadership roles?

J. Schwartz: I have very much the standard advice of work hard, do a good job, be who you are. Find a place that lets you be who you are. I couldn't walk around in a suit all day. I wanted to do the kind of volunteer work that excited me. That is the first thing you should look for. You should also be good. I am sorry to say this, but we have to be 110 percent as women lawyers because there is so much sexism out there. I am sad to say this 35 years out of law school. So be responsive, be good, and find a place where you can be yourself.

M. Machado: I'd love to hear a little bit more about what led you into the philanthropy space. I know, for one, that you're heavily involved with UJA Federation of New York, one of the largest local philanthropies in the world. Relatedly, do you think on a more professional level, philanthropy has enhanced your career or inspired your leadership philosophy in your career, or is the goal of philanthropy for you something more personal?

J. Schwartz: Well first of all, it was very much about trying to contribute back to a broken world in a way that was practical for me. I remember wanting to join a Big Sister program as a young associate and thinking, "What if I have to work?" or "What if I have to cancel, and somebody is depending on me?", and that's how I found myself getting more involved in boards and things like that because it was more practical for the lifestyle of a young associate at a Big Law Firm. But I will agree with you that it has done all of those things. I've had opportunities and experiences in the non-profit world that have allowed me to develop skills and meet people. It's also just good to do something besides help companies all day -- and I can do that from 9 in the morning until 9 at night and keep going after that, too. But for me, the ability to help make the world a slightly less horrible place is redeeming and it's a passion. I think we do [Big Law] for so many hours that we need to do other things that make us happy. Of course, family and friends help us to achieve this, but doing for others is equally as important. It helps that it's also good for business and business development, but I'm much more interested in improving the world for others.

K. Schroeder: One of the themes we have talked about in this class is how to search for and foster mentorships. Do you have any advice for how to foster these relationships?

J. Schwartz: I think that being a mentor and finding a mentor are two of the most career-enriching experiences. I feel like phones are making people think they can phone in, text in, or email in their advice. But law is about inter-personal relationships. The mentor-mentee relationship that develops when you go in ten minutes early for a conference call and you discover you are both opera fans allows you to develop a relationship. You can not only pick his or her brain when you have a decision to make but also, he or she will be more willing to forgive you and help you. I think that it is incumbent on all of us to remember that any institution you are in is made up of people. You need to go into people's office and look them in the eye. In terms of being a mentor it is rewarding but sometimes gets put a little bit in the corner. I want to remind people that it is important that we help the next generation with some of the things that tripped us up on the way.

"I want to remind people that it is important that we help the next generation with some of the things that tripped us up on the way."

M. Machado: As someone with considerable influence as a woman, what do you think you and people in comparable positions in law firms can do particularly for minority women and women in general, especially in a profession that has seen rising rates of turnover, and what do you think of as best practices in the Big Law space to mitigate this issue?

J. Schwartz: I think the critical thing women leaders can do for minority women is to be the squeaky wheel - to use their voices and respective amassed political capital to bring up these women for promotions and to mentor them, unapologetically. I don't miss a recruiting committee meeting so that I can ask my questions and make my voice heard whenever we are hiring new associates or extending offers to lateral hires. I want to make sure that we're making offers to women, but I am also the squeaky wheel on minority inclusion, disability inclusion and women inclusion, both in law school hiring and in the law firm setting when it comes to promotions, amplifying women's voices in meetings or giving them assignments. I think that it's my job as a senior woman who is immune from the political pressures to really be a squeaky wheel - and so, you will always see me raise my hand to ask, "Did we consider a woman for this position? Did we give this woman an opportunity to do this trial, or to make this argument, or to do this board presentation?". [Women] have to push each other up. And I think that's truly the role of any senior woman. If you have enough political capital that you can really go out on a limb and annoy people, then do it. That's what I do.

K. Schroeder: One of the phenomena I noticed working at a firm this summer is that there appears to be a lot of effort to push women up and get women involved. Have you seen positive change over the past couple decades?

J. Schwartz: Of course. First of all, we are finally seeing a time when a law firm could be shamed for having five white men be promoted. What started as progressive general counsels has now become law firms understanding that they need to reflect the diversity that is coming out of law schools. We are still struggling with retention. I see people who would never have thought about it before thinking about it. They come down to my office and say that a woman is unhappy, and they ask how we can retain her. It used to be that when the men wanted to leave, we tried to keep them but when women tried to leave people felt it was natural. Now there is a fight for every great woman. Things are changing but we aren't there yet. There is so much implicit bias. People choose to work with people who look and sound like them. We cannot lose fifty percent of the talent in the world. I still tell a story of how I was taken out to the Wall Street Club and we sat in the lady's dining room because they didn't allow women. Yet this is changing.

Maggie McKinley Blackhawk

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe

Maggie McKinley Blackhawk joined the University of Pennsylvania Law School faculty in 2017. While she began her time as a professor of constitutional law, she now offers additional courses in federal Indian law and continues to craft distinguished scholarship from her research in legislative procedure and minority representation in democracy. Blackhawk earned her BA, summa cum laude, at UCLA in linguistic anthropology and a JD from Stanford Law School. Her post-graduate experiences include clerkships with Chief Judge James Ware of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California and the Honorable Susan Graber of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Interview by Michael Machado

“Believe that you have a right to take up space in this school, in this profession, and in governments and courts.”

M.Machado: It’s wonderful to be able to speak with you today, Professor Blackhawk. I thought we might start off with some insight about your career trajectory. What inspired you to go to law school, and did you ever have any doubts about attaining a degree that women go on to utilize in sectors which are still predominantly male?

M. Blackhawk: Before applying to law school, I worked at UCLA as a social science researcher. My job there was to compile the research of a few different centers that studied working families—that is, families where both parents work outside the home. Then I had to take all of that research and put it together for this team of lobbyists in D.C., who would then take our research and advocate for more family-friendly workplace policy. The head of that D.C. team was Chai Feldblum, who helped draft and pass the Americans with Disabilities Act as a lobbyist for the ACLU. Chai’s team was not only all lobbyists – so, not your traditional lawyers – but they were also all *women*, and they were the first lawyers I’d met in my life. They collectively (but primarily Chai) convinced me to apply to law school.

But because of them, I think my view of law school was a little bit off. I thought that most lawyers – I mean, I knew the typical story about lawyers litigating in a court – but still, I thought that the lawyers who really fought for change went to Congress. I applied to law school based on meeting Chai’s team and Chai convincing me (she’s very convincing; she has to be!) and then, I went off to law school with not a thought in my head that it was a male-dominated field. I had a very skewed perspective; I was like, “everyone’s a lobbyist, and everyone’s a woman”. Naiveté has its perks. But yes, my mom went to community college (she graduated after I moved out) and I went to big public schools that were near home. I had no real view of

the world. I hadn't met lawyers, either. My very narrow view of going to law school, then, was that I'd get to be like or at least spend time with people like Chai and her team.

M. Machado: Fast forward to today, where you sit before me as a trained lawyer, public law scholar, a woman, and Native American. Can you tell us about how some or all of these identities intersect, whether in your daily life or via some discrete examples that capture the ways in which intersectionality has shaped your world?

M. Blackhawk: So, I went to Stanford Law School and was trained by some of the most amazing women-civil rights leaders, like Pam Karlan and Janet Alexander. These were women who had really cut their teeth fighting for gender and LGBTQIA+ equality; it's no surprise, then, that the tools they offered and the language in which they did so were characteristically about rights, courts, and equality. And this is how they trained me. Now I, as not just a woman but a *Native* woman, was a bit puzzled, because I knew that, rather than rights, it was power or jurisdiction in Indian Country which was most important. While rights were something that allowed you to go to another government and beg for your redress, power, on the other hand, allowed you to govern and to make the laws that would shape your daily life. And these notions really drive Indian Country – that is, this idea of jurisdiction or power and sovereignty. These words really empower and organize Native people, by contrast to the Civil Rights Movement which really organized more so around rights and equality. I know in our Constitutional Law class we went through the history of how the Civil Rights Movement argued from equality and rights, and then gender, and all of these movements that came later essentially reasoned from race, took the same tools, and ran with them. The simple story there was that, if you want to find justice, you need to argue in the language of rights, equality and courts. Not only does that simple story not hold within Indian Country; it's in *conflict* with it.

So, equality and rights, within U.S. law, usually mean that you get to enter certain institutions on the same equal footing as others. There might be bigger conceptions of rights, like anti-subordination rights, but the conceptions have become, "Let's bring people from the outside inside to statistically mirror the world outside." For Indian Country – where we're often the asterisk of every single study (if even mentioned) – making us the statistical mirror of the world outside actually will break down those centers of power in which Native people now govern. Yes, tribal governments look like segregated spaces and Indian Country looks segregated. But to integrate Indian Country is not to solve the problem of colonialism; it's to further it. We've gone through that before in the past, where the federal government has tried to break up federal lands through allotment because the government wanted Native and non-Native peoples to live side-by-side. And there have been many efforts to integrate Indian Country, but what they end up doing is essentially breaking up these spaces of majority-minority rule, these spaces where power, sovereignty, and jurisdiction are needed to serve notions of equality and rights. This is, for me, a great tension. There's yet another tension where under the equal protection race doctrine, all of Federal Indian Law is unconstitutional. Those arguments are being made more and more by the Trump Administration as well as by groups who are challenging Federal Indian Law in the same

way that they've challenged other remedial legislation for other racialized communities. The story, then, that I learned in law school, and the way that I was trained into the tools of equality, rights, and courts, didn't work for the community that I wanted to serve. Though the intention was there, and the care was there, folks didn't get it. And so being a woman was actually in tension with the Native part, and the woman part had to give.

M. Machado: Would you say that some of the tensions which you just underscored, while affecting you personally, also had a profound impact on your research?

M. Blackhawk: That's right. Part of my project moving forward was to find ways to translate the tools and language of rights, equality and courts into things that would be meaningful for Indian Country and vice versa: to use the lessons of Indian Country to expand the tools that people are using to reach justice and to remedy the subordination of so many communities. Look, there are lessons that can go both ways. We shouldn't just focus on rights, equality, and courts, but power is equally as important, not just for Indian Country, but for everyone.

The burden of proof is often on women scholars to prove that they're not only able to do these things, but that they did them *themselves*.

M. Machado: Thank you, Professor. I think your point leads nicely into my next question. What are the gender dynamics at play, from your perspective, in academia? We can see your scholarship in the Stanford Law Review and Yale Law Journal, or your recent work on Federal Indian Law as a paradigm of public law in the Harvard Law Review. But what we might *not* see are some of the obstacles in the background to operating as a top scholar and woman in your field.

M. Blackhawk: I think that the biases that folks experience everywhere don't stop. There are places where women are expected to be, and then there are places where women are just not expected to be. These presumptions tend to cut to the contrary. It's not as though folks are mean, and it's not as though they are explicitly thinking that women ought not do these things. But they just presume that women haven't. And so, the burden of proof is often on women scholars to prove that they're not only able to do these things, but that they did them *themselves*.

M. Machado: And speaking of projects, I should mention for readers of this profile that your article in the Yale Law Journal draws on an *original* database of over 500,000 petitions to Congress. I think anyone would agree that this is remarkable, thorough legwork that only lends more credence to your arguments, but did this magnitude increase the "burden of proof" on you?

M. Blackhawk: I study in the fields of Public Law, Constitutional Law and Legislation. Constitutional Law more so than Legislation is largely a male-dominated field, and it's been that way for a very long time. To the extent that people of color, women, and women of color have stepped into those fields, they usually study rights. And the conflict that I talked about before – that rights rhetoric is often in tension with paradigms of Indian law- manifests in my work as a criticism of this idea that rights, courts and equality are the “right” tools. In extension of this, my arguments are on the structural side of the Constitution, which is an area dominated by male scholars to an even greater extent. And one response to this is, “Wow - you're in this field, which we wouldn't expect you to be in to begin with. But now, you're not even fitting into the area of the field that most folks who study minorities and communities of color go into. Instead, you're looking at the power- side, the structural-side.” So, my methodologies were unusual and the approach that I was taking was unusual. The burden of proof was on me to show that my arguments were viable. This has required and continues to require a lot of effort on my part.

M. Machado: Well, we as students are grateful that you've selected this space, and we hope that you continue to occupy it as courageously as you have, for as long as you desire to. Let's shift gears a bit, I'd love to know what you think of Sheryl Sandberg's argument that *“the most important career decision that a woman makes is whether she will have a life partner and who that partner is.”* This is something Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet have said, too.

M. Blackhawk: I think partners really matter, and Sandberg may be right in terms of the fact that our society doesn't have structural support for women. For example, most European countries (and many Native Nations, also) have all sorts of early childcare, maternity leave, paternity leave, and other programs to support women who want to both work and have children. But the United States still burdens women with the majority of the “home” work. So, I can see how Sandberg may be factually accurate, at least if she's making her point in the context of structural problems within the U.S.; for example, it may be the case that you want or need a partner who might actually take some of that societal burden. But, you know, it might be helpful if folks like Sandberg really advocated for structural change rather than framing the solution in terms of marrying either a rich person who can pay for childcare, or someone who is more egalitarian and might care for children collectively. To place that much agency on a woman's path forward on women themselves is just myopic to me. I mean, you look at all of the statistics, and the way women meet their partners is usually in college. They marry people of their own socioeconomic status and that means that money collects around money, power collects around power, and the inequalities which we see all over the place are then entrenched within these partnerships, too.

M. Machado: I like that answer for a host of reasons but above all, I imagine it will resonate with Penn Law students – whether in their personal lives or as they research prospective employers. On the subject of students, though, what do you think your responsibility is to them, both as a teacher and a woman leader?

M. Blackhawk: I know when I first started teaching Constitutional Law, which again, is a field with fewer women in it and fewer women leading it (not to understate those who have done a wonderful job breaking open the field), I was the only non-male faculty member teaching Constitutional Law and that held true for last year, as well. Constitutional Law is sort of like political science; it's the heart of democracy and the study of democracy, and it's *seen* as a male field. In that sense, my just being in front of the classroom is powerful in itself. By the same token, me being up there and knowing that there's just no way around that part of my identity because it's in the front of the room for all to see, is going to affect the way people learn, approach, and think about the material.

But I'm also a longtime fan of Hannah Arendt's and Emmanuel Levinas's respective works, where they study the way that morality is developed through confrontation with the other, of actually seeing and being forced to engage with the humanity of people that you think are different from you. To have students both tussle with those really intense Constitutional Law questions while they are confronting me is hard. It's not something I've learned how to work through entirely, although I think it does a lot of pedagogical work. But I'd like to learn to work through all of the layers of experience on the other side for the students, because I realize that the experience of having a woman professor—especially when we study equal protection gender doctrine, for example—is difficult in some ways. Many students have also never met a Native person before, and they may struggle with that as well.

Be brave and do the things that you think you're not entitled to do. Give yourself the license to be entitled.

M. Machado: It goes without saying but I'll say it anyway: I don't think any of that is your fault.

M. Blackhawk: Of course not. I didn't create the system that I came into, and so, there's an injustice in me having to carry that burden. But on the flipside, it's a powerful pedagogical tool. I do certain kinds of normative work by standing up there, perhaps more than someone else would.

M. Machado: Thanks, Professor. I know that I speak for many of my colleagues when I express gratitude to you for your having stood courageously at the front of our Constitutional Law classroom every day, in confrontation of these issues and without apology. We're so lucky to have you at Penn, and I appreciate you taking the time to talk with me today. Might you have some parting words for the students of Penn Law? Specifically, what advice do you have for the women here who want to follow in your footsteps and in the footsteps of women leaders?

M. Blackhawk: Be brave and do the things that you think you're not entitled to do. Give yourself the license to be entitled, to speak up in the classroom, to go to office hours, to apply for

things that you don't feel you're qualified for. I see women selecting out of these processes and doing their own self-valuation, which is usually far lower than what everybody else would value them as. Some of these women later opt out, because they don't believe they're entitled to what they've achieved. They don't think their questions are good enough to take up space in the room, or that their applications are good enough to get those competitive clerkships and other jobs that would give them the skills and opportunities to better serve their communities. I encourage these women to take that license or entitlement and run with it – because everyone else *is*. It is not easy given the structural barriers that have been stacked against you. But find confidence in challenging circumstances and *believe* that you have a right to take up space in this school, in this profession, and in governments and courts. Also, to the extent that you really want to change things, that change has to be on a structural level and change will have to come from institutions reckoning with their own values and cultures. Currently, women are penalized for being too confident, too assertive, or too ambitious. Those are real limits to what women will be able to accomplish and those limits will stay in place until reform occurs on a much largerscale.

M. Machado: In light of this excellent advice, what can men do to serve as better allies, whether at Penn or in the world at large?

M. Blackhawk: Generally, and not just in Penn Law, men can yield power. Look, it's really hard, because nobody wants to give up power or credit. I think that everyone wants to get ahead and to have their voices heard or to be the leader on something. That's just a natural, human way of being. But I think that a lot of men need to understand that some of their credit and privilege is coming from their gender. They need to take a step back and give women room to wield power, and they need to amplify women's voices – not just through their own voices, but by being *quiet* more often. Yield the floor to other people. Rather than talking for 30 minutes about how much you value women. Instead, yield that half hour to women's voices. I know this is the opposite of what people want to do and that it's the answer nobody wants to hear. But if men don't yield power, things aren't going to change.

