

Law Firms' New Partners Still Mostly Male

A dozen firms elect 50% or more new female partners, rest lag behind

For some time now, we have known that the lack of women in leadership positions at law firms is not a pipeline issue. Women have been graduating from law schools at a rate of 40% or higher since 1985 and entering private practice at the same rate as their male counterparts – 70% – during that time. Over the past two years, we have seen an increasing number of firms looking for ways to retain their talented women lawyers and to advance them into leadership positions. In light of this increased focus, we set out to review this year's partnership classes with a renewed optimism that firms might be walking the talk. We collected promotion statistics for a total of 77 law firms representing a variety of sizes and locations. We chose these firms based on inclusion in prior years' surveys, firm size, reputation and availability of information. We also combined the new information with the data that we had collected in previous years so that, for the first time, we could see whether a particular firm has made strides or slipped over the past four years.

We found good news. At a dozen firms, 50% or more of the new partners were women: **Dorsey & Whitney** (10 of 14 new partners are female, for 71%), **Ropes & Gray** (7 of 10 new partners are female, for 70%), **Simpson Thacher & Bartlett** (4 of 6 new partners are female, for 67%), **Blackwell Sanders** (8 of 12 new partners are female, for 67%), **Cravath, Swaine & Moore** (2 of 3 new partners are female, for 67%), **Crowell & Moring** (4 of 7 new partners are female, for 57%), **DLA Piper** (15 of 28 new partners are female, for 54%), **Reed Smith** (14 of 26 new partners are female, for 54%), **Arnold & Porter** (2 of 4 new partners are female, for 50%), **Cadwalader** (1 of 2 new partners is female, for 50%), **Shearman & Sterling** (3 of 6 new partners are female, for 50%), and **Womble Carlyle** (4 of 8 new partners are female, for 50%).

At many firms, between a third and a half of the partners promoted this year were women. Some notable firms: **Baker Hostetler** (8 of 17 new partners are female, for 47%), **Bryan Cave** (6 of 13 new partners are female, for 46%), **Patton Boggs** (4 of 9 new partners are female, for 44%), **Venable** (4 of 9 new partners are female, for 44%), **Dewey & LeBoeuf** (4 of 10 new partners are female, for 40%), **McDermott Will & Emory** (14 of 35 new partners are female, for 40%), **Hogan & Hartson** (7 of 18 new partners are female, for 39%), **Kirkland & Ellis** (21 of 56 new partners are female, for 38%), **Cleary Gottlieb** (3 of 8 new partners are female, for 36%), **Morrison & Foerster** (7 of 20 new partners are female, for 35%), **Arent Fox** (1 of 3 new partners is female, for 33%), **Holland and Hart** (2 of 6 new partners are female, for 33%), **Holland & Knight** (6 of 18 new partners are female, for 33%), **Stroock & Stroock & Lavan** (2 of 6 new partners are female, for 33%), and **Thelen, Reid** (5 of 15 new partners are female, for 33%).

However, other firms are seriously lagging behind. **Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein** did not make a single female partner (0 of 8 new partners were female). For others, only one or two women lawyers were awarded the brass ring: **Orrick** (1 of 13 new partners is female, for 8%), **Proskauer Rose** (1 of 11 new partners is female, for 9%), **Nixon Peabody** (1 of 11 new partners is female, for 9%), **Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman** (1 of 11 new partners is female, for 9%), **Baker & Daniels** (1 of 9 new partners is female, for 11%), **Vinson & Elkins** (1 of 9 new partners is female, for 11%), **Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge** (1 of 9 new partners is female), **Akin Gump**

(2 of 15 new partners are female, for 13%), **Milbank** (1 of 8 new partners is female, for 13%), **White & Case** (1 of 7 new partners is female, for 14%), and **Gibson Dunn** (2 of 13 new partners are female, for 15%).

Some of the most interesting information can be found by examining the trends for individual law firms. For instance, in all but one of the past four partnership classes at **Crowell & Moring** women have been 50% or more of the firm's new partners. Likewise, women have been 40% or more of the new partners in the past three partnership classes at **Cadwalader**. **DLA Piper** has had three years of steady but moderate progress followed this year by a substantial increase to 54%. In two of the three previous partnership classes at **Ropes & Gray**, women have been more than a third of the new partners and the firm this year was one of the path-breakers with 70% of its new partners being women. In contrast, at **Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge**, the percentage of women promoted to partner has steadily decreased in each of the last three years (30% in 2006, 20% in 2007, and 11% in 2008). And at some firms such as **Akin Gump, Dechert, Milbank, Pillsbury, Strook & Strook, Vinson & Elkins** and **White & Case**, women have been largely absent from most of the past four partnership classes.

