

LOCKE LORD DIVERSITY AWARENESS

August 2017: Women's Equality Day

On Saturday, August 26, 2017, Women's Equality Day, we will celebrate the anniversary of the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which granted women the right to vote. In 1971, after a Joint Resolution of Congress, August 26th was designated as Women's Equality Day, and called for the President to issue a proclamation annually to commemorate the day. Note, the observance of Women's Equality Day is not only to commemorate the passage of the 19th Amendment, but also to call attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality.

To that end, we want to highlight some of our female leaders at Locke Lord, to show their experiences of how the Firm has changed during their career and to demonstrate their personal endeavors in promoting women. We asked them several questions:

Has the role of female attorneys changed since you've started at Locke Lord?



Nina Huerta (Los Angeles)

Since I joined legacy Lord, Bissell & Brook in 2004, women have played prominent roles in our Firm – both by leading teams working on important cases as well as taking part in Firm management. That was one of the reasons I wanted to work here when I initially joined the Firm, and it remains one of the reasons why I know this Firm is a great fit for me. The visible presence of women leaders at the Firm makes leadership more relatable to women attorneys and it also inspires women attorneys to set their sights on attaining leadership positions themselves one day.



Denise Hanna (Washington, D.C.)

When I joined the Firm, there were some but certainly a lot fewer women in leadership roles. Today, Locke Lord is still one of the few firms of our size and stature that is led by a female Chair. And, under Jerry Clements' leadership, I have been impressed with the number of women serving on our Executive Committee, serving on our Board of Directors, serving as Office Managing Partners and heading Practice Groups. Our lesson is not that a woman leader just wants to pick other women leaders. The lesson is how equality can be fostered when there are more voices, more perspectives and more experience around the table that may be more open to seeing qualifications that might have gone unnoticed in a less diverse setting. In my view, diversity has beget diversity – especially when looking at the female leadership of the Firm. For me, it makes Locke Lord a more interesting and satisfying place to work. I hope it does for other female attorneys at the Firm as well.

Do you have any official or unofficial roles promoting equality for women inside or outside of the Firm?



Jennifer Kenedy (Chicago)

I think we all have an unofficial duty to promote equality for talented female lawyers both inside and outside the Firm. That can take on many forms: as a mentor, Firm leader or in outside organizations. In 2008, I was a founding Board/Executive Committee member of the Chicago Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law Firms, a consortium of women attorneys who, despite in most cases being competitors, joined forces to develop an organization to share best practices and implement Coalition programming and strategies to ensure the Chicago legal community hires, retains, and promotes our talented women lawyers. Several of our Chicago women attorneys have since held leadership positions in this important and impactful organization.

Did You Know?

- Led by **Nina Huerta** and **Allison O'Neil**, the Firm has a Women's Initiative Committee whose mission it is to support and encourage the success of women at Locke Lord. Goals include hiring, promoting and retaining female attorneys, encouraging women to take leadership roles in the Firm and providing mentoring and networking opportunities. The Women's Initiative addresses head-on the everyday issues facing women practicing law in a large firm.
- Outside the Firm, we are a member of the Chicago Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law Firms and the Houston Bar Association Gender Fairness Initiative, which strive to promote women in law firms. Further, Firm Chair Jerry Clements serves on the Board of Directors of the National Women's Council, a nonprofit organization that seeks to provide a collective voice for women of all backgrounds, classes and ages.

The heart of Locke Lord lies within our people and the many different experiences and perspectives we share. We recognize, embrace and celebrate our differences and believe we can only provide our clients with the best possible representation if we reflect the diversity of the clients and communities we serve.

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