The Honorable Yvonne Esperanza Campos

Superior Court of the State of California

Judge Yvonne Esperanza Campos graduated from Stanford University in 1985, and then went on to pursue a law degree from Harvard Law School (J.D.,1988). Judge Campos became a licensed California attorney in December 1988. After 15 years of private law, Governor Gray Davis appointed Judge Campos to the Superior Court of the State of California on October 2, 2003. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Campos served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of California from October 1995 to October 2003, serving as a Deputy Chief in the General Crimes Section. In 1994, Judge Campos was awarded a White House Fellowship by President Clinton and served on the staff of Attorney General Janet Reno at the United States Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. Prior to that, Judge Campos was an attorney in private practice specializing in real estate transactions, land use, and environmental law with two California law firms. Judge Campos is a member of the California Judges Association(CJA), California Latino Judges Association (CLJA), the American Bar Association (ABA), the San Diego County Bar Association(SDCBA), Association of Business Trial Lawyers(ABTL), Lawyers Club of San Diego, the San Diego LaRaza Lawyers Association (SDLRLA), and the National Association of Women Judges(NAWJ). She serves as an appointed member of the ABA's Ethics and Professional Responsibility Judges Advisory Committee. She also serves as Treasurer for the California Latino Judges Association (CLJA). The California Women Lawyers awarded her the Joan Dempsey Klein Distinguished Jurist Award in 2015 for her excellence as a jurist and her longstanding, vigorous service and inspiration to women lawyers of California. She is Vice President-At Large for the Harvard Law School Association (HLSA) and serves on its Executive Committee. Judge Campos is a native Californian. She is the mother of two children. The family has three dogs. She hiked Mt. Whitney (tallest mountain in the lower 48 states), Mt. Baldy, Mt. San Jacinto, and she also enjoys reading, traveling, and photography.

Interview by Eduarda Lague

“Any person who is underrepresented in any category needs to be tough and have the fortitude to persevere no matter what. If you want to be a lawyer, then do what it takes to be an excellent lawyer. Have confidence in yourself and don't worry about whether you are similar to others or if you are the freaky outlier.”

E. Lague: The legal profession continues to be one of the least diverse professions. It is estimated that less than 2% of lawyers are Latinas. As a Latina judge, what advice do you give to women who are underrepresented at their law schools and when they pursue the field?

E. Campos: The legal profession is a tough calling. The work and the profession can be brutal. Any person who is underrepresented in any category needs to be tough and have the fortitude to persevere no matter what. If you want to be a lawyer, then do what it takes to be an excellent lawyer. Have confidence in yourself and don't worry about whether you are similar to others or if you are the freaky outlier. The Nike slogan works: Just Do It!

I have heard famous men speak about their backgrounds from small towns or rural settings. They too got over their underrepresentation, so it's not just a concern for today's minority students. If you're from a different socio-economic class than other students, you might be self-conscious. If you're less attractive than others, you might be self-conscious. There are endless categorizations. Focus on learning what you need to show to prove yourself in your chosen areas and get to work.

When I went to law school my classmates were about 1/3 women, 2/3 men. I've had the chance to meet and read about women who were the initial law students at Harvard Law School. They were some tough, brilliant and hardworking students (9/550). They endured numerous challenges and indignities. They did not allow themselves to be derailed by chauvinist deans or professors. It is sad but true that United States Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor (Stanford Law) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Harvard/Columbia Law) could not get hired by law firms when graduating from school simply because they were women.

They were brilliant and top of their class or near the top but that was not enough. Their gender was the sole reason they were only offered secretarial work in the legal profession upon their graduation. I have heard each of them speak about this publicly. Neither got bitter, both just got to work in other legal areas (not Big Law) and they each excelled in whatever they did. Their reward? Sitting on the nation's highest Court. They have been excellent role models and I am grateful to them for their resilience and perseverance, in addition to their brilliance and hard work.

Students of color had only been admitted in a small percentage (approximately 25/550) for a decade or so when I enrolled in law school. The earliest students of color were literally in the single digits and they had to have been some hardy souls. I have had the chance to meet United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. I have read her autobiography. She continues to have to prove herself to those whose biases prevent them from accepting her. She does not let that deter her from her work. She perseveres. She knows her voice and she uses it. If she gets discouraged, she does not show it (but I'm sure she's human so I'm sure she has to recharge like the rest of us).

In my era, I had the benefit of some female classmates as well as some classmates of color so I was not alone. It was helpful for bonding purposes and sharing some commonality. I even had a few women professors as well as some professors of color. To this day, however, my alma mater has only one Latino law professor and no Latina law professors. That's beyond incomprehensible to me. I hope they rectify that before I die.

When I was in law school all of the portraits around were of older white men. It was historical, but it certainly wasn't welcoming in terms of visualizing yourself in those roles. Since I've been a judge, numerous people have said to me "You don't look like a judge!" I'm sure it wasn't meant as a compliment. I show up at work and for the hundreds or thousands of people I interact with over the years, I hope that I can help bust their stereotype that a judge has to be old, white and male. I generally get great feedback from my jurors so I can only hope I make a difference just by doing my job.

I have been mentored by men and women of many ages, races, religions and backgrounds and I have paid it forward by mentoring all types of students and lawyers. I have consciously made it a point to mentor women and Latinx students/lawyers since we share a lot in common and since they may not find as many other mentors. I have been active with local, statewide and national bar associations supporting the success of women and Latinx people in the legal profession.

E. Lague: Many people take untraditional paths to law school. It can also be difficult to enter a profession that is predominately male-dominated and where people in the classroom do not look like you. What inspired you to pursue law school? How did you maintain this

inspiration throughout your journey?

E. Campos: I was inspired to attend law school due to some Stanford Law School students who were my Teaching Assistants (TA's) in my introductory political science American Government course as a college freshman. They were intelligent, well-spoken and knew a lot about history, current events, politics and I decided I wanted to learn what they knew. I had intended to pursue journalism as a career through high school, but my teachers were very discouraging about pursuing that career (because it doesn't pay much), so I pivoted toward law school. I met enough types of lawyers at Harvard Law School that I have never looked back since starting there. I've been able to work in Big Law, federal government and state government. I've been a transactional lawyer, a trial lawyer, and I am now a state trial court judge. It doesn't mean that it has been easy; while I wasn't at Harvard Law School during the "Paper Chase" or "One L" eras, I was there shortly after and during some difficult times for the school and its faculty. The Critical Legal Studies wars were no fun for the students. I have to say I enjoy returning as an alumna much more than I enjoyed being there as a student. I can now follow all discourse and there is no stress or pressure; when I first arrived the language of the law seemed foreign many times. Since I didn't speak up much during class as a student, I also make a point of participating extensively when I am back on campus.

Build in your village of support.

E. Lague: One concept we constantly discuss in class is not only how we can be leaders but also how we can blaze a trail for those who come before us. From your bio and information, you are involved in numerous boards, associations, and organizations. What are concrete steps that you have taken as a leader to pave the way for other women?

E. Campos: I have been mentored by men and women of many ages, races, religions and backgrounds and I have paid it forward by mentoring all types of students and lawyers. I have consciously made it a point to mentor women and Latinx students/lawyers since we share a lot in common and since they may not find as many other mentors. I have been active with local, statewide and national bar associations supporting the success of women and Latinx people in the legal profession. I have hosted law school, college and high school interns of many backgrounds and all I have ever asked is that they too pay it forward at some point in their careers.

I think that membership and advocacy for specific groups are important or else those particular issues will not be heard. I have found it gratifying to be a part of the National Association of Women Judges (helping to host the 2014 Annual Conference in San Diego), California Women Lawyers (serving as the Southern California Judicial Liaison, speaking at So You Want to be a Judge Workshops), Lawyers Club of San Diego (speaking at luncheons and helping bring in luncheon speakers), and San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association (mentoring, hosting education sessions in court). I am also a member of many other associations and bar groups that only address mainstream legal practice issues and involvement in those is equally important. I would urge you not to segregate yourselves; don't be islands. Be bridge builders and find coalitions with others on matters of mutual interest. We all have a lot to learn about the human condition. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Be willing to be in the arena and to get back in. You

have to have resiliency to be a lawyer. No one wins everything. Keep an open mind. Know yourself and improve yourself. Don't succumb to incivility, bad stress coping mechanisms (substance abuse/alcohol abuse) and try to have a well-balanced life. Family, friends and fun. Build in your village of support. We all need it. Help others and when you need help you will find others willing to help you.

Suzanne Jaffe Bloom

Co-Chair, White Collar Practice &
Former Co-Chair of Hiring Committee at Winston & Strawn LLP

Suzanne Jaffe Bloom is a partner at Winston & Strawn's New York office and is Co-Chair of the firm's White-Collar Practice. She previously served as Co-Chair of Winston's Hiring Committee. Bloom previously served for 12 years as a federal prosecutor in both the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. The mother of three has been described as "exceptionally smart and tenacious" and has landed on the list of Benchmark Litigation's "Top 250 Women in Litigation". She has also been recognized as a "Super Lawyer" in editions of New York Super Lawyers. Bloom earned her BS, summa cum laude, at SUNY in Business Management and a JD, cum laude, from Harvard Law School.

Interview by Sara Shayanian

I believe that a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds really enrich our practice.

S. Shayanian: As a woman in the law, can you tell me about your career path and how you reached the leadership position you have today?

S. Bloom: When I graduated law school back in '88, I had a strong desire to do public service. However, financial considerations, including the need to pay off student loans, led me to private practice. I had a great first experience as a junior associate. I ended up staying a little longer than I had anticipated, and I attribute that to the fact that I was fortunate enough to be working with people who were comfortable giving me a lot of responsibility. I joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York after about four years of private practice. I spent about a year in the general crimes unit, a year in the narcotics unit, and then moved on to the public corruption unit. I stayed there for a total of about seven years. I would have stayed even longer, but after having my second child and moving out of the city, the commute became difficult to manage. I wanted to continue my work as a federal prosecutor, so I ended up working as an Assistant US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York and the Deputy Chief of the Long Island Criminal Division, in an office that was much closer to my home. That move allowed me to continue doing what I loved to do at a time in my life when I needed to make good use of every moment of the day, which meant reducing my commuting time as much as possible. After several years there, and at a point in time when I was better able to manage a longer commute, I joined Dewey Ballantine and thereafter Winston & Strawn.

While at Winston & Strawn, I've served on various committees and I was asked to be Co-Chair of the firmwide hiring committee. I jumped on the chance to take on that leadership role, even though I knew it would involve a lot of additional time and effort, because it presented me with an opportunity to make a significant impact and strengthen our efforts to hire, retain, and support talented diverse attorneys and women attorneys at Winston. I continue to focus on those important issues in my new role as Co-Chair of Winston's White Collar, Regulatory Defense, and Investigations Practice.

S. Shayanian: In our class, we have read about different institutional barriers that often present challenges for women and people of color in law firms and in business. What are some examples of obstacles and barriers to your success you experienced on your way to reaching your goals? In what ways has mentorship aided you throughout your career?

S. Bloom: There weren't as many women attorneys while I was developing in my career, and therefore there weren't many women mentors available to help me navigate my path forward. There are far more women attorneys now, who can serve as mentors for other women. Earlier on in my career, most of my firm colleagues and the in-house attorneys, including general counsels, were men. Male partners were able to develop relationships with the male in-house attorneys doing things that I, and perhaps other women, weren't as interested in, like fishing trips, for example. Now, with more women lawyers in law firms and at companies, there is much more of a focus on developing initiatives that appeal to women as well as men, and which provide greater opportunities for women to strengthen their relationships with colleagues and clients. Another example of a challenge that I faced is one I mentioned earlier. Family responsibility made it more difficult for me to do a lengthy commute. The way in which I overcame that was by figuring out how to eliminate that aspect of my work, while still doing what was important to me. That's when I decided to continue my work as a federal prosecutor, but in a different district that was closer to my home. Doing so made it easier for me to fulfill my family responsibilities without the added burden of a long commute, and to continue doing the work that I loved.

Winston places great importance on ensuring that women are in significant managerial roles and leadership roles at the firm.

S. Shayanian: How do firms that are awarded for supporting diversity in the law help to successfully increase and sustain diversity and inclusion in the legal profession? What are some examples of this you have seen at Winston?

S. Bloom: Winston makes a concerted effort to reach out to diverse student groups on campus to find out what their interests are, what their goals are, and how we can support them. We engage with diverse student groups proactively. We try to make those important connections. Then, when we are successful in recruiting women and diverse candidates, we ensure that we integrate and support them in various ways. For example, we focus on having integrated and diverse case teams and pitch teams. We take a real interest in associates and their well-being, especially their interest in professional development and exploring different practice areas. I believe that a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds really enrich our practice and we place great value on those things.

S. Shayanian: Winston in 2018 was named a Women in the Law Empowerment Forum Gold Standard Firm. In your opinion, what makes a firm a “gold standard” firm for women? How can other firms learn from the example Winston has set?

S. Bloom: We have a very progressive parental leave policy, which I think helps women trying to balance career and family. It is a 20-week paid leave policy and the leave doesn't have to be taken all at the same time. Our parental leave policy recognizes that parents are often part of dual career couples, that people have different types of parenting responsibilities, and that not everyone fits into the same mold as soon as a child arrives into their lives. Equally as important, we have liaisons that work with people who are about to go out on parental leave and who are about to return from parental leave, to make sure they have the support needed to make the transition effectively and smoothly. Sometimes when people come back from parental leave, they have difficulty navigating their way back to doing significant and interesting work. Well before an attorney's return date, a liaison will connect with the attorney to provide the support and information needed to ensure that the attorney has a successful return to work and doesn't lose momentum. I believe that's very important. Another thing we do to support women is we provide programs that are geared towards women's professional development. For example, we had a speaker come talk to us about negotiating styles, with a focus on highly effective women negotiators. We offer training and support for business development strategies and resources tailored for women in particular. Winston also places great importance on ensuring that women are in significant managerial roles and leadership roles at the firm. You can do a lot to support women at the lower levels, but if the more junior women don't see women in significant leadership roles at a firm, it can be disheartening, and they won't have the mentors I mentioned earlier.

When we are successful in recruiting women and diverse candidates, we ensure that we integrate and support them in various ways.

S. Shayanian: I know you have three kids. We read a 2015 *Washington Post* article for our course, where managing partners of top law firms were quoted attributing a lack of women in the law to disproportionate family responsibilities. They noted that mothers, even those working full time, are assumed to be less available and committed to their positions. As a lawyer and a mother who has worked in a law firm setting, what advice would you give to women who are navigating and trying to balance both family/motherhood with their work responsibilities?

S. Bloom: When you are taking care of a family, a lot of unpredictable things happen. So, you need to be proactive about managing your time effectively. My advice is never put off work that you can take care of now. If you have the time to get something accomplished now, do it, because you just never know when something unexpected is going to pop up that will require your attention. To this day, if I have a client who wants to talk about something, I try and schedule the call for as soon as I possibly can; because I never know what tomorrow will bring. Being on top of things at work and addressing assignments as soon as you can, will leave time open for the unpredictable — both in your professional life and your personal life.

I also suggest bringing reading material to the many doctor's appointments you'll be going to with your kids! You'll spend hours and hours in waiting rooms. And if you bring reading material, you can get a lot accomplished, while also encouraging your kids to make good use of the time by reading or getting their own homework done.

S. Shayanian: We have in our course talked about unconscious biases in hiring, performance reviews, promotions, and more. Are there ways that law firms can help structure their management styles and firm culture to combat these biases?

S. Bloom: I think it's important to bring in people who can train and educate on unconscious bias. As the name suggests, its unconscious. People aren't even realizing they are engaging in it! I think the first step is to educate attorneys and staff about unconscious bias so they can recognize it in themselves and prevent it when possible. In terms of how to deal with it, I think one of the things that can be done is when firms are setting up sponsorship or mentoring programs -- avoid pairing people together because they share a similar background. Pair people up valuing the diversity.

This way people with diverse backgrounds and experiences can learn about each other and appreciate and embrace their differences.

Everyone should be educated about unconscious bias so they can recognize it in themselves and prevent it when possible.

S. Shayanian: We have learned through our course that women and minorities often feel the “emotional tax” of presenting perfection in the workplace. Because of this “tax” women and minorities are often too busy polishing their work product and working twice as hard on the details, while other associates are able to invest more time proving themselves in leadership roles. After working in the legal profession for years, have you ever felt the weight of the “emotional tax” many women and minorities feel? If so, how have you dealt with that pressure?

S. Bloom: I have seen it not only in myself, but with the terrific women with whom I have worked over the years. Many women put in 200% of their effort, going above and beyond to ensure their work product is top notch, down to every last detail. And unfortunately, I have seen the situation you've described where a woman is not being staffed appropriately, because somebody else is being put in her place, and that person may be more visible, but lacks the same stellar skills, instincts, or work ethic. Women, at some point in their professional development, should focus on appropriately delegating work and managing others so that they don't spend all of their time behind the scenes immersed in detail. This will allow them to take on more leadership roles, where they have opportunities to guide strategy and advise on bigger picture issues.

