

TOP WOMEN IN THE LAW

Ronny Jo Siegal

Ronny Jo Siegal is a retired judge and a partner with Pashman Stein Walder Hayden.

What do you see as your biggest accomplishments over the past two years, and why?

Just over two years ago, upon my retirement from the bench, I joined Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, which is undoubtedly my biggest accomplishment and a great fit as well. My position as a Judge was the culmination of my legal work paired with my community focus. When I reached the age of required retirement from the bench, I knew that I needed to work in a firm that integrated and fully supported passionate advocacy, justice, mentorship and community, and that is precisely what I found at Pashman Stein.

What does the legal profession need to do to improve opportunities for women?

I benefitted early on from a forward-thinking partner who understood work-family balance and encouraged me to be an excellent parent and an equally excellent attorney at the same time, without

taking the view that these roles could not coexist at the firm. I became an equity partner there.

In preparing my response to this question, I solicited the views of women whom I respect, and I have included their insights. Firms should examine their metrics for productivity and performance to ensure that the criteria are both objective and gender-neutral. Firms should provide implicit bias training and actively support mentoring by women who have successfully reached their partner positions and who will help other women fight their battles.

Indeed, women must have the same opportunity as men to work on the financially “important” or compensated matters, and be educated about “how to bring in business” with lessons that their fellow associates or partners may be receiving. In sum, firms must be deliberate and consistent with equalizing the playing field this way. These concepts should become part of a law firm’s culture to accomplish moving toward equal treatment and opportunities for women.



Best advice you ever got...

John A. Shedd wrote, “A boat is always safe in the harbor, but that’s not what boats are built for.” This has inspired me to take professional risks and to seek adventures without the fear of failure. Even if you do not succeed 100%, you will have done something you deemed worthwhile and you have achieved something meaningful in the experience. In law, as in all careers, it is important for women to be confident as they take risks. As the saying suggests, you can’t sail if you just stay where you are.