

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Wednesday 8th March 2023



KATHRYN AINSWORTH

Managing Partner & Head of
Private Family Law



Celebrating International Women's Day

#EmbraceEquity

WHAT DOES IWD MEAN TO YOU?

IWD gives me an ideal opportunity to say a well-deserved and huge thank you to not only the amazing women I work with but also to family and friends as I rely on all their support pretty much daily!

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT AND BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

I have a huge sense of achievement at my private family law department being repeatedly ranked Top Tier in the Legal 500 and being personally ranked as a Leading Individual. My late Mum was so proud of this and used to tell all her friends. My big brother now does this too which is just lovely. I have been humbled by the kindness and support I have received having been catapulted into the Managing Partner role here at Machins – the faith everyone has in me is simply wonderful. This is by far my biggest challenge.

WHO INSPIRED YOU?

Not necessarily an inspiration, but this quote from Maya Angelou has always resonated with me

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

In my role as a family lawyer I aim to inspire confidence in women on the new life they face post separation

I am very proud of all the women I work with. So many face incredible challenges yet smile through every day. Every single one of them is an inspiration to me.



JACKIE CUNEEN

Partner,
Employment Law



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WHAT DOES IWD MEAN TO YOU?

My first memory of IWD was when I was a law student volunteering at the law centre in Luton and the legal team had a night out to a female comedian stand-up night for IWD at a local community club. It was a hilarious night out and a real mix of women there. There is such solidarity in humour and women are just so funny!!

WHO INSPIRED YOU?

Two Helenas:

My sister Helena who we sadly lost to Breast Cancer. She was beautiful, a creative, brilliant mind and person – so funny and generous. Even when she was in chronic pain. She was all about everyone else – with secondary bone cancer she was still painting and holding charity art exhibitions in a decrepit basement in Hoxton.

Baroness Helena Kennedy – criminal barrister and author of 'Eve Was Framed' and 'Eve Was Shamed'.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMALE LAWYERS

I was once told by a senior partner in a law firm where I worked that my USP was that I was a woman.

- Bring your personality. It's allowed – even as a lawyer!
- Your life experience is all relevant and can make you a better lawyer.
- Be brave. Make and take your opportunities. Use your platforms to connect.
- Help other women - be both a mentee and mentor!



HOLLY BAKER

Associate Solicitor,
Dispute Resolution



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WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMALE LAWYERS

Don't be afraid to be bold. I've had to give myself a shake on a number of occasions in my education and career so far, to force myself to have more confidence and to be bold! If this resonates, reading 'Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead' by Sheryl Sandberg changed my perspective and I would encourage you to give it a go!

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT?

My proudest career accomplishment is being the first person in my family to go to university – and knowing how proud that makes my parents!

THE PANDEMIC – HAS THE CONVERSATION AROUND EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CHANGED?

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, two of the three individuals who were promoted to partner were female and it makes me very proud that Machins recognises and promotes female talent within the firm. It's especially inspiring to junior female lawyers across the practice to see a pathway to partnership that perhaps wouldn't have existed in law firms 20 or 30 years ago!

SARAH LIDDIARD

Associate Solicitor, Company
Commercial, Machins
Solicitors



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WHAT DOES IWD MEAN TO YOU?

It is a day to celebrate and reflect on some of the trailblazing women who have become experts in their field despite the obstacles they have faced due to their gender.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMALE LAWYERS?

Law does provide a good long term career and I would always seek out a mentor or someone who can help you navigate your way through your career and act as a sounding board.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT?

To be the first employee to be promoted to Associate Solicitor whilst working part-time hours.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES WOMEN IN LAW FACE?

It is hitting the headlines again and the main challenge is not just for women in the law, but a major challenge for parents everywhere is the provision of affordable childcare to allow parents back into the workforce. It's time to invest in the future generations of this country and recognise that the lack of decent affordable childcare is a major barrier to parents returning to work and progressing in their careers, which has the most impact on women who wish to return to work or carry on working whilst having a family.



SARAH ASHBY

Partner,
Public Family Law



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WHAT DOES IWD MEAN TO YOU?

International Women's Day is an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come, be thankful for those who have led the way in getting us here and a chance to continue to work together to grasp the opportunities we have to push even further for equality.

WHO INSPIRED YOU?

My mum inspired me hugely as her work ethic was second to none and this meant she was promoted to management in an era where it was much less common.

I was never raised to believe there was a difference in what I could achieve in my career because I was a woman and I think this helped me to just keep pushing for what I wanted.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT?

My proudest career accomplishment is making partner, along with Nicki Denton-Masih, which demonstrates the ways in which Machins is shaping the way to break the bias all the time. Nicki and I changed the scope of the partnership when we were promoted, increasing the number of female partners by 1/3 at that time. I am proud to have been part of such a significant change.



NICKI DENTON-MASIH

Partner,
Private Client



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THE PANDEMIC - HAS THE CONVERSATION AROUND EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CHANGED?

The pandemic has impacted our lives in ways that we would not have expected. I think some of the outcomes from an employment perspective will have a positive impact on opening up the profession further. It means that some of the challenges that are unique to women may be less of a barrier in the future, and that can only be a good thing.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMALE LAWYERS

Work hard, set goals, chase the dreams. Don't give in and don't give up!

WHAT DOES IWD MEAN TO YOU?

It is a great day to celebrate the achievements of women! Our contribution to economy, society, community and in so many other ways should be championed and IWD is important in its role in doing that.