S. Shayanian: In our course, we have spoken with many women in the law and business on what their personal leadership philosophy is (if they have one at all). Do you have your own personal leadership philosophy? How have you implemented this philosophy or way of thinking into your career?

S. Bloom: I think it is very important to welcome and in fact, invite, different opinions and challenges to your own way of thinking. While working with my own teams, I will often say, “This is what I'm thinking about doing. What's wrong with this strategy? Where do you see the pitfalls?” I believe that a person brings value when she can point out things that someone else might not be thinking of. Just saying “Yes, I agree with everything” doesn't bring as much value as pointing out where you disagree or have other ideas. I tend to be very collaborative. I encourage everyone, from the most junior person on my team to the most senior, to feel comfortable speaking up. I think that goes back to the notion of valuing diversity of perspectives. I want to hear other perspectives, especially those that differ from my own. It's only by getting input from everyone on your team that you can come up with the best course of action, the best advice for the client, and the best strategy for achieving goals.

Dorothy E. Roberts

George A. Weiss University Professor of Law and Sociology and the Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights, University of Pennsylvania
Carey Law School

Dorothy Roberts is one of the nation's leading legal scholars and social critics on race, reproductive health, and child welfare. Her publications include a list of over fifty articles and several critically acclaimed books, including Killing the Black Body. Because of her multidisciplinary background in Africana studies, sociology, and law, she is able to lecture in all three departments at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Roberts graduated from Yale as an anthropology major and went on to Harvard Law School for her J.D. She is a social justice pioneer who advocates for racial and gender equality through her scholarship.

"I think there are also....stereotypes about women, for example being too emotional. Again, it is all very ironic because in fact women often have to manage so many different things, they have to be leaders in their families and communities, even if they are not seen as leaders."

In this seminar on women's leadership, we were assigned to read excerpts from Deborah Rhode's work on Women and Leadership. Rhode highlights research showing that women, in academia, account for a majority of college graduates and postgraduate students but only about a quarter of full professors and university presidents. What mechanisms or barriers do you think impede women's progress in academia?

D. Roberts: One barrier is that women still do the bulk of housework and caregiving, whether caregiving for children or caregiving for elderly parents or other family members or friends. It obviously takes extra time to do that, so in terms of being able to juggle a number of responsibilities, even when women are able to do it, and most do, there is still a perception that women are not focusing entirely on work. We have this paradox where women are actually working harder to take care of all of these different responsibilities and yet there is a perception that they are not as devoted to the workplace. I know you asked about academia, but I saw this while practicing law at a large law firm in the 1980s. There just weren't a lot of examples of female associates who had children. There weren't many women partners either—there was only one when I was there. There was this expectation that you were supposed to devote your entire life to the firm and there was an assumption that women with children could not do that because, of course, they would be expected to take care of family obligations. Whereas the expectation for men was that they would have a wife who was taking care of the children.

It is both the actual extra work required for workplace and family responsibilities and management of them, but also, I think stereotypes about women that have been barriers to women being able to achieve those higher levels of leadership. I think there are also, related to that, more generalized stereotypes about women, for example being too emotional. Racist stereotypes about black women as less intelligent, angry, and licentious make advancement even harder for them than for white women. Again, it is all very ironic because in fact women often have to manage so many different things, they have to be leaders in their families and communities, even if they are not seen as the leaders. This happens in so many types of organizations—for example, in churches where women are organizing everything. And yet, the belief is typically that they would not make a good church leader. I think it is all based on gender stereotypes.

In addition, being able to reach those higher levels of leadership requires certain types of networking, getting the allegiance or support of people who put you in those positions. A lot of that networking may happen in personal spaces where men get together and women are not welcomed. I think this exclusion is accentuated more in law firms, but it takes place in academia, as well. In terms of leadership in academia, my sense is that there are many more female deans of law schools and presidents of universities now than when I started teaching thirty years ago, and the shift has been greater than with female partners in law firms. That is just my impression; in particular, I know quite a few black women who have become deans or presidents of universities, so I think some of those stereotypes are changing. Again, I do not have the numbers, but I have seen progress in terms of female leaders in academia.

What are some policies and changes that would help mothers and diverse lawyers advance in their legal careers and become leaders in their field?

D. Roberts: I think one needed change is to end the stereotyping of women as not being capable of leadership. I think that will change partly as more women become leaders and are in a position of authority both to advance other women, that's very important, but also to illustrate that women have the capacity to be leaders. I also believe the way caregiving is treated it is an impediment to women, both the distribution of caregiving and the stereotypes surrounding it. That needs to change. Many workplaces are structured as if caregiving doesn't exist; it's not a natural impediment to leadership. The workplace is still structured based on workers who aren't caregivers, so that the structure becomes an impediment to leadership. I think as either more men become caregivers or participate more in caregiving or as the workplace structure changes, then more women will have greater opportunities to become leaders.

I had the experience of having three children while I was practicing at a big Manhattan law firm in the 1980s. I know I was the only female associate who was pregnant during the time I was there, and people weren't sure if any female associate ever had a baby while at the firm.. At that time, there was the option to go on what was called the "mommy track"—yet again even the terminology isolates and stigmatizes women in particular; why is it called the "*mommy* track"? It reflects the expectation that it is women who will be doing the caregiving. It is a form of accommodation that to me is stigmatizing and devaluing. It also assumes that women will have other sources of income, such as family wealth or a high-earning partner, which is less likely for women of color. I did refuse to go on the "mommy track": I told them I can do my work and raise my children at the same time.

Also, I did not want to be paid less salary because, at high-powered firms, it is very hard to be able to work only part time. If a partner tells you they need a brief finished by tomorrow, then you may have to stay there all night. It is very hard to say I am not going to do it because I'm on the mommy track—you will be seen as a problem. Also, there were certain customs that were built around someone that did not have childcare responsibilities. For example, it was assumed that you were going to be at the firm at dinner time, and it was customary for the associates to go out to dinner together and return to work afterward, and the client would pay for it. Your social life at the firm revolved around you being able to stay late at night, and the partners expected that you would there late at night. I could get the same amount of work done if I came in earlier and not spend the same amount of time socializing as the other associates and partners. It is not just strictly about the amount of hours you bill, but also the traditions and customs at the firm that assume someone without any caregiving responsibilities.

I have seen for examples in many big firms that women put off having children until they have become senior associates and they have more control of their schedule. Do you think that if an associate wanted to be on a track for partnership then she could not have changed her schedule or missed these social events?

D. Roberts: Definitely. There are some companies that will pay for women to freeze their eggs so they can put off having children until later. Again, that means that women have to sacrifice their health because it is risky and painful to have your eggs extracted and frozen. We actually do not know what the health risks are because there is not enough research or what the condition of the eggs will be in the future when they are thawed. So, you are really asking women to put at risk their health and their childbearing potential in order to work harder for the company or the firm while they are young. All of these things are ways in which the workplace is structured around men who are assumed not to take care of anybody and to be able to rely on a woman who will do the caregiving for them. That is fundamentally what has to change. There needs to be more flexibility so that people can choose which timing is better for them. It is never easy to balance everything, but you should not be forced into a particular path because of sexism.

First of all, the path should be equalized so that gender and racial discrimination is not what determines it. Along with that, caregiving should be publicly supported. Part of the reason why we have these constraining systems is the social assumption that women will take care of children and aging adults. Racism also comes into it because women who are wealthy enough can hire women of color to do all of the housework and caregiving. It is really the intersecting racist and sexist

devaluation of caregiving that fundamentally needs to change. All of this is based on the lack of public support for caregiving, because if we had universally available public childcare, health care, and other forms of assistance to families that would free people who are socially disadvantaged, including low income women and women of color, to be able to have more opportunities in the workplace. But we have an extremely capitalist approach to caregiving that requires people to handle childcare on their own and those who are not able to may be excluded from leadership. Instead, there should be generous public support for caregiving so that everybody has an opportunity to be a leader if they are capable and want to be one, not determined by gender, race and class.

One of the women leaders who spoke to us encouraged us to take initiative and pull up a chair at the table because we may not get invited. What are your thoughts on women asserting themselves more? What would an ideal societal arrangement look like for you in terms of how men and women connect with one another?

D. Roberts: I think the concern I have about leaning in is that it is an individualistic approach and, as I commented earlier, I think what we need are structural changes that equalize access to leadership. So, I do not think the answer is for individual women to lean in more and be more aggressive. I think the answer is to make changes in the workplace and in homes, both public and private arenas, that support people so that they can take leadership positions. Everything I talked about is not about the failure of women to lean in, it is about the failure of workplace structure and our public policies to support women who want to be leaders and have the qualities of leadership. Structures and stereotypes working together—that is the concern I have. That said, I certainly do not think that women should shy away from participating because they are going to be seen as aggressive.

You do not understand freedom by listening to slaveowners, you understand freedom by studying the experiences and the resistance of enslaved people. So, the traditional focus in legal scholarship on the elite, that has been changing dramatically since I started, is wrong-headed.

As a leading legal scholar on race, reproductive health and child welfare what are some of the barriers and challenges that you faced where you felt that there was some kind of discrimination, whether it was for your race, gender or other reasons?

D. Roberts: I have had a number of experiences in the classroom, at conferences, and at faculty meetings (I am not referring to Penn), where people have assumed all sorts of characteristics of mine because I am a black woman. For example, that I would not understand the subject or that I would be too aggressive. I remember once someone saying to me at a talk about my book *Killing the Black Body*, “I was so surprised that you actually smiled! You are actually a pleasant person”. I guess they thought I would be a mean and aggressive black woman, yelling at them. I have had experiences with students, again not at Penn, but in other places I have taught. Some white male students have tried to find something wrong with what I said in class, or they have questioned my questioning them, which I know they would not have done to a white male professor. I could tell you stories about other black professors who have had experiences like that.

Another example is the subject matter that I write about, which no longer is a problem because I am well-established, and I have many publications. But when I started out and I wanted to write about black women's reproductive freedom, in particular, black women who were arrested for using crack cocaine during pregnancy, I was counseled by a number of senior faculty members that it was an inappropriate subject for a non-tenured professor. I stood firm in my position that this was an important subject that I was passionate about, that it was absolutely appropriate and necessary for legal scholarship to include this topic. Starting with that first article, which was published in the Harvard Law Review, I have been a highly cited and well-regarded scholar writing on unorthodox topics. These are the topics we should be writing about, because you cannot understand constitutional law or its principles of liberty, freedom, equality, or power, these terms that legal scholars write about, if you do not examine how they are interpreted against the most disadvantaged people in society, as well as their perspective on the law. You do not understand freedom by listening to slaveowners, you understand freedom by studying the experiences and the resistance of enslaved people. So, the traditional focus in legal scholarship on the elite, that has been changing dramatically since I have started, is wrong headed.

Do you still get pushback for your topics and publications?

D. Roberts: I think it has changed dramatically. I started teaching in the 1980's when critical race theory was just getting started, when feminist legal theory was not yet seen as a legitimate area of legal scholarship. At that time there were very few legal scholars of color, especially black female legal scholars. We could meet together in a room! So those perspectives were not represented as much in legal scholarship. Now that has changed a lot, but we are still not at a point where we should be; we still have to struggle for these topics to be seen as equally legitimate topics of scholarship as more traditional ones and then to get what we have been advocating into place.

We can write about it but how do we actually change policies so that they incorporate these ideas, that is still a very long struggle.

You have a very full calendar! You work as a professor, lecturer, and within the leadership of different departments and organizations. How do you get it done?

D. Roberts: That's a question I get a lot. I'm working in a number of fields and in three departments, it's a lot to handle. I don't think there is a secret: I just work a lot. I have my own forms of keeping myself organized—writing my list of to-dos every morning on a yellow sticky, carrying a calendar with me, planning way ahead of time. I integrate all the different types of activities I am engaged in, and I see connections between the different fields I'm involved in. If you see the various aspects of your life as integrated, it's easier to manage them. My children are all out of the house now, but I used to have to take care of four children at once. I tried to involve my children in my work, when I could. Learning how to connect all these dimensions makes them more manageable and enjoyable. I really love everything I do; it's such a blessing that the reason I work so much is that I want to do all these things! I think it makes a big difference if you are doing things you love, and you are dedicated to doing them. I feel lucky to work on these matters that are so important and so urgent. It's not extra work for me because I truly enjoy doing it. Doing what you're passionate about makes all the difference in the world.

How did you build that relationship with work? Is that something you've always had or something that you built?

D. Roberts: I've always been like this! Since I was a child, I was always staying up late to do homework and projects, joining committees, and editing the student newspaper in grade school. I'm not sure what makes me like this!

You've had a varied career. Is it easier to have this attitude when you self-drive your career?

D. Roberts: That's the great thing about academia. Compared to most jobs, there is a lot of flexibility in when you work, how you work, and what projects you work on, and that's one of the reasons I gravitated toward teaching. To me, I don't think my pace has diminished at all; I work as hard now as I did when I was practicing law. It doesn't seem as onerous as it did working at a big law firm, not onerous at all. The path that I chose helps make it more gratifying to continue with the personality trait I have—to keep taking on new projects! I don't think it's because I have a hard time saying no; instead, if I'm invited to work on something that I am interested in and that I think I could make a contribution to, then I want to do it! The problem is that the one thing I want to work on the most, one of my book projects, I never have time to get to because of everything else. I have to make a commitment to myself, sometimes in writing, that I'm going to stick to it!

How do you balance your individual narrative when you're fulfilling so many different roles on your behalf and on the behalf of the university?

D. Roberts: Fortunately, all those opportunities allow me to express myself! You know that's one nice thing about writing books and articles. For example, an initiative I launched at Penn, the Program on Race, Science, and Society, started a project on Penn Medicine and the afterlives of slavery, and I can frame it in line with my narrative because I am directing it! There is an issue of stress on the body and mind, and I do make an effort to make spaces where I can get away from work for a little bit, especially when I'm overseas. During a conference in Amsterdam, I took an extra day to just walk around the city. I try to take moments where I can just relax and look at beautiful things.

How do you take care of yourself on an everyday basis?

D. Roberts: I have a lot of fun planning trips and events. That's an enjoyable escape for me. I try not to rush into the day. I usually stay up late working, and I like to read the paper and drink my tea in the morning. I try to take a walk. That sort of thing. When my children were at home, taking care of them was also a way to take my mind off work. When they were away, I would just work all night! It's been important for people close to me to help modulate my habits, to draw me away to other things I love and enjoy. Family helps a lot. Taking these moments and planning trips make up for the months of hard work.

During a conversation on the meaning of "intersectionality" with Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw (Professor of Law at UCLA and Columbia Law School), the difference between theorizing and implementing theory was discussed. For your work at Penn, is there a difficulty of working within an institution while challenging parts of the institution and its history?

D. Roberts: I think it is a privilege as a scholar to be able to work within these institutions and imagine what a better society would look like. It is important to have a view of what an equal and just world could look like. Often, people refuse to imagine anything different, and they keep doing the same thing over and over again. At a presentation at the Quattrone Center [for Fair Administration of Justice], we were discussing commutations. I rejoice over everyone released from prison. Especially the women all had stories of being abused, or acting in self-defense, or not doing anything illegal at all! There is a difference between releasing people one by one versus not incarcerating people. Both are important, but I want to consider how we can stop incarcerating people, how we can build a society where prisons are obsolete. Black feminist scholar activists, such as Angela Y. Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Mariame Kaba, have been at the forefront of a prison abolitionist movement. It's important to have people who theorize, people who strategize, and people who take concrete the steps to get there. One of the important insights of abolitionists is that we do not expect prisons to be dismantled tomorrow, but because we can imagine a different society, we can work toward it. If we can imagine something different, we can strategize about how to get there. But if we can't even imagine it, then we won't ever get there! So, let's try a different way of thinking. Especially when we know the social structures we have now are rooted in racism, sexism, and homophobia. We know that. So, let's not make the struggle stop us from dismantling those unjust structures and working toward a just society.

Let's try a different way of thinking. Especially when we know the social structures we have now are rooted in racism, sexism, and homophobia. We know that. So, let's not make the struggle stop us from dismantling those unjust structures and working toward a just society.

Vicky Neumeyer

New Orleans Saints & New Orleans Pelicans Senior Vice President/General Counsel

Vicky Neumeyer is the Senior Vice President/General Counsel of the New Orleans Saints and New Orleans Pelicans. She oversees all legal aspects of both teams, provides comprehensive legal consultation and services to the teams' executive staff, and assures compliance in all of the organizations' business endeavors. Ms. Neumeyer joined the New Orleans Saints organization in 2000 and the Pelicans organization in 2012. Prior to joining the Saints, Ms. Neumeyer spent over five years as an in-house corporate litigation attorney for Exxon. She sits on the boards of the Make-A- Wish Foundation (Texas Gulf Coast and Louisiana), the NOCCA Institute, the Arizona State University Law Program, and the Sports Lawyers' Association. Ms. Neumeyer completed her undergraduate degree (graduating summa cum laude) and a Master of Science Degree in Audiology at the University of Wisconsin. She graduated with honors from Loyola Law School. She also earned a Master of Law with Distinction with a dual emphasis in Intellectual Property Law and Sports Law from Tulane Law School.

