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Baylor Law grad named among most influential female lawyers in America

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By Tim Woods

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Baylor Law School continued its impressive run of awards, honors and achievements when alumna Jerry Clements was named by the *National Law Journal* as one of the “50 Most Influential Women in Law” in America.

Clements, managing partner at the 400-attorney law firm Locke Liddell & Sapp, graduated from Baylor Law School in 1981 and was lead counsel in *Henry Schein, Inc v. Stromboe*, which strictly limits class action litigation in Texas.

While Clements says she “will be happy when the day comes when it is no longer news when a woman becomes managing partner of a major law firm,” she welcomes her role as a trailblazing role model for young female attorneys.

However, Clements is not so quick to take all the credit for her success as a woman in a historically male-dominated field — though that is changing because of the work of women such as Clements. She points to Harriet Miers, former White House counsel and a 2005 U.S. Supreme Court nominee, as a mentor. Miers preceded Clements as the first woman to be named managing partner at Locke Liddell & Sapp.

According to the *National Law Journal*, Clements was instrumental in Miers’ return to the law firm after her January resignation as White House counsel.

Another major figure in Clements’ professional ascent is Morris Harrell, another Baylor Law School graduate and former president of the American Bar Association and American College of Trial Lawyers.

“He gave me many opportunities when there weren’t many women trial lawyers in the country,” she said.

Clements cites her training at Baylor Law School as the foundation for her success, listing several professors — one of whom, Constitutional law professor David Guinn, still teaches at the school — as providing her with the tools to excel in the field.

Likewise, Baylor Law School dean Brad Toben names Clements as a shining star of the profession.

“Jerry is a ‘go to’ lawyer in the truest sense,” Toben said. “In a span of time in which women were only making first strides in the legal profession, Jerry not only moved out of the pack, but carved a

remarkably high profile as one of the best of the best. . . . We are so proud of her as a Baylor lawyer.”

Clements said she is not satisfied with her own personal success, though. She says she hopes to help groom succeeding generations of trial lawyers.

“My goal is to make sure to mentor and inspire young lawyers — women and men — to be the best they can, just as I was mentored by those before me,” she said.

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