This interview with Ms. Neumeyer is presented in the third-person as the interview could not be recorded Jessie Sarkis

J. Sarkis: Thank you so much for speaking with me today. This is truly an honor. To start, could you please discuss your career trajectory and what led you to the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans organizations?

Ms. Neumeyer grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, a famous football city. She developed her passion for football at a young age watching the Packers with her older sisters and their boyfriends on Sundays. Despite being “not at all athletic,” she has a deep passion for the game.

Ms. Neumeyer pursued a degree in speech and hearing disorders at the University of Wisconsin, without any intention of pursuing a career in law or sports. She moved to New Orleans after college and worked in audiology at Tulane University Hospital. However, she found the position to be a “dead end” given the amount of education required in the field and began to look elsewhere. She reached out to a lawyer from New Orleans she had met a few years prior while she was still living in Wisconsin. They both attended a seminar that brought together lawyers and speech and hearing professionals. Soon after, she decided to go to law school.

After graduating with her J.D. from Loyola Law School (and having no luck applying for legal positions in the sports industry), Ms. Neumeyer went in-house for Exxon USA. When Exxon closed its New Orleans office following a corporate consolidation, she stayed in New Orleans where she worked on a contract basis. She decided to go back to school for an LLM in Intellectual Property at Tulane University, where she filled much of her elective time with sports law classes.

After completing her LLM, Ms. Neumeyer decided to take one more stab at a sports career, sending a resume to the New Orleans Saints. She received a call back – which she described as “dumb-luck.” The Saints’ ownership had recently fired Mike Ditka (the former coach of the Saints) and “cleaned out” the entire building. The gentleman who subsequently came in to lead the business side of the organization – a fellow Wisconsinite – brought in Ms. Neumeyer and another attorney (whom she never actually

met) to serve as legal interns. Ms. Neumeyer worked in the afternoon, and the other attorney worked in the morning. Ms. Neumeyer recalled asking herself “what am I doing” taking an “internship” position “after practicing law for 12 years?” But the position was flexible, allowed her to continue to work on a contract basis and turned out to be “a ton of fun.” Ultimately, after her year with the Saints, the organization created a full-time “staff counsel” position for her. Overtime her title evolved into General Counsel, Vice President, and now she is the Senior Vice President/General Counsel of the New Orleans Saints. After the Saints’ ownership group bought the Pelicans, she became Senior Vice President/General Counsel of the NBA team as well. She joked that her success was likely because “I was cheap” (I would beg to differ).

“All you have is your reputation. You have to do things right. If you did something wrong, own it.”

J. Sarkis: What are your primary responsibilities as the Senior Vice President and General Counsel of the Saints and the Pelicans?

Ms. Neumeyer described her role and responsibilities as typical of those of any General Counsel of an entity, specifically overseeing all things legal, spotting and averting potential issues, and resolving other legal matters. She handles “anything business related,” such as agreements with sponsors and vendors. She also covers non-player related labor and employment issues, commission policies, and the employee handbook. She explained that “no contract should go out of this building without legal having reviewed it.” Conversely, player contracts and salary negotiations fall under football operations which is in the purview of the team’s General Manager.

Ms. Neumeyer highlighted the rising importance of data privacy and protection in her role. In particular, she helps to ensure that any information stored in the Saints’ or Pelicans’ databases is used and shared properly. For example, she explained that the Saints have a larger database than the Pelicans in part because the Saint’s stadium holds 20,000 more fans. While the Pelicans may want to access the Saints’ data in order to sell tickets to their 42 home games, this information-sharing is precluded by the NFL’s privacy policy.

Ms. Neumeyer also touched on the legal implications presented by using social media as a marketing tool in professional sports. As the Saints and Pelicans, like many other professional sports teams, seek “more and more content” to be used in team promotions (e.g. videos, ticketholder contests), she and her department must navigate the rules and regulations surrounding this growing area of the law.

J. Sarkis: In what ways are the Saints and Pelicans looking to attract a younger fan base and to better connect with children in the local community?

Ms. Neumeyer explained that the Saints and Pelicans engage in a number of grassroots initiatives to connect with local children. Players on both teams had visited three schools in the few weeks leading up to our call. Further, she expounded on a longstanding partnership with St. Amant High School, which was devastated by a flood in 2016. Through a bit of “star power” lent by the Saints and other high-profile donors, the school was able to raise funds to rebuild – as well as to purchase new instruments for the school band. Most recently, the “phenomenal” St. Amant band had the opportunity to play at the Saints’ Sunday night game on September 29th.

Ms. Neumeyer discussed the extensive rules that come with organizing youth-based initiatives. As part of St. Amant's performance, NBC wanted to do a feature on the band by visiting the school. However, this required advance confirmation from the school that each child had received parental consent to be shown on television and social media. Similarly, there are a host of limitations surrounding the use of a child's name alone. For example, the Saints' Kids Club offers two levels of membership: one that is paid and one that is free. The team may only collect the names of those children participating in the paid membership. This distinction can raise a dilemma for the team if, for instance, it wants to provide personalized merchandise to its Kids Club members but can only use the names of those that have paid to join.

Ms. Neumeyer noted that the Saints are an avid supporter of local high school football programs. In addition, while grade school football programs are "dying off a bit," Saints quarterback Drew Brees started his own flag football group (Football 'N' America) which has gained widespread popularity. During our discussion, Ms. Neumeyer raised the often-unanswered question in youth football: "when do you introduce tackling?" – which she described as a "chicken-and-egg" dilemma. She explained that while some programs may wait to introduce tackling until high school for purposes of student-safety, this wait can actually create other safety risks that would otherwise be avoided by teaching tackling to students earlier.

"You can't just hire what you look like."

J. Sarkis: To what extent, if any, do issues concerning player health and safety impact your role?

Health and safety is largely dealt with from the football operations side. However, Ms. Neumeyer's department has handled litigation matters – including document collection, subpoenas, and other administrative procedural issues – in connection with the "infamous no-call" during the 2019 NFC Championship game. She joked, "we are still trying to talk fans off the ledge on that one." Nevertheless, she explained that while the no-call was initially looked at as an issue of pass interference, illegal head-to-head contact likely should have been the basis of a foul.

J. Sarkis: The Pelicans drafted Zion Williamson with the first pick in the 2019 NBA Draft and last season, the Saints reached the NFC Championship game. How do inevitable fluctuations in team performance impact the organization as a whole?

Ms. Neumeyer confessed that while those on the business side may attempt to be "record-proof," it's ultimately impossible because "we are truly a family." On the Saints side alone, Ms. Neumeyer and her colleagues have been through "a Hurricane and a Superbowl victory," both incredibly impactful experiences for those affiliated with the organization, as well as the City of New Orleans, generally.

Ms. Neumeyer further explained that team performance is "all about fan affinity and emotion." The day after a team loss, she knows there will be a host of negative media and fans will even call into her office. When there's a win, "it's the opposite." But, "good or bad, you want fan involvement."

Ms. Neumeyer emphasized that working for an organization like the Saints and Pelicans requires an ability to cope with public scrutiny. For instance, when interviewing students for an internship, she asks herself, “is this person going to be able to fit in?” She stressed that “it takes a certain mentality” to be able handle the public pressure inherent to working in such a public-facing position.

J. Sarkis: To what extent have the Saints and/or Pelicans implemented policies to promote diverse hiring and an inclusive work environment?

Ms. Neumeyer praised the recent creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Council within the Saints and Pelicans organizations. The Council is a way of “trying to open people’s eyes to diversity.” She urged the need to be open and inclusive in hiring decisions, stating “you can’t just hire what you look like.”

The Council organizes other events for employees, including a recent discussion with the head of diversity from one of the major law firms in New Orleans. In fact, the day before our interview, the Council organized a field trip to the criminal courthouse to watch a bail bond proceeding and to talk to members of the Public Defender’s Office. The following week, the Council had planned a visit with the District Attorney’s Office to “hear the other side.” Ms. Neumeyer stressed the importance of “actually understanding our society” which includes knowing what happens “two miles away from here.”

J. Sarkis: There are six women General Counsels in the NFL. Do you think that the increase in women in leadership positions has had an effect on the League generally?

Ms. Neumeyer professed that “in-house at the NFL, it’s amazing how many women there are.” She recounted the “wonderful” experience of entering an NFL General Counsel’s meeting and seeing the number on women in the room. Although many women are still at a junior level, they are nonetheless rising in the ranks. However, she emphasized that while greater diversity in management positions is significant, it is equally critical that there is operational continuity within the League or the organization as a whole, “regardless of age, gender, or race.”

J. Sarkis: What barriers, if any, have you experienced personally throughout your career and/or witnessed generally that impact women seeking to advance in the sports law field?

Ms. Neumeyer recalled that when she was first trying to break into the sports law industry, she contacted a senior executive at the Green Bay Packers. He suggested that she would “never make it” because she lacked a sports background and therefore, didn’t understand the locker-room environment and what it’s like to be part of a team. He recommended that she look for positions in college sports or a women’s league instead. Years later, that same executive was very surprised to hear Ms. Neumeyer announce herself as a representative for the Saints on an NFL- wide conference call: “He called after and said, ‘Oh my god you did it.’ It was really cool.”

Ms. Neumeyer has not found her lack of a sports background to be a limiting factor in practice, noting that “I don’t need to know the locker-room mentality” to be successful. Just as she may not know what the players experience in the locker-room following a loss or a big win, the players do not know what those on the finance or legal side experience as well. In fact, she said that those on the business side share a special “comradery” and “conference room mentality” that is unique to their role.

Ms. Neumeyer added that her position is conducive to her priorities as a mother of two daughters. She enjoys the flexibility associated with having a “laptop and a cellphone that work from anywhere.” She also has been fortunate that the Benson family – who own the Saints and Pelicans – are “very cognizant” of the particular needs of working parents. For example, while she is invited to attend any Saints game she chooses, there is no expectation that she go. However, the NBA side can be more demanding because the teams play many more games than in the NFL. While she is only asked attend one road-game, it can be difficult to attend the Pelicans’ forty-two home games each year.

While Ms. Neumeyer noted that her experiences may be unique to her “skewed slice of the world,” she also addressed the double standards that women face in the workplace generally. She referenced a recent Taylor Swift interview on *CBS Sunday Morning* where Swift made concrete comparisons between adjectives used to describe men and women and the different connotations associated with each. Ms. Neumeyer discussed the ways in which certain terms that are considered “positive towards men” are used in a way that is “derogatory towards women,” a difference that can negatively impact women seeking to advance in their careers.

J. Sarkis: What values or guiding principles do you believe are essential to effective leadership?

Integrity: “All you really have is your reputation. You have to do things right. If you did something wrong – own it.”

Honesty: Ms. Neumeyer stressed that “pushing the truth” can have serious consequences for an organization. She urged the need to be both forthright and accountable.

Staying Calm under Pressure (although Ms. Neumeyer confessed that she herself is not always able to meet this goal)

Lead by example and treat others with respect.

Be Positive: “Everybody here is a role model for somebody, so live it that way.”

J. Sarkis: At the close of the interview, Ms. Neumeyer shared with me a few words that she writes down in her planner each year and keeps with her:

“Reputation and credibility are priceless assets.” “Transparency is essential.” “Know your strengths, own them – don’t apologize for them.”

Farahnaz Ispahani

Farahnaz Ispahani is a Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, DC and the author of the book Purifying the Land of the Pure: The History of Pakistan's Religious Minorities (Oxford University Press, 2017). In 2015, she was a Reagan-Fascell Scholar at the National Endowment for Democracy, in Washington, DC. Ispahani was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center from 2013-2014. Ispahani also served as a Member of Parliament and Media Advisor to the President of Pakistan from 2008-2012. In Parliament, she focused on the issues of terrorism, human rights, gender-based violence, minority rights and US-Pakistan relations. She was also a member of the Women's caucus in the 13th National Assembly. Ms. Ispahani spent many years of her career as a print and television journalist. Her last journalistic position was as Executive Producer and Managing Editor of Voice of America's Urdu TV. She has also worked at ABC News, CNN, and MSNBC.

Interview by Farah Chalisa

"Male Ministers often thought issues concerning women and religious minorities were 'soft issues' that didn't merit time on the floor of the house or legislation. In spite of that... we managed to pass more pro-women bills in one 5-year term than ever before in Pakistani history."

F. Chalisa: It's wonderful to be able to speak with you today, I'd like to start off by asking - how did you first get involved with politics? As a little girl, did you ever imagine yourself in these roles?

F. Ispahani: I always knew I wanted to contribute in some way to my country of birth, Pakistan, but I initially thought it would be as a journalist reporting on politics and human rights issues. My grandfather was an elected politician in pre-partition India and a financial and political supporter of Mr. Jinnah both before and after Pakistan's birth. He was also Pakistan's first Ambassador to the United States. He had a great influence on me.

F. Chalisa: How do you feel that your dual nationality has impacted your work and perspective on foreign policy?

F. Ispahani: My nationality of Pakistan and also the United States has never divided my loyalty to either. When I served in the Pakistani parliament and as an Adviser to the President of Pakistan I supported initiatives that were in the interests of the people of Pakistan, like the Kerry-Lugar Bill that was the first civilian only aid bill passed by the US Congress, but did not look at Pakistani issues through an American lens. The issue of dual nationality is used as a lever of pressure by the Pakistani establishment to cast doubt on the patriotism of civilian politicians.

F. Chalisa: How did you meet Benazir Bhutto? What was it like, returning to Pakistan with her in 2007? What lessons did you learn from her that you feel are important to pass along to future generations of women?

F. Ispahani: I knew Ms. Bhutto as a family friend but came to know her well personally when we were all in exile during the military dictatorship of General Pervez Musharraf. She invited me to return to Pakistan to support the effort for the restoration of democracy and to help run the international media cell of the Pakistan People's Party. Ms. Bhutto was an iconic leader - the first woman elected leader in the Muslim world. She was well-educated, well read, and a forceful speaker. She was also someone who had suffered in jail as well as house arrest and lived through the judicial murder of her beloved father, former Prime Minister Bhutto, and later the assassinations of both of her brothers. She suffered deeply. What was so impactful was that instead of bitterness, Benazir had endless empathy for those in difficult economic and social need, especially women. She had deep friendships with other women and loved to chat over dessert and a cup of tea. I hope her legacy will always be that of a woman standing up to Islamists, the Military, and other powerful forces and standing with those who had no power of their own. Her gift of leadership and empathy was extraordinary.

"I hope [Benazir Bhutto's] legacy will always be that of a woman standing up to Islamists, the Military, and other powerful forces and of standing with those who had no power of their own."

F. Chalisa: As a Pakistani politician, you served as a Member of Parliament and Media Advisor to the President of Pakistan. What difficulties did you face as a female politician in Pakistan? Have you faced any challenges in getting male leaders to respect you?

F. Ispahani: After Ms. Bhutto's brutal assassination, the most powerful advocate for women in Pakistan's political process was lost. However, her party, of which I was a member, was created in the elections and we formed a government. The PPP had a strong bench of women, but we had to deal with male parliamentarians and ministers who were not always respectful. Male Ministers often thought issues concerning women and religious minorities were 'soft issues' that didn't merit time on the floor of the house or legislation. In spite of that and primarily because of the support of the President and Prime Minister, we managed to pass more pro-women bills in one 5-year term than ever before in Pakistani history. The creation of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus formed by the first woman speaker cut across party lines and was a tremendous support in our efforts. My personal involvement and efforts were usually behind the scenes, helping bills move and gain support, getting them laid in parliament, and helping to get them passed. This, sometimes, included critical political maneuvering, bypassing obstructive Ministers and building across party support.

F. Chalisa: What was your motivation for writing the book *Purifying the Land of the Pure: Pakistan's Religious Minorities*? Has this book been influenced at all by your own background or life story?

F. Ispahani: When we were forced to leave Pakistan, I could no longer work within the parliament as a member of the Human Rights Committee or on the floor of the House as a voice for persecuted religious minorities. I decided to write a book on the history of Pakistan's religious minorities so that I could continue to give voice to their conditions, which reflected Pakistan's increasing majoritarian culture and the growing politicization of Islam.

Lauren L. Steinfeld

Chief Privacy Officer, Penn Medicine

Lauren Steinfeld is the Chief Privacy Officer for Penn Medicine and the Senior Advisor for Privacy for the University of Pennsylvania, where she leads and oversees the HIPAA compliance program and other privacy initiatives for Penn's four hospitals, over 200 physician practices, and the School of Medicine research program. She also co-teaches a course on Privacy Law, offering a practitioner and policymaker's perspective on the various federal regulations governing privacy practices in the private sector. Prior to coming to Penn, Lauren worked at the Federal Trade Commission as an Attorney Advisor until 1999, when she joined the White House administration as the Associate Chief Counselor for Privacy. There, she helped the Clinton Administration develop the HIPAA medical privacy regulations and handled a wide range of other privacy issues, including financial and online privacy, cybersecurity, and government information systems. She is the first to create an infrastructure for an institution-wide privacy policy in higher education.

Interview by Chrissy Pak

“You have to learn to trust yourself and be comfortable making that call.”

C. Pak: You were one of the first professionals to become an expert in privacy. How did you find yourself specializing in such a new field? How did your career begin?

L. Steinfeld: I began as a litigator at the firm Morrison & Foerster. Even though I worked primarily in oil, gas, and telecommunications—so nothing to do with privacy—I found it a valuable experience in the broader practice of law. Working at a firm really taught me how to write.

From there, I joined the Federal Trade Commission as a Staff Attorney in their Credit Practices division before becoming the Attorney Advisor to Commissioner Mozelle Thompson, who just happened to be the one to handle some of the first internet and privacy related enforcement proceedings brought by the FTC.

It [the FTC] is a wonderful way to do public interest because you're protecting consumers. At the ground level as a staff attorney you're assembling cases, trying to find as much as supporting information as possible and really being an advocate for the consumer. As an Attorney Advisor, it's a broader consumer protection practice. The Commissioner's job is to think critically—should we bring this consumer protection action? So, I was evaluating the cases similar to ones I had assembled as a staff attorney.

C. Pak: And that's where you first became exposed to privacy as a legal practice?

L. Steinfeld: Yes, the FTC was the first federal agency looking hard at privacy. David Medine, Chief of the Division of Credit Practices was interested, and so was my Commissioner. You have to realize that it was a very unexplored field back then. Now there's a lot of demand, but back then nobody was really talking about privacy. Anita Allen had written a lot of good work on

privacy, but more from a philosophy perspective and less from an information practices perspective. So, the FTC became the leader on internet privacy issues, and I was lucky enough to be there at the time.

C. Pak: In 1999, you joined the White House administration as the Associate Chief Counselor for Privacy. How did you make the shift away from enforcement into substantive policymaking?

L. Steinfeld: President Clinton appointed my direct boss and the first White House Privacy Officer, Peter Swire, as part of OMB [Office of Management and Budget]. OMB is part of the administration, unlike the FTC, which is one of the few independent agencies. Commissions like the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission], the CFTC [Commodities Futures Trading Commission], or the ITC [International Trade Commission] are typically small, independent, and operate in five-person commissions bringing cases. Most other agencies, by contrast, are part of the administration, so they can't really act against the White House administration in place.

C. Pak: And where does OMB come in?

L. Steinfeld: Anything that goes out as an administration policy goes through OMB clearance. OMB runs the cost-benefit analysis on the proposal before sending it out to every other agency so the administration can speak with one voice. So, we really get to have a hand in policies across the board in a really unique way.

C. Pak: How was the transition from an independent commission into such an integrated part of the administration?

L. Steinfeld: Well, there was actually a good amount of collaboration and similarity between my FTC that I was a part of and the Clinton administration. The big transition was going from an enforcement role into a policy role—and my role at OMB was such a deep policy role. I got to talk to all kinds of people drafting legislation and was able to work on some really exciting policies in the context of HIPAA [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act], COPPA [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act], financial services legislation, and government surveillance issues.

C. Pak: In your position, you were not only one of the few people in the world who was an expert on federal privacy policy but also one of the few women. Did you find that you encountered any biases or struggled finding mentors that you could emulate and learn from?

L. Steinfeld: I think I was incredibly lucky in finding really good mentors, regardless of gender. With respect to women mentors—it wasn't that my male mentors were problematic because I was a woman, or anything along those lines—but my boss's boss at the White House was also a woman, and she really took me under her wing. Sally Katzen—she was essentially the COO of the federal government, and she was just amazing. But it wasn't just women. My boss, Peter Swire, is a man, and he was also amazing. Even after I left, I would call him up for advice, and I still keep in touch with him even today.

One piece of advice I would have for any young person is to just try to be in the room. That's how you learn. Whenever there was any meeting where I had even a tangential connection, I would always ask my mentor, "Can I be your notetaker?" and that would just get me into the room. I got to observe

my mentor's tone when she spoke to high-ranking officials, her style of running a meeting. I also watched her put high-ranking officials on hold when her son called.

C. Pak: I think that's a good segue into an issue that people bring up often in any discussion about women in leadership---work-life balance. It sounds like you think that it's important. What advice would you have for women like you who want to balance a successful career with a family?

L. Steinfeld: I guess I would say—you can have it all. But maybe not at the same time. You know, at the time, my husband had a job with Penn. But we stayed in DC because my OMB job was so important to me, and my husband also just thought it was the coolest job. So, we stayed in Washington, and he commuted. After the change in administration when the Republicans won the White House, we moved to Philadelphia, and I wanted to have more free time as we were starting a family.

I think everyone has, or should have, a big passion out of work, and for me that is family. It can be hard to balance work and family. Honestly, I could spend all day every day on either one – work or family. So, you have to be conscious about making decisions that give you the right balance. I had to learn that it was okay to say, and right for me to say, that I had to leave work early or come in late because my kids had special events that I did not want to miss.

C. Pak: In Philadelphia and at Penn, you were the first person, male or female, to create an infrastructure for an institution-wide privacy program in the field of higher education. How did you end up getting the job as Chief Privacy Officer?

L. Steinfeld: So, I had moved here with my husband but without a job. And I actually wrote a case study for Penn that essentially said, 'Here is why you need a CPO [Chief Privacy Officer] and here is why it should be me.' It was bold and a little confident. Unbeknownst to me, at the same time, Penn had created a subcommittee on privacy that had actually recommended to the Provost that they needed a CPO. So, they read the recommendation, and they read my case study, and they hired me.

At the time, there were still very few professionals on privacy. The IAPP [International Association of Privacy Professionals] had about 600 members—now they have about 30,000. So there just were very few people who were in the field and could do what I could do. I was just extremely lucky to have been able to get that experience at that time. Now, the field has grown so much and there are tens of thousands of experts in privacy, which is just terrific.

C. Pak: I think it may have been a little more than luck. What was the transition back to private practice like?

L. Steinfeld: Coming to Penn was hard. It was my first time not working closely and directly under a leader or boss who knew privacy in and out. Previously, you know, with Peter and Sally, I had always had bosses with more expertise than I had that I could rely on. Here, suddenly, I was expected to be the number one privacy expert in my workplace, and that was really intimidating. As I mentioned earlier, sometimes I would still call up Peter and ask, 'What should I do?' And he would ask me, 'What do you think you should do? What would you tell me if you were recommending a plan to me?' But he made it clear that it was my call now. And you have to learn to trust yourself and be comfortable making that call. That was a big adjustment and sometimes still is.

C. Pak: That's definitely an important lesson for every leader to learn, often especially for women. I know we spoke about mentors earlier, but what broader advice would you have for women who are trying to build or transition in their careers?

L. Steinfeld: I would say keep your eyes and ears open always and keep an open mind. Don't be so sure what you want.

Here at Penn, for example, I was brought on, first as a consultant and then as part-time—they couldn't fully afford me full-time and going back to what we were saying about balance, I had a newborn. When our institutional compliance officer left, I came on as full-time, but I felt too busy, so I ended up going back to part-time as the Senior Advisor for Privacy.

When the CPO for Penn Med left, I agreed to be the interim CPO for Penn Med while they looked for a replacement. But I was very adamant that it was a temporary position. I was just so sure that I didn't want to do this full-time. The problem was that I loved it! I had been in my last job for a while and I think the change was refreshing. So, while they were searching for my replacement, I was starting to think—oh no, I don't want to leave this job.

C. Pak: But given your current position as CPO for Penn Med, I'm going to guess it all ended up working out.

L. Steinfeld: Yes, luckily enough the original person they had approached didn't end up working out, and so I kept on working in the role. But the lesson there is really to always keep an open mind. I was so fast to say no to a position without even thinking about it, and I ended up loving it.

C. Pak: Anything else? What about women who know that they want to transition into a specific field or practice, like your move from big law into policymaking?

L. Steinfeld: Relationships really matter—either for practical networking purposes or just because they're rewarding and enriching in and of themselves. People are key, always. And being a specialist is really valuable too.

So, if you know what you love, and you're reading all the material in that field, staying current and up to date with the news, knowing who the big players are—that's a start. And if you start getting to know the big players, networking, going to conferences and getting involved in those

associations where I think everyone is very open to networking and mentoring young professionals—those connections will help you learn about and get those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities.

So, try to figure out what you love, and stay current in it, and always build relationships with people and keep in touch. Keep your eyes and ears open whenever you get into the room.

Amanda O'Connell Adams

Ann O'Connell Adams is a trailblazing woman. She graduated from the George Washington University Law School in 2004. She clerked for Judge Frank Magill on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in Fargo, North Dakota, immediately after graduation. She then clerked for Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Chief Justice John Roberts on the U.S. Supreme Court. She was only the third woman ever to graduate from G.W. Law and clerk on the Supreme Court. Following her clerkships, she was an associate at the Washington, DC law firm Covington & Burling. She then transitioned to the U.S. Solicitor General's office, where she argued over twenty cases in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. She currently works in the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice.

Interview by Meghan Downey

A. O'Connell Adams: When I went to law school, I didn't have any idea what I wanted to do as a lawyer. I had been a political science major in college, and I knew that I didn't really like math and science, so law school was a natural next step. I knew very little about what it was like to practice law, and I definitely didn't know what a clerkship was when I went to law school. I learned about that in law school and thought that it sounded interesting.

I applied for some clerkships my 2L year and got an offer to work for a judge in Fargo, North Dakota, so I went and clerked in the Eighth Circuit. From there, I kind of fell into appellate law – because that's the clerkship I got, and I feel like law school sort of directs you there, too, with the appellate briefs and moot court, so I kept pursuing that line of work. I did do a little bit of trial work when I was at Covington, but other than that, I had started to think appellate work was cool in law school and kept pursuing it after that.

M. Downey: You've served in a lot of different roles - could you talk about how you were able to transition between all of these opportunities? What were some of the challenges you encountered during these transitions, and how were you able to overcome them?

A. O'Connell Adams: In the legal world, transitions between jobs are never really that hard because it's mostly reading and writing. As long as those are skills that you developed and that you enjoy doing, going from job to job is just going to be applying those skills in different ways. Now it's different in the trial world, obviously, because you're doing things that require a totally different skillset, but at least in the appellate world, you're mostly sitting in your office writing briefs, and that is a very transferable skill.

The one thing that was probably the most challenging in terms of transitioning between jobs was the transition from being a law clerk to being a lawyer. The skill is the same, you're just writing, but your mindset has to shift. When you're the law clerk, you're reading and weighing both sides and determining which one is right and what's the right or best answer. When you go to the law firm, you're an advocate now, and you're trying to push the envelope as much as you can in one direction for your client.

The other big transition from me was moving from the law firm to the government. At the law firm as an associate, I did get to stand up in court a few times, but it wasn't a regular occurrence. In four

years at the firm, I did it twice—once for an appeal that I was working on for a pro bono case, and another time in a different pro bono case I got to argue a motion and cross examine a few witnesses in a trial. When I came to DOJ, all of a sudden being in trial was a huge part of the job. I started in September, they were like, "Ok in January you are going to argue this case in the Supreme Court," and I was like "Alright!"

This is an experience you get easily when you go into government service, but you don't always feel totally prepared for it. Because obviously, if I have been in private practice, no one would have hired me to do that argument—but the government did. And so that requires, basically, a lot of confidence, knowing that you have been hired into this job for a reason and that you're going to be fine as long as you do the work and prepare, then you'll be good to go.

M. Downey: Confidence is easier said than done! What did you do to prepare or build that confidence? Or did you just charge right through your nerves and go for it?

A. O'Connell Adams: A little bit of both. I think that confidence usually comes from just being completely prepared for what you're doing. Some of it is you have to be comfortable on your feet and answering questions and talking in public. But if you are arguing a case and you can find the time to really drill down on it and write the best brief you can, practice giving your answers to every single possible question—I don't think I ever had an argument that was harder than the moot court I did to prepare for it. If you do all the work to prepare, I think confidence standing up there should be pretty easy by the end.

M. Downey: What is preparing for an oral argument like? How do you go about that?

A. O'Connell Adams: I usually start by pulling up a blank computer screen and making an outline of my argument, and I use my brief to do that. Then I start to think of as many questions as I can that people might ask me that expose all the weak points in the argument. Then I practice making up answers to those. Most of the work is done by your colleagues—in the Solicitor General's office we always did two moot courts for every argument. So, you would ask three of your colleagues to read all the briefs for your case and then do a moot court for an hour, which is way longer than you would ever argue in the Supreme Court. And those people are reading the briefs and trying to come up with the hardest questions they can, and then you stand up there in front of them for an hour answering all their questions. I would usually record those because your mind is all over the place when you're doing moot court, especially when you sit down at the end to get their feedback, your brain is fried. So, I would go back and listen to the feedback again later. Those moot courts will help crystallize what the problems are with your case and what your best points are, and you restructure your argument that way. So, we rely a lot on our colleagues to help us figure out what we should say and what we should focus on.

M. Downey: That reminds me of something we've spoken about in class, that one of the barriers that women face in the workplace is the stereotype that women should play more of a collaborative role rather than a leadership role or authoritative role. But it sounds like both are important! Can you speak about how collaboration has been important in your career? Is it an important leadership skill that both women and men can develop?

A. O'Connell Adams: Collaboration is a huge part of the work that I do as an appellate lawyer, and

I think it's probably even more important at the trial level, with all the work that our prosecutors are doing.

I worked at Covington for just four years and I've been at the Department of Justice for a little over nine years, and most of that time has been in the Solicitor General's office. Most of those nine years, the Solicitor General and most of his deputies—even though they were rotating in on a political basis—they've all been men. And so, while I love the idea of women leading those discussions and not simply collaborating, that wasn't my experience in the Solicitor General's office at all. Even when a woman was the one presenting the argument, the deputy on the case was the one sitting in there and helping to crystalize what the best arguments and weakest points are. It was always a man who was the point person leading that discussion.

In the Criminal Appellate Division, we have a woman who's our chief, and she has three deputies, all of whom are men, who help her run the office and report to her. It may be the only appellate division in the Department of Justice that is run by a woman, and that was one of the most attractive aspects of this job when I was deciding where to go from the Solicitor General's office.

M. Downey: In this course, we video conference with women who are trailblazing new paths in the legal profession all over the world. For example, we spoke to a Zimbabwean businesswoman, Natalie Jabangwe, who is the youngest chief executive of a mobile money service in Africa. She spoke about the challenges women in Zimbabwe face to gain access to the credit and capital they need to pursue careers independent from their families. One of the biggest barriers faced by Zimbabwean women is their exclusion from the formal economy. What in your opinion are the biggest challenges that women in the US face to pursuing a fulfilling and successful career?

A. O'Connell Adams: I thought a lot about that when I was at a firm, for sure, because I think that at least in our sphere of the law firm world, especially in DC, the firms have really come a long way and they've actually been there for a long time. I was an associate at Covington from 2006-2010 so that was ten to fifteen years ago. Even then, Covington had very egalitarian parental leave policies: as long as you were the primary caretaker for the child, if you were a man or a woman, you could take a longer leave.

It is just a fact of life that women have babies. They are mothers and they are often viewed as caretakers, and often times, there is that expectation. So, a lot of parental leave policies had been built around that idea, that the woman who has the baby can take four months off and the man gets a shorter leave. And although that seems like a wonderful thing, it means that the woman is at home and is not at work, so she's not making connections or advancing her career. Meanwhile her husband goes back to work and continues to do all those things.

I think that the structure which is set up for parents taking leave from work makes it so that, generally, since men are typically paid more than women, often times it makes sense for a mom to stay home while her husband goes back to work. But again, in the law firm world that's not the case. People are mostly paid the same regardless of the gender. So, if you have a husband who is also a lawyer and you are the same age, you'll be making the same amount of money.

I think the law firm world has come a long way in that respect, though the recent Jones Day situation shows that not everybody's there.

M. Downey: Have you encountered any of those obstacles in your career - whether they be structural or institutional, or more individual or relational, like if someone has undervalued you or underestimated you because of your gender? Have there been any moments like that in your career, or have you seen anything like that happen to your colleagues? Or conversely, have you seen the opposite, any instances of women's empowerment in the work environment?

A. O'Connell Adams: I don't think that I have ever personally experienced anything like that, and it could be just because I received this credential of being a Supreme Court clerk pretty early on in my legal career, and whether that warrants it or not, that is something that has always commanded respect. So, people have always been like, "This person has this credential, this is a serious person that we won't question."

In terms of barriers that I've seen other women face, In the Solicitor General's office, one of my friends had a baby and she took a leave of about four months or so. When she came back, there was a question about whether she would have the same number of arguments that she would have received had she not taken the leave—the concept being that she had not contributed as much to the office that year because she was out, caring for a baby. When we heard that we were like, "Oh, hell no."

It ended up working out so that no decision needed to be made about that, just because of the way the arguments were doled out based on seniority. She wouldn't have received the next argument anyway.

But when we first heard the discussion that was happening, she approached me and told me what was going on. I said, "Look this is not acceptable, and we will do something about this. Do you want me to step in and help you, or do you want to go advocate for yourself, and I can be here to back you up if you need it?"

In 2019 I was shocked that this was something that we were talking about, so it's definitely something that I've seen my colleagues face when they have children. I don't have children so that may be part of the reason why I haven't personally experienced that kind of discrimination, but I've seen it happen for sure.

M. Downey: When you said, "We all said, 'Oh hell no,'" who was the we? Did it include the men in the office?

A. O'Connell Adams: That's a great question, and it was the women. It was not the men. I think a lot of the men that I worked with were very enlightened, so it was surprising to me. I can remember that a bunch of men were sitting around and doling out the arguments, and when I walked in and asked, "What are you guys doing?" they, too, had identified this issue – that my female colleague was being penalized for having a child. But they were like, "Well, I would be the next person to get her argument, so why should I care about that kind of thing?" It was definitely the women who were like "oh hell no" about what was going on.

M. Downey: That speaks to a number of other questions that I was hoping to ask you. Let's talk about mentorships first, although that story you just told definitely does speak to the role

of diversity in the workplace. But for now, speaking about your experience with other women in the workplace and the relationships that you've had with other women throughout your career: In our class, our professor has emphasized that friendship is part of leadership, and that we as women experience more success in our careers when we support one another and lift each other up. Can you speak about any experience you've had with other women in the workplace, and the women who support you in all aspects of your life? Are there particular women whom you admire and look up to? And have you had the opportunity to develop mentoring relationships with women, either as a mentor or mentee?

A. O'Connell Adams: I feel like I am reaching back so far in my experience to find women mentors, because all the people who have supervised me in the past decade have been men, until I moved to the criminal division. When I was in law school, I had two women whom I considered to be big time mentors: one was my legal research and writing professor, who now is an advocate for autism insurance. She has had this whole other career after being a law professor that has been very cool.

Another was a 3L who taught me how to use the Bluebook when I was a 1L, named Courtney. She was my Dean's Fellow, so she had read my writing and knew me as a student and a person. She had attended law school with the goal of clerking at the Supreme Court. She took all the right classes with the right professors, and she knew all the right people to get all the right recommendations. She thought she had a shot clerking for Chief Justice Rehnquist because he had hired people from G.W. before and some of his former law clerks were professors at G.W., and things like that. So, she totally worked that and got that clerkship.

While she was clerking for Chief Justice Rehnquist, I had secured an Eighth Circuit clerkship. But when it came time to apply for Supreme Court clerkships, I had never ever considered doing it. I was like, "Nope, I'm not at the very top of my class, I'm not number one, and somebody from G.W. is not going to be hired and definitely not me."

But then Courtney called me one day. She said, "Hey, Chief Justice Rehnquist came into my office today and told me, 'Courtney you're one of the best law clerks that I've ever had, I would love to hire another person from G.W. Do you have anyone you would recommend?'" and she said "Yes, I would recommend my former student Ann O'Connell. She's a great writer and a fun person and I think you'd really get along with her."

So, she called me and told me this, and I was like "Well I haven't submitted my application," and she was like, "Bring it over tomorrow morning." So, I brought it over, and she put it on his desk. Chief Justice Rehnquist interviewed me a week later and I got the job.

That was definitely a scenario where it was a life-changing credential that I ended up getting, but I never believed myself worthy of having that job. And when I did the job, I was like, "What the heck, I'm just as smart as everyone else here from all these other schools like Harvard and Yale!"

And there were definitely men in my class at G.W. who had Court of Appeals clerkships and were like, "Yep, I'm going to apply to the Supreme Court." And I think that is probably one time that gender may have played a role in holding me back from taking an opportunity, because I was not that confident. But also, it was through that mentorship and empowerment that I got that job.

M. Downey: Thank you for sharing that with me, that is such an incredible story. One of the trailblazers who spoke with our class said: “You’re not a leader if you don’t provide transformation for the people around you. Being a leader has to be about what we can provide for other people.” I would love to get your take on that—how do you commit yourself to supporting other women, if that's a goal of yours, and then how do you reconcile that with putting yourself first and prioritizing your own career development?

A. O’Connell Adams: I think that's a great thought, and it's something that I have tried to live out and I think the women that I have worked with have always tried to live that out. At the Criminal Division, when I first started here, the women in the office had a happy hour get-together to welcome me. The women of the Criminal Division have a monthly lunch where people can come and talk about issues facing women at the Department of Justice. On a very personal level, the same woman I was mentioning earlier who had a baby, she had miscarried about a year earlier. Very early on in her second pregnancy she was having some issues, and she screamed and left work, and thought she was miscarrying a second time. It turns out that she was ok, but she was in the hospital and she had to be on bed rest for a couple of weeks. And she was just at the end of getting a brief ready to submit to the Supreme Court. And she absolutely could not finish it.

That day she left the office, I had heard her scream, and I had emailed her asking if she needed help and what was happening. I was aware of what was going on, but she did not necessarily want it shared with everybody. So, I jumped in and helped finish that brief over the weekend, so that she could rest without having to share what she was going through with everyone else at work, which was mostly men. She often references that experience, and thanks me for it, and I'm like, no, that is something that we should be doing for each other, and I was more than happy to give up a weekend or a week or whatever it was to help her when she was going through something that is unique to women and that she didn't necessarily want to share with everyone else at work.

For her, I know that she really wanted to finish the brief. And I remember talking to the few other people who knew what was going on, and they were like, "Listen, we need to let her know that this is taken care of, because she is going to want someone to take her computer home to her and work on this when she really shouldn't be doing that."

I think that women who are lawyers tend to be driven, and they don't want to be held back by something like this. But I think that, at the same time, when you're talking about struggles between family and health and work, there's always going to be a struggle: do I give up this opportunity to file this brief or argue this case to go do something that I am obligated to do as a mother?

I have not encountered anything like that, but I am confident in the job that I have now, that if I were in a similar situation, the women here would help me out. Since they're the ones that embraced me as I made this job changed. Whenever I have questions at work, I go ask the women. We have a great women vibe in the Criminal Division.

M. Downey: In our course, we have spoken at length about the way in which diversity enhances decision-making. In all the places that you've worked, you mentioned that it's mostly men who have authoritative roles in these spaces. Can you think of an instance in which there has been someone at the table with a different perspective—a woman at the table, or a person

of color, a woman of color, in a position to make decisions. Have you seen these decision-making environments be changed by that different perspective? Have you encountered work environments in which an emphasis or recognition of diversity contributes to the way decisions were made?

A. O'Connell Adams: I have been a little bit disappointed to realize that even though we have been having national conversations about diversity—and not just diversity but inclusion, about making sure that the diverse voices that we bring in are included and respected—In the Solicitor General's office, we were not only not that diverse in terms of gender, but it also wasn't very diverse racially, ethnically, sexual orientation, anything like that, either.

I would say that even though I've only been in Criminal Appellate for a few months, I have heard from those working here who have been here for a few years, that our Chief, who is a woman, has been watching her daughter grow up and experience the workplace as a woman. Our Chief use to be very much like, "Everyone needs to be here from this time in the morning to this time at night," and it was a very traditional office. As her daughter has become a working professional and had children and all that, she's softened. The work from home policies are pretty liberal—you can work from home one day a week and then any other time that you need to. And I think that having a woman be the leader of the division has helped to make those policies very friendly to women working here. That is probably as much as I've seen about the value of diversity in decision-making processes in my experience, because again, I don't think there is a ton of diversity here.

This is an interesting question, though, and I've thought a lot about it. I went to a play a few weeks ago, called "What the Constitution Means to Me." It's a one woman show, and I didn't know what it was until I went, so I went without knowing anything and it was very cool. At one point, somebody in the play referred to the prison system in the U.S. as being like a modern form of slavery, and it struck a nerve with me because I spend my entire day trying to put people in prison or keep people in prison. And obviously I can look at the sentencing reports and see that most of these people are African American or Hispanic, so that really struck a chord with me. There have been a lot of things over the years about how there used to be much harsher penalties for crack-cocaine because that was a drug that was more prevalent in the African American community, and though some laws have tried to make that more fair, this is not necessarily a Department of Justice problem but more so a Congress problem. The fact that the prison population is so heavily skewed to minorities probably shows that there is some kind of disconnect between who is doing the decision-making and the result.

Tess Wilkinson-Ryan

Tess Wilkinson-Ryan joined the University of Pennsylvania School as a Sharswood Fellow in Law and Psychology in 2008, became an Assistant Professor of Law in 2010, and a Professor of Law and Psychology in 2015. She studies the psychology of legal decision-making, and her research uses experimental methods from psychology and behavioral economics to address the role of moral judgement in legal decision making, with a particular focus on private contracts and negotiations. She teaches Contracts to 1Ls, for which she was awarded the A. Leo Levin Award for Excellence in an Introductory Course in 2012, is one of the few women faculty members in the Center for Technology, Competition, and Innovation (CTIC), and served a two-year tenure as Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs.

Interview by Saba Bajwa

S. Bajwa: Can you talk a little bit about your background and what brought you here?

T. Wilkinson-Ryan: Professor Wilkinson-Ryan grew up in rural Maine. Her father was a substance abuse counselor, and when she was very young, her father was a lawyer working with the handicap rights project. He was a litigator, and hating doing it, because he had terrible stage fright – so he quit when she was four years old, went back to school, and since then has been teaching the third grade. Professor Wilkinson-Ryan views her position as a professor as “a combination” of both her parents’ jobs and reflective of their values; being in education, the mind sciences, and being in law. She attended law school, and then pursued a PhD in psychology.

S. Bajwa: In a conversation we had before this interview, you talked about “making space” for yourself as a woman at academic conferences. How did you approach doing that earlier in your career versus later?

T. Wilkinson-Ryan: Being involved in both psychology and economics spaces, Professor Wilkinson-Ryan’s experience differs regarding whether or not she is in a male dominated space. She acknowledges the tropes – that psychology as a space is feminized, and the “economists are the men, and psychologists are the women” – which is obviously not reflective of the actual case. Early on in her career, it became clear to her that she wanted to participate directly in conversations about decision making, conversations that tend to be dominated by the law and economics space. This is what led to her involvement in the economics space, but in doing so, she had the feeling of not completely fitting with the group. As a woman in male-dominated economics spaces, who did not have an economics background, she knew the best way to be successful was to keep her claims constrained and careful, which in retrospect was a positive influence on her research. These male-dominated law and economics conferences were alienating for Professor Wilkinson Ryan, and she did not want her role to just be that of the only woman in the room, making a “counterpoint” to the dominant point of view (her background in psychology allowed her a more integrated view than a strict economist). She also had experiences being tokenized early in her career. Professor Wilkinson-Ryan taught a class at Harvard Law School for a short period of time, and described her time there as being very “unintegrated” into the faculty or affairs of the school. After her class ended, an article of hers about investment decision making made a top 10 list of a notable

publication; Harvard listed her and other male Harvard professors who were featured on the list as “notable faculty” on the

website. This is not an experience unfamiliar to many women. Professor Wilkinson-Ryan’s opinion is that institutions can’t have both – they cannot fail to integrate and include women faculty into the affairs of the school, but also laud themselves as having notable faculty when those women are recognized for their achievements. Later in her career, once she got tenure, she viewed these issues through a new lens. She recognized that she was privileged and “elite” in a sense and recognized that if she had concerns about how women are to navigate academia, it was incumbent on her to stand up for those women. Because of her tenure, her experiences now in academia are less fraught with doubt from her peers, and she uses this elevated position to do small things like make jokes about the shortness of the women’s bathroom line or complain and speak up on behalf of herself even if it is seemingly “embarrassing”. In part, she recognizes that she’s fortunate to be complaining about these types of issues. Her trajectory has been well-supported by a field of people who have welcomed her into academia – both men and women – and she feels grateful and heartened about the state of academia because of that.

S. Bajwa: How did you make the transition from Professor to the temporary role of Deputy Dean? In what way do you think being a woman informed both of those roles?

T. Wilkinson-Ryan: Professor Wilkinson-Ryan started with the fact that she feels vaguely aware that she feels approachable to students because she has a certain level of warmth and empathy, by virtue of being a woman, that male professors do not de facto have. Because of this openness, she is conscious of being open and engaging with the students of the school, and believes it is her duty to make herself as available to her students as her can. She describes her mission as trying to “demystify” law school. In terms of how she got the Deputy Dean position, she said she didn’t specifically seek out the role, but she did want to make the law school experience for students better, support Dean Ruger, and enjoyed working with her peers like Polk Wagner. Holding this leadership position gave her insight into how the school works, and gave her perspective on the problems that the school is facing that she can use her strengths to solve, and problems that are “easy to accidentally make worse”. Her self-described personal ethos is one of targeting “low-hanging fruit” – an idea she got from her brother-in-law in the military, where their philosophy is to focus on low effort, high value projects. This is how Professor Wilkinson-Ryan views her role as Deputy Dean – focusing on small things she can do that will have a tangible impact on her students’ lives.

S. Bajwa: Why did you decide to focus on contracts? How do you think being a woman informed that decision and pursuit going forward?

T. Wilkinson-Ryan: Professor Wilkinson-Ryan started her legal career by writing about family law, which she described as “really complicated”, and read a lot about divorce during this time. She received comments from people who had done studies on breach of the “marriage contract”, and how the concept of breach was important to them in how they think about divorce. This led her to realize that people don’t often think about the psychology of contracts, and that is an area she should further explore. Her unique perspective as a woman in this field allowed her to see deeper into the emotional aspects of family law; this view was easily translatable to contract law. Although the emotions in contract law aren’t as passionate and complex, she knew the emotion and decision-making behind contract law was going to be less well-trodden ground. This view on emotion in relation to contract law is one male

professors seldom have and allows Professor Wilkinson-Ryan to pursue an area of interest and teach a core course.

S. Bajwa: What do you like most about teaching 1Ls? You are often a 1L's only woman professor their first semester of law school – how do you think that influences how you approach it?

T. Wilkinson-Ryan: In Professor Wilkinson-Ryan's words, there are very few people in this world that are as open to learning as law school 1Ls. She is able to see that the 1L experience is very emotionally intense, but her students are still present every day, ready to participate. She described it as "pretty wild", and her hope is that she can bring her openness and investment in her class to making their time at school better. She said she's had a really good experience at Penn Law for 17 years, and she wants to impart that transformative experience on her students – one that changed her outlook in ways that she values and made her into a much better thinker.

S. Bajwa: Are there any last things you want to mention, about the overarching impact you've felt on your career being a woman?

T. Wilkinson-Ryan: Professor Wilkinson-Ryan stated that real human relationships with other women in her professional life has really mattered to her. Although at least half of her closest professional relationships are with men in the faculty or in the field, getting to where she has in male-dominated spaces and having close relationships with women has given her a new understanding of what people mean when they say representation matters. Although she sees that academia may not be necessarily male-dominated, there still aren't very many women, and she's cognizant of the role she is able to play in encouraging other women to pursue and stay in the field. As is common to many women, Professor Wilkinson-Ryan said having little kids had major impact on her professional life. She thinks it's important to talk about how the biological clock is not a trivial issue, and although having kids is not a problem unique to women, the burdens of childcare often fall on women. She really enjoys her job, so she's okay with the fact that having kids likely affected her career before having tenure – but she did recognize that having young children did have an effect. She identifies with what it means to carry "femaleness" and a strong sense of gender identity, and that informs her understanding of what everyone is facing in the world. She hopes that she can bring a broad empathy to everyone and enjoy her role in a way that allows her to be generous with herself and her time.

Kalpana Kotagal

Partner, Cohen, Milstein, Sellers & Toll, PLLC

Kalpana Kotagal, co-author of the groundbreaking “Inclusion Rider,” currently works as a partner at Cohen Milstein as a member of the firm’s Civil Rights & Employment practice group and chair of the firm’s Hiring and Diversity Committee. Kotagal earned an A.B.B.S. with honors from Stanford University and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, cum laude. She clerked for the Hon. Betty Binns Fletcher in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and served as a Wasserstein Public Interest Fellow at Harvard Law School.

Interview by Molly Wolfe

“You have to do all of it, inside and outside, in order to actually drive a culture change around these issues. The work is literally never done. The point is, go at it, go after it, keep going.”

M. Wolfe: Could we begin by talking about your experience at Penn Law and how you developed your skills and interests during your time here?

K. Kotagal: I graduated in 2005, so I’ve been gone for a while. I don’t come from a lawyer family; I was a first-generation lawyer and child of immigrants. Law school was a foreign and confusing environment for me, but I really loved being in the classroom again. I spent a number of years out of school before I came back to Penn Law, so I was ready to be in the classroom environment again. I remember being thrilled about that in the first week back to school after being out for a few years. I loved Penn Law. I didn’t feel like it was a perfect institution, and I still don’t feel like it’s a perfect institution, as the Dean knows I feel, but I also felt like the commitment to a particular kind of culture—one that was collegial and recognized the value of learning together and was not hypercompetitive in its learning style—was really important to me. I felt like I found that at Penn. That was a huge part of it for me. I also just loved living in Philly and made great friends there. A lot of my friends from law school are people who, like me, had been out for a number of years before they came back and came back to law school with a particular plan in mind and a particular set of interests or reasons to want to be a lawyer, and that also felt important to me. It felt very different than some of the folks who had come straight-through and were in law school because they didn’t really know what else they should do. I didn’t have that environment or that kind of group of friends. I had a great time in law school. I learned a ton, I made really good friends, and I felt like it was a satisfying and rich, although not perfect, learning environment, but I guess I didn’t expect it to be perfect. That was my Penn Law experience in a nutshell. I was on Law Review, I studied hard, I enjoyed time with friends, I was engaged in a lot of political work and activism, and then I clerked afterwards.

M. Wolfe: Definitely. I think it’s really interesting that you mentioned going into law school knowing what you wanted to do afterwards, and you were still engaged in a lot of activism while you were in law school. So now in your career, in the more traditional law firm space, how do you still work with social change and continue to be an activist?

K. Kotagal: So, I don't work in Big Law, which I think is important. Cohen Milstein is a very particular kind of law firm. We are a plaintiff's side class action law firm. We represent workers and small business in antitrust actions, investors. I made a very deliberate choice not to go into Big Law. I did not go into law school wanting to go into Big Law, I knew I wanted to be a plaintiff's side class action lawyer when I went to law school and I stayed with that. And I think that's really important. I didn't do on-campus interviewing. I didn't go to law school with the idea that I was going to go to a big firm, and I haven't. While I may be one of my few classmates who is still at the firm I started at after law school, I also didn't go to a traditional kind of law firm. My firm is now bigger than we used to be—we're pushing 90ish lawyers—but we're almost all contingency fee, we're a plaintiff's side firm. My practice is in civil rights and employment. So, I come to work every day doing activist work. It's at the heart of my firm's value proposition.

M. Wolfe: And also, at your firm you're the chair of the Diversity and Hiring Committee?

K. Kotagal: That's right, I am. It's been traditional at my firm that a partner in our Civil Rights and Employment practice group has also led our internal hiring and diversity efforts, and that remains the case here. It's been really an important opportunity to ensure that we are committed in our day-to-day to the values that are an essential part of our litigation. We work to address the places that we're not doing as well and to continue to be a leader in the places we are.

M. Wolfe: That's something that we've talked about in our class is that it's so important to have these practices and committees, but there's also a fear that it will lead to tokenizing women and people of color. I'm curious what your take is on how we can still encourage that diversity without tokenizing.

K. Kotagal: In my diversity and inclusion work at my firm, there are a couple of things. One, we use the term diversity or diversity hiring or inclusion and that language, but the question is what does that mean? If the culture of that workplace is to tokenize or focus on the superficial, then that is what you're going to get in terms of the outcome that flows from it. If the commitment to deep diversity and inclusion, and authentic practices that result in that diversity and inclusion flow from a value proposition that is genuinely valuing a variety of experiences and models, then I don't think it shows up as tokenism. It shows up as a valuing of diversity in all of the different ways that it shows up. I would say tokenism arises where you're doing external-facing work that isn't reflected or anchored in internal values. At Cohen Milstein we, like lots of other law firms, have a lot of work to do on continuing to live and model what diversity and inclusion mean. But that commitment to doing that work is ongoing. It's a daily part of our work. So, we continue to work to get better. We work to address the places that we're not doing as well and to continue to be a leader in the places we are. It is a core part of our value proposition.

Here's a very good example of what you're talking about. There are a bunch of big law firms that have been targeted by the People's Parity Project. These are big law firms that talk the diversity and inclusion game but then subject all of their employees, summer associates, and associates to forced arbitration in a way that prevents them from raising concerns about their civil rights. That, to me, is an example of internal and external values just not aligning. Diversity and inclusion work that doesn't recognize internal inconsistencies and go after them—that's where I think problems arise.

M. Wolfe: I think it's interesting that there's often this discrepancy between the internal and external work, and that's often something we see in the MeToo space as well, where it's great to have one or the other but we really need both.

K. Kotagal: All of it! It's inadequate. To take the MeToo space as an example, there is this remarkable success story, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, that has done incredibly cool work on behalf of farm workers. It is an organizing model driven by the workers themselves. That organizing effort recognized that you couldn't address sexual harassment and the safety issue without thinking about all of the various pressure points. It's not enough to do one piece of it or another piece of it. You have to do all of it. You have to look at supply chains, training, accountability and discipline, what's your complaint model. You have to do all of it, inside and outside, in order to actually drive a culture change around these issues. The work is literally never done. The point is, go at it, go after it, keep going. Don't stop. When you get it right, good for you, but it's still not done. That, to me, is part of the mindset.

M. Wolfe: I'm also curious specifically about the inclusion rider if you could tell me a bit more about how that initiative came about and how you think that it could be mimicked in other industries.

K. Kotagal: The inclusion rider is a project of three of us originally. It came out of some work that I did with Stacy Smith, who is at the Annenberg School and Fanshen Cox who is at Pearl Street Films, which is Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's production company. The three of us worked to advance this idea of improving the practices and the models for auditioning and interviewing, both for on-camera roles and behind the camera for roles on feature films to see if we could slow down hiring processes and interrupt implicit bias as it takes shape. The inclusion rider is not that complicated. It basically embodies a set of best practices you would use in any well-run hiring process and incorporates them into contract language that an A-lister can take into negotiations. That's where it came from. It has taken root in Hollywood, most recently being employed by Michael B. Jordan and Warner Media on "Just Mercy" which is in the theaters right now about Bryan Stevenson and his death penalty work. There's no reason, and this is already taking shape, that it needs to be limited to Hollywood or even to the performing arts. We're working on an inclusion rider right now for Broadway, and we'll be able to make announcements about that early in the new year. We've also seen it applied in sports with endorsement deals. We've seen it applied in the law, JAMS adopted an inclusion rider for its arbitrators so that there's an effort to improve the diversity of arbitrators. It is being used all over the place. And the idea of inclusion riders is that they can be used anywhere there's somebody with bargaining power who can take that bargaining power for a spin and use it to improve hiring practices in their industry.

I should also say that the principles embodied in the inclusion rider could themselves be applied. You could extract those and develop a company-wide policy, or anything, to improve your practices. It doesn't have to work through an inclusion rider.

M. Wolfe: That makes a lot of sense. It doesn't necessarily need to be an individual contract; it can really expand into more comprehensive policies.

K. Kotagal: That's right. This is what best practices in the hiring space look like.

M. Wolfe: I think that's really exciting to see. Especially coming out of law school now, we can be more optimistic both in the law firm space and worldwide that hiring practices are in general shifting so quickly. It's exciting to see a way that we as lawyers can positively contribute to it.

K. Kotagal: It's been thrilling. I've actually reflected on that a bunch in a couple of speeches I've given. One, in the TED talk that I gave earlier this year and two in the commencement speech that I gave at Penn [Law] in May. I made points similar to those you've just made, but I also push it farther to say that just the hiring practices are not enough. And that's the point that you were making earlier. That's where you'll end up with a superficial approach to diversity rather than a deep and rich, profound commitment to getting it right and acknowledging the structural failures that prevented that from happening in the first place. That needs to extend to pay practices and promotion practices and evaluations and sexual harassment, and to the access to justice issues we've talked about like arbitration. Once you've started to make progress on the hiring process, you've got to figure out how to actually sustain a rich, inclusive, diverse workplace as a value proposition. That's where it becomes really important to go farther. It's not enough to hire people. You have to create workplaces that genuinely value them.

M. Wolfe: Do you have any last advice for the students of Penn Law? Specifically, what advice do you have for the women here who want to follow in your footsteps and in the footsteps of women leaders?

K. Kotagal: I love that. I am now co-chairing this recent initiative that the Dean has launched, and we just had our very first meeting. We're getting going on actually making something come of it. There's this group of alumni who are now working with the Dean and the Office of Alumni Inclusion, more significantly on our own, to push through some changes to the way that Penn Law handles some of the issues that have become really fractioned and challenging over the past couple years. There's room to stay with it, to do it, to not let that work go. The current generation of law students are more active and activist and engaged and unwilling to tolerate the status quo than I think we were. When I was in law school, the fight was, while certainly Professor Wax was doing her thing and that percolated up while I was there, we were so focused on the Iraq War, and it was right after 9/11. It was a very different time in the generation of law students. The kind of activism that I see you guys engaged in is something I would really encourage you to stay with. It's really important to not let that go and to get the skills and training for yourself and for each other to be as effective as you possibly can. I see that happening—I'm on the advisory board of the People's Parity Project—and I see that with their work. I see it in the organizing and activism that's happening on campuses all over the place now. So, stay with it. That would be my first little bit of advice. My second little bit of advice is to get the skills. There is a lot that we can do and do better if we get trained in organizing skills, learn how to become a genuinely effective advocate. Like, how good is your writing? Do you know how to take a deposition? All of that kind of stuff. And then the last thing I would say is that although loans hold people back, and I get that, as soon as people can get to a place where their loans are not holding them back, go find the work that you initially went to law school to do. Don't be beholden to a big law job for any longer than you have to.

Meenakshi Gopinath

Dr. Gopinath is a former member of the National Security Advisory Board, the first woman to serve the Government of India agency. The Government of India awarded her the fourth highest civilian honor of the Padma Shri for her contributions to Indian educational sector. Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath is an Indian educationist, political scientist, writer, and former head of Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. She is the founder and incumbent director of the Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace, a non-governmental organization promoting peace and socio-political leadership among the women of South Asia. She is also a co-editor of the International Feminist Journal of Politics, the leading journal of feminist international relations and global politics.

Interview by Amal Sethi

“My mission in Life is not merely to survive, but to thrive, and do, do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style”.

-Maya Angelou

A. Sethi: What are the singular challenges you have faced in this journey of leadership?

M. Gopinath: I remember a beautiful poem here and it is a woman's re-rendering of Greek poet C. P. Cavafy's famous poem Ithaka which goes something like

*As you set out in search of Ithaka
Pray that your journey be long
Full of adventures, full of awakenings
Do not fear the monsters of old*

And this exquisite women's rendering by Sarah Ban Breathnach is a song of encouragement to travelers setting out on a voyage of self-discovery and can be read as an elegy. It becomes a powerful affirmation of our real-life journey.

“Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Your arrival there is your destiny.
But do not hurry the journey at all; be patient.
Better that it lasts for many years -
longer than you can even imagine.
So that finally, when you reach this
sacred isle, you will be a wise woman,
Abundantly fulfilled by all you have gained along the way;
no longer expecting Ithaka to make you wealthy,
no longer needing Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka offered you the profound journey,
The chance to discover the woman you have always been.
Without Ithaka as your inspiration, you
Never would have set out in search of Wholeness.
And should you find her poor, Ithaka did not deceive you.

Authentic as you have become, full of wisdom,
Beauty and grace, enriched and enlightened by all you have experienced
You will finally understand what all of life's Ithakas truly mean"

The biggest challenges are always internal: How to develop an abiding sense of internal spiritual abundance. How to remain authentic even as you interact with a world that may not always prove reinforcing of trust. How to be responsive to the pain on the planet, without losing faith and also to be sensitive to the beauty of a bud unfolding. How to make despair unconvincing and hope, practical. How to have the sense of altruism without ego to confront the afflicted and yet have the sense of justice and courage to "question" the complacency we see around and make our voice count. How to try and make a difference, without taking oneself too seriously, retain a sense of humor and above all as one grows older to retain the "child's mind" the sense of curiosity and wonder about the unfolding present and above all to begin to glimpse the purpose of one's life. Why was I sent here, at this time to this place in this particular universe of possibilities? Above all, how to listen, reflect, and act with purpose and without ego.

These have been challenges, every day. And so, my "journey," such as it is, will ever remain voyages of new discoveries. Ever, haltingly, a "work in progress".

A. Sethi: Give us a brief account of your journey, from where you started to where you have reached today.

M. Gopinath: There is of course the conventional journey of education, career, family and so on. My work in education, privileged me with a magical context to work with exceptional women, (and men) whose trajectory inspired me. Being in a women's college, as its President for over 26 years, gave me a ringside view of how young women make choices, how they exercise agency, about how they challenge oppressive structures and assert equality. This has been most exciting.

I also work now with a civil society initiative that looks at women, peace and security. We work to enable young people and women to assume leadership in processes of peace building in conflict ridden, fractured societies and in zones of conflict. We undertake training in Educating for Peace, across institutes of learning – schools, colleges and universities. This initiative called WISCOMP (Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace) that I helped put together is a South Asian Initiative with a large footprint today.

In the midst of violence, it gives my colleagues and me a deep sense of gratification that there are more and more young people who are coming together to nurture constituencies of peace. They need assistance and encouragement. Through WISCOMP, we believe we play a small role in attempting to provide healing spaces for our embattled world. I feel energized when I engage with young women and men, who show extraordinary courage commitment and drive.

There is so much to learn from their unselfconscious expressions of genuine leadership. I am a toddler in the field of peacebuilding, but this is where I would like to sojourn for a while. It has been said that true education is peacebuilding by other means. I am learning the alphabet. Perhaps my vocabulary will grow as I engage, traverse and venture deeper down these paths.

Having spent decades in education and over two decades in the peacebuilding field, I see these two domains coalescing and coming together now seamlessly. The education space has led me to the excitement and grandeur of the realm of ideas. Working in the areas of gender, peace and security has created a context for engagement with committed grass roots workers and practitioners. I have met remarkable men and women, who displayed the courage to speak truth to power through the sheer strength of their work. I have been deeply touched by their humility, almost childlike ability to be transparent and by their genuine sense of altruism. I do hope it has impacted my way of seeing and being in the world.

A. Sethi: As the first woman member of the Government of India's National Security Advisory Board, you have broken considerable barriers. What motivated you and what leadership qualities allowed you to accomplish such feats?

M. Gopinath: I am not at all sure I accomplished any feat. I was conscious of an overwhelmingly and predominantly masculinist mindset especially in the context of issues of National security. I tried to factor in gender and non-traditional approaches to Security and where possible a peacebuilding lens. I am not sure how much I was able to influence any outcome. I felt I needed to continuously and assiduously plug in an absent perspective and bring in an alternative voice that needed to be heard. This I attempted to do.

A. Sethi: In that case, what gives you the biggest sense of achievement?

M. Gopinath: I have read that what you leave behind is not what is “engraved in monuments of stone but what is woven into the lives of others”. What gives me the biggest sense of fulfilment (not achievement since my “achievements” are limited?) are some of the following:

When I see my students all over the world in various walks of life making a positive difference in the spaces they inhabit and demonstrating leadership that is sensitive to justice, inclusion, and democratic articulation.

When women and men are able to combine the professional with an ethics of care in their home and workspaces.

When individuals and communities are able to set aside acrimony, recognize difference and yet build common ground and if I am able to play a small part in that process.

When people, especially women are able to come out of the shadows of invisibility and silence and find voice – when those who wish to sing find their song.

When on a clear day, one can see further than before, and in that balance of stillness, listen to the sounds of silence and the music of the spheres.

A. Sethi: Having been educated in the United States, what was your idea of female leadership initially? Did you have to change your vision of female leadership when you returned to India? What do you think are the biggest challenges female leaders in India face?

M. Gopinath: I do not see them as binaries. A feminist notion of leadership underscores inclusivity, consultation, transparency, active listening nonhierarchical modes, the ability to be vulnerable, empathy and so on. I have seen both men and women practice it. It is non muscular. I draw from the Tao. “A wise leader is like water. flexible and fluid. Water can wear down the hardest of rock. It is renewing and ever flowing. This is the paradox of Tao. What is soft is strong”. As far as the biggest challenge’s female leaders in India face - widespread misogyny in society and their own inability to break through stereotypes and glass ceilings. And perhaps the inability to define success differently from what is the norm

A. Sethi: Has being a woman helped or hindered your climb towards success? Do you feel that in your career, you’ve had to prove yourself or exceed expectations more so than your male counterparts?

M. Gopinath: I have never seen it in that way. Yes, I have had to prove myself and I found that to be a reasonable criterion. My male colleagues were never a comparative scale in my consciousness. I was not seeking to emulate them. If the problem, lay with the expectation of others I refused to cognize it as such. I did not see performance through a competitive lens.

I cannot talk about a climb to success. I truly do not see my life through that lens. I feel happy that I am a woman and would not change that for anything. Deep inside, I value my identity as a woman. I feel it enhances, enriches and textures all my other identities as a professional, teacher, civil society practitioner and so many others. The woman I am today enables me to experience many facets of Being and Seeing that would have not been quite as accessible to me in another avatar. I do not feel constrained by that identity. I think it tunes me to a larger range of choices and avenues of expression. I feel being a woman keeps me somehow better tuned to the dance and music of life’s myriad experiences.

A. Sethi: How much does a supportive family, spouse or social network help in a woman’s career?

M. Gopinath: One should never underestimate what a supportive family and genuine friends can make possible. We are not monads; we are all interconnected in a myriad way in a larger philosophical sense. But the immediate family can provide the oxygen in which a hundred flowers can bloom and an azure sky where dreams can take flight.

My parents gave me roots and wings, my partner has been a fellow traveler and anchor all the way. I am blessed. I do not set great store by what passes in the name of “networking”, for a busy woman professional it can leave you with the illusion of a support system, but be bereft of deep abiding relationships that transcend the work space, your “position” in an organization or your social status. One has to be mindful in nurturing relationships. They require investment in time and care – above all they have the power to keep you grounded during dizzy heights and equally during crash landings. In life there are bound to be both. You need people around who can hold up a mirror, so you see and understand better – without being self-obsessed.

A. Sethi: What or who has inspired you in your work and personal life?

M. Gopinath: There are far too many people to list. More than anything, I know that the extraordinary is present in the seemingly ordinary, be it a situation, a person. I have witnessed an enormous generosity of spirit in the midst of the greatest of privation, I have seen grace under grave provocation and pressure, I have seen enormous courage, in the face of the deepest sorrow and adversity; I have witnessed empathy and care in spaces filled with violence. And all this from seemingly ordinary human beings. I have watched ordinary craft persons who would put celebrity artists to shame by their sheer ability to surrender to their art without ego. These encounters have all provided their own memorable moments. A series of seemingly unrelated almost miraculous expressions of humanity that never cease to inspire and amaze and fill you with awe.

So, as Proust says, “the great voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but having new eyes”. These are people who have the ability to “see the world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wildflower”. “Hold infinity in the palm of their hand” – to paraphrase Blake – “And eternity in an hour.” These are the people who continue to inspire me.

At the family level two women who were inspirational were my grandmother – for her courage and engagement with social causes, and my mother for her deep serenity and her ability to give unconditional love. And a remarkable man, my partner, a true feminist, who continuously supported my professional and personal endeavors who I admire for his ability to find joy in watching others take flight and succeed.

A. Sethi: What, according to you, constitutes empowerment, especially for a woman?

M. Gopinath: “Empowerment” is not a static state of being. It is a verb, not a noun for both men and women. It depends on what you wish to be empowered to do and how you engage with the challenges and opportunities that exist in that context. I am not particularly comfortable with the way the term “empowerment” is used as a catch all phrase and especially in relation to women who are often perceived as helpless creatures who need to be “liberated” or “empowered”. Who is supposed to “empower” the seemingly “disempowered”? This remains a core question for me.

A. Sethi: Do you think academic institutions in India are failing potential female leaders? If yes, then how? What role do you think academic institutions can play in creating future female leaders in India? Do you think for the latter purpose India needs more all-female institutions modelled on the style of Lady Shri Ram College for Women?

M. Gopinath: While there are several mandates and also comprehensive legislation pertaining to HEIs in India they are not gender just spaces. Practices of exclusion and attitudes of misogyny, pervasive cultures of silence and impunity mar the professional advancement of women on campuses. Positions of leadership are largely filled by men. There are only 17 women Vice Chancellors in over 700 Universities in India even though their enrolment in HEIs are close to 47 percent. Social Audits and gender audits are imperative to point the searchlight on regressive practices that prevail in spaces that are meant to be transformative and also cradles of the democratic impulse of equity and the constitutional mandate of equality. Reclaiming Dignity therefore has to yield a mantra of agency for women beyond the victimhood metaphor. There exists a real challenge.

All women’s colleges can begin to see themselves as an alternative public sphere with more robust practices of democracy and inclusion not as cocooned cloistered spaces. Actively engaging with the

issues of our times that impact women, men trans people (LGBTQIA) and all sentient beings. Providing a new conceptual alphabet for a world waiting to be born eschewing intolerance and prejudice and forging democratic coalitions and communities of choice. I don't advocate more women only institutions; not more safe spaces, but more brave spaces.

A. Sethi: With the current decade coming to a close, what are your expectations from India in the next decade? What are some of the biggest challenges India as a democracy faces?

M. Gopinath: The youth in India will write a new script for substantive democracy in India. The generation of midnight's children is on the ebb. A new vocabulary of democracy is needed that speaks to new global challenges in an interconnected world. A new social compact on responsibility that draws on the fundamental humanistic impulse beyond man made borders and boundaries and cartographic anxieties seek a new imagination of sustainability about how we wish to live in this world. Drawing on what connects rather than what divides us as peoples. We need to preserve the spirit of our constitution but as a large country home to over a billion we have the responsibility to walk the talk of civilizational civility. A less ethnocentric anthropocentric or androcentric world is what we need to aspire to. Perhaps it is time we march to the beat of a different drum and explore the road less travelled. Wipe out the narcissism of communal certitudes and bring back the tolerance of the truly secular spirit that informed the best aspects of our anti colonial struggle

A. Sethi: What would be the main pieces of advice you would give to future female leaders?

M. Gopinath: Future women leaders if indeed they are leaders will chart their own course. They will have better answers than what my generation can proffer as advice. In any case they will critically and creatively interrogate all received wisdom and separate the grain from the chaff for themselves.

Beth Simmons

Andrea Mitchell University “Penn Integrates Knowledge” Professor of Law, Political Science and Business Ethics at the University of Pennsylvania

Beth Simmons joined the University of Pennsylvania Law School faculty in 2016. She teaches International Law and International Relations; Borders and Boundaries in International Relations; International Humanitarian and International Criminal Law; Border Anxieties. Blackhawk earned her BA, summa cum laude, at University of Redlands in political science in philosophy, an M.A. from the University of Chicago in international relations, and an M.A. and PhD. From Harvard University in government. She is renowned for her published scholarship on the topics of political science, human rights, and international law.

Interview by Molly Wolfe

“If you want to follow in the footsteps of women leaders, cultivate your confidence, sharpen your skills and set your priorities.”

M. Wolfe: Could we begin by talking about your experience in academia and how you navigated the male-dominated field as both a student and a teacher?

B. Simmons: My field is not as male dominated as it used to be. As a professor of international law and international relations, I did begin my career many years ago in a male dominated environment. But the field of human rights is full of highly visible and hugely successful women. I navigated academia by just being as prepared as I could be for classes, presentations, and research.

M. Wolfe: Can you discuss how you've been mentored and also how you've served as a mentor to the next generation of women?

B. Simmons: Exceptional mentoring is the main key to my professional success. I had one of the best mentors in the field, Robert Keohane, who has written extensively about international law, international cooperation and international relations. I try to do for my students (many of whom are women) what he did for me. Most notably: positive and public endorsement and crediting whenever that seems appropriate; recognizing that people have many different goals, and not everyone wants to be me; careful, critical yet supportive reading of my students' research; available for advice when needed.

M. Wolfe: How do you think we can increase diversity in leadership, particularly in government and politics?

B. Simmons: By preparing and encouraging women to take leadership roles. By helping women to imagine themselves as leaders. By preparing and encouraging women to take leadership roles. By helping women to imagine themselves as leaders.

M. Wolfe: In international law, we often have a real struggle getting leaders to buy in to feminist foreign policy. How can we make this more of a policy priority for world leaders?

B. Simmons: I understand feminist foreign policy as the Swedes do: as a “global voice for gender equality and full employment of human rights by all women and girls.” To get there, first we have to mobilize and vote for leaders who have the right values. Second, we have to be armed with evidence of the broad benefits of a feminist policy approach, for women and men.

M. Wolfe: Can you explain more about how international law has improved women's human rights? What steps can we take next, both on the community level and on a larger scale, to continue to improve?

B. Simmons: International law doesn't do things. People do things with international law. Women and allies of women have used international law to stake their claims to basic human rights on an equal basis with men. CEDAW has been a tremendous tool in the hands of women over time. Now, with better access to education, property, work and political voice, women have better resources than they have ever had in the past to achieve equality. Wage differentials show we aren't there yet, and backlash to equality is a real risk in parts of the world, but gaps are closing. Violence against women is the next frontier. The Declaration on Violence Against Women is a start, but it might be easier to hold governments accountable for conditions that give rise to female physical abuse by passing a binding international agreement to support their moral claims.

M. Wolfe: Do you have any parting words for the students of Penn Law? Specifically, what advice do you have for the women here who want to follow in your footsteps and in the footsteps of women leaders?

B. Simmons: If you want to follow in the footsteps of women leaders, cultivate your confidence, sharpen your skills and set your priorities. If you want to follow in my footsteps, come see me and let's chat – I'm in Golkin 226.

Maura Pally

Maura Pally is the executive vice president of the Clinton Foundation. In this role, Maura oversees the strategic and operational efforts of the Foundation's initiatives, and fosters relationships with individuals, foundations, and corporations to support the life-changing work of the Clinton Foundation. Prior to her current role, Maura was responsible for the Foundation's women and youth programs including managing the creation, development, and implementation of No Ceilings: The Full Participation Project; Too Small to Fail; and Job One, an effort to help close the skills gap nationally. She has also served as acting chief executive officer.

Maura joined the Clinton Foundation from Bloomberg Philanthropies where, as a member of the leadership team, she provided strategic direction for programmatic activities and oversight of operational management. Previously, she served as acting assistant and deputy assistant secretary of state for Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). As acting assistant secretary, Maura led a bureau of 450 employees and a \$635 million annual budget to fulfill ECA's mandate of facilitating public diplomacy through exchange programs, including the flagship Fulbright Scholarship Program. Maura oversaw the Department's exchange activities and budget strategy ensuring programs furthered the Administration's foreign policy objectives, and created new programs, including smARTpower and TechWomen to empower the next generation of women leaders in technology. Prior to joining the U.S. Department of State, Maura held several positions in the government and the private sector, including as a special assistant in the Office of White House Counsel under President Clinton and as manager of politics and public policy at Oxygen Media. She earned a bachelor's from Brown University and a J.D. from the University of Southern California.

Interview by Allie Gottlieb and Amy Woodward

You have held positions with considerable professional responsibility early in your career. What are some of the key things that helped lead to your success?

M. Pally: The most formative and important—really turning point—in my career was one hundred percent due to Hillary Clinton giving me an opportunity very prematurely in my career, and her having faith in me, but also taking a risk with me.

After Hillary Clinton was appointed Secretary of State, she had to fill all the political appointee positions. I requested to be placed in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and she put me in a position much bigger than the one I expected. I felt a bit in over my head, but excited about the prospect. A few weeks in, still struggling to find my ground, but confident enough that I would figure it out, I got word that the person that we had nominated to be the head of the bureau, the assistant secretary of state role, was being held up at vetting. She (Hillary Clinton) wanted me to become the acting assistant secretary of state.

I was 34, and it was a bureau of 450 people with a 600 million-dollar budget. I had run a small legal team of eleven people on a political campaign, worked in the private sector, and gone to law school—nothing like managing the size of the budget and number of people this job would entail. Immediately I thought, there's no way I can possibly do that. I can't do it. No way. And her message to me was “You can do it. . . . you will do it. Go do it. You'll figure it out.”

It was a thrilling, but also completely terrifying, and at times completely paralyzing opportunity. I just kept thinking it wasn't real, and I couldn't possibly be in charge—a humongous operation with people who were ten, twenty, thirty, forty years into careers at the State Department all reporting to me. But I just did it because, when you're pushed into the deep end, you just do it. You figure it out, and I did figure it out.

By the time the person got through vetting and was appointed, I had done the job for over a year. At that point, I loved it and felt confident—I had proven to myself and others that I could do it.

After that year, I thanked Hillary. The experience transformed me from somebody who saw the limits of my abilities based on past experience, rather than my potential. The experience gave me a much different idea of my capabilities, and the confidence to believe that if I could handle that job, there are so many other opportunities out there that I could consider.

I thanked Hillary for taking a chance on me — telling her, that never would I have ever thought I would have had that amount of professional responsibility ever in my career, let alone so early.

She basically just said, and I'm paraphrasing, “Yeah, well you need to give people a chance, especially women.” She was very candid and said sometimes it works great and other times it doesn't, but that's sort of how the world works—you need to take chances on people, and she does it for women. She obviously saw enough in me to think that I could do it, but it was a risk.

She said, “look around at X ,Y, and Z men who are in positions of leadership. Do you think they felt as full of self-doubt as you did when they were given an opportunity—or did they just grab it?” I was that classic case—I immediately thought, there's no way I can do that, come back to me in ten years. Whereas the men immediately think, great, can't wait.

In large part, I took away that you really have to give people, especially women who show strong potential, a chance and sort of push them into the deep end.

How has that experience informed how you work with other women who may work with or for you?

M Pally: Now, when there's so much attention around getting women on boards, and in leadership positions, and you hear that there's nobody in the pipeline, I think so often of Hillary Clinton and what she did for me and for so many other women. Picking people out who have great potential and jumping the line a bit to get them in the pipeline. And sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't, but more often than not it's going to work. I saw that Hillary Clinton having done that for me and so many women — just had a huge impact for literally hundreds of women and men too. But, more importantly for women, because there are so few people doing that.

Whether its men or women getting an introduction to an alumnus of their school, or something else, people often get a leg up in professional situations. And that's something that women need to embrace more, feel ok about, and do for other women.

When Hillary pushed me into that large job that was a huge pivot and turning point of, thinking oh, wow I can do this. Whereas I never would have raised my hand and said I want to do that. And I think that's typical of so many women. I think we need to give each other the push and then when we get the push to embrace it, and just go forward and try it.

So, you had Hillary to push you and you are now trying to push other women who are earlier in their careers. Do you think that formal efforts within an organization to help women are effective or do you think it has to come from informal mentorship?

M. Pally: I think a combination of both, some institutionalized incentives for further pushing women, but also, the responsibility on the managers and the leadership of the organization to set that as a priority, or even just making people more aware. Most managers or leaders probably think that when they say who wants this job and five men say I do, well, these people want it, we asked, but no women volunteered. Getting in the mindset that women just need to be pushed more than men do. If you have that the back of your mind, maybe you seek out women and say, “I think you could be good. Do you want this? I know you could be qualified.”

Getting it into the organizational stream and more education and awareness would help enormously, because I think many people just don't think about it. And it shouldn't all be on women to make sure other women are supported. Everyone gains from inclusion.

What are your thoughts on the differences, if any, between how men and women lead?

M. Pally: I think it is important to see and recognize management differences among all bosses and leaders—male and female. I have come to appreciate that there are different ways people can be successful as leaders.

Women often put pressure on themselves to be everything, but there are so many strengths that one can bring to a role, and no one person can, or needs, to bring all of them at once.

I think women need to work on valuing what we do bring to the table, rather than focusing on what we don't. I don't know how that's taught, other than either bosses, managers, or mentors, instilling that early on.

This is really a follow up to my first point—about the need to push women further than they think they can go, because odds are, they can do it. We also need to remember that no one person will bring everything and learn to focus on what each individual does in fact bring to the table.

You were selected as acting CEO of the Clinton Foundation at a time when Hillary Clinton was launching her presidential campaign, and the Foundation and the Clintons were subject to intense public scrutiny. How did you handle it personally and professionally?

M. Pally: With any challenge in life, you just deal with it. It was never an option for me to say this is too much. I accepted the responsibility, and I knew I had to figure out how to do it. The thing that made it much easier for me was the core group of people that supported me and helped

me figure out the toughest questions. I needed that confidence from having that core group behind me and giving me counsel and weighing in in order for me to feel confident about the decisions I was making. That's just where I was. And luckily, I had them.

I think feeling like it was more of a team than just me as an individual made all the difference in the world. And I think there are probably more women, like me, for whom feeling more like a collective rather than a lone person is very important.

What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they may be falling short on and could be doing better to advance their careers?

M. Pally: I think so many of the stereotypes are true. Women need to speak up in meetings more. They need to be more confident in their opinions and their judgments. Similarly, managers need to be more solicitous and encourage people who aren't the ones sticking our hands up, or being the first to speak.

It is a cultural shift. Further encouraging women and women also stepping up more and looking at their male colleagues or counterparts who are not second guessing themselves and aren't hesitating to speak up.

And then also, the apologizing, the prefacing of statement they're about to make with something that diminishes it. If we could rid women of that tendency, that would be a huge accomplishment. Women have to be called out on it, but also, I think it will change over generations as girls are raised to be less doubtful and are more encouraged.

And then also, just the risk-taking factor, both being pushed, but also being willing to take a risk, get out of your comfort zone, it's okay to try something and not be great at it. All the stuff that we fear. You'll never know if you don't take a risk. If you do try and you're not great at it, the world still moves on. And that, I think that risk appetite is really helpful in careers. Women need to remember that we don't have to be hyper prepared for everything that we try.

When women are in positions of power, or seen as confident or ambitious, they're often portrayed as objectionable or even offensive. What can we do to change that?

M. Pally: I think part of it is generational, but also more exposure to women leaders will eventually change this. So, even the difference from 2016, having one woman candidate to today having many is just normalizing that. Normalizing women in leadership positions, I think, makes it much harder to make generalizations about what that looks like and to diminish it. But I don't think it will go away any time soon.

How – if at all – do you think things have changed for women since the 2016 election?

M. Pally: Seeing the pure number of women who are running for office is amazing. Whether they win or lose, just normalizing that in society more like, why not? Let's give it a try. It's okay to lose, and it's really good to put yourself out there. That's a huge, huge difference.

I'd be curious, I don't know, from my own professional experience, if that's also happening in business as well, or in the workplace generally. Are women thinking, well, why not me? It's definitely not happening as strongly as it is on the political side, but hopefully that will bleed in.

So, I think that's been one really great change—even if it doesn't change the representative numbers as much as we would like—normalizing and seeing that it's okay for women to be super ambitious. To try and to fail and then to get back up again. It's a really fantastic trend. I hope it lasts.