We will continue to update this chart as more partnership class information is released. As always, let us know any encouraging or discouraging partner class news we should include.

| New Partner Chart | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (year is effective date; U.S. partners only) | | | | |
| Firm | Women/Total for 2005 (%) | Women/Total for 2006 (%) | Women/Total for 2007 (%) | Women/Total for 2008 (%) |
| Akin Gump | 1/16 (6%) | 2/11 (18%) | 2/15 (13%) | 2/15 (13%) |
| Arent Fox | 2/5 (40%) | 5/12 (42%) | 6/12 (50%) | 1/3 (33%) |
| Arnold & Porter | 0/5 (0%) | 2/9 (22%) | 4/7 (57%) | 2/4 (50%) |
| Baker Botts | 2/14 (14%) | 4/10 (40%) | 2/17 (12%) | 5/17 (29%) |
| Baker & Daniels | N/A | N/A | 4/9 (44%) | 1/9 (11%) |
| Baker Hostetler | N/A | 9/22 (41%) | 5/22 (23%) | 8/17 (47%) |
| Ballard Spahr | 2/8 (25%) | 4/8 (50%) | 2/7 (29%) | N/A |
| Bingham McCutcheon | 5/17 (29%) | 3/11 (27%) | 4/11 (36%) | 2/9 (22%) |
| Blackwell Sanders | 4/8 (50%) | 3/15 (20%) | 2/10 (20%) | 8/12 (67%) |
| Bryan Cave | 4/16 (25%) | 4/10 (40%) | 1/11 (9%) | 6/13 (46%) |
| Cadwalader | 0/2 (0%) | 2/5 (40%) | 3/6 (50%) | 1/2 (50%) |
| Cleary Gottlieb | 2/5 (40%) | 2/5 (40%) | 2/5 (40%) | 3/8 (38%) |
| Cooley Godward | 1/8 (13%) | 3/13 (23%) | 2/13 (15%) | 3/12 (25%) |
| Cravath | 3/8 (38%) | 0/4 (0%) | 1/4 (25%) | 2/3 (67%) |
| Crowell & Moring | 2/3 (67%) | 0/6 (0%) | 1/2 (50%) | 4/7 (57%) |
| Debevoise & Plimpton | 2/5 (40%) | 0/3 (0%) | 0/4 (0%) | 3/9 (33%) |
| Dechert | 1/10 (10%) | 2/12 (17%) | 1/13 (8%) | 2/8 (25%) |

New Partner Chart

(year is effective date; U.S. partners only)

| Firm | Women/Total for 2005 (%) | Women/Total for 2006 (%) | Women/Total for 2007 (%) | Women/Total for 2008 (%) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dewey & LeBoeuf ^f | 0/5 (0%) | 0/4 (0%) | 2/10 (20%) | 4/10 (40%) |
| Dickstein Shapiro | 1/4 (25%) | 2/4 (50%) ⁱⁱ | 2/9 (22%) | 1/4 (25%) |
| DLA Piper | 10/34 (29%) | 13/34 (38%) | 11/38 (29%) | 15/28 (54%) ⁱⁱⁱ |
| Dorsey & Whitney | 2/13 (15%) | N/A | 1/11 (9%) | 10/14 (71%) |
| Drinker Biddle | 2/8 (25%) | 1/7 (14%) | 4/10 (40%) | N/A |
| Duane Morris | 4/12 (33%) | 2/9 (22%) | 5/13 (38%) | 2/10 (20%) |
| Edwards Angell | N/A | 3/10 (30%) | 2/10 (20%) | 1/9 (11%) |
| Finnegan Henderson | 0/5 (0%) | 4/14 (29%) | 0/9 (0%) | 3/15 (20%) |
| Fitzpatrick Cella | N/A | N/A | 1/5 (20%) | 0/3 (0%) |
| Foley Hoag | N/A | N/A | 1/5 (20%) | 0/3 (0%) |
| Foley & Lardner | 4/24 (17%) | N/A | 8/23 (35%) | 7/24 (29%) |
| Fried Frank | 2/9 (22%) | 0/5 (0%) | 1/7 (14%) | N/A |
| Fulbright & Jaworski | 1/9 (11%) | 5/16 (31%) | 2/12 (17%) | N/A |
| Gibson Dunn | 3/7 (43%) | 4/6 (67%) | 1/10 (10%) | 2/13 (15%) |
| Haynes & Boone | 1/8 (13%) | 2/8 (25%) | 3/10 (30%) | 2/10 (20%) |
| Hogan & Hartson | 5/21 (24%) | 4/15 (27%) | 9/17 (53%) | 7/18 (39%) |
| Holland and Hart | 3/6 (50%) | 0/4 (0%) | N/A | 2/6 (33%) |
| Holland & Knight | 13/25 (52%) | 7/28 (25%) | 9/35 (26%) | 6/18 (33%) |
| Howrey | 4/9 (44%) | 5/13 (38%) | 4/6 (67%) | 3/14 (21%) |
| K&L Gates | 4/17 (24%) | 5/21 (24%) | 6/17 (35%) | 6/22 (27%) |
| Kaye Scholer | 2/4 (50%) | 1/3 (33%) | 2/4 (50%) | 2/6 (33%) |
| Kilpatrick Stockton | 4/15 (27%) | 4/13 (31%) | N/A | 4/13 (31%) |
| King & Spalding | 4/20 (20%) | 6/18 (33%) | 4/12 (33%) | 5/19 (26%) |
| Kirkland & Ellis | 18/59 (31%) ^{iv} | 16/61 (26%) ^v | 17/59 (29%) | 21/56 (38%) |
| Latham & Watkins | 8/29 (28%) | 5/21 (24%) | 9/23 (39%) | 3/20 (15%) |
| Mayer Brown | 5/24 (21%) | N/A | 3/26 (12%) | 5/27 (19%) |
| McDermott Will | 8/28 (29%) | 8/22 (36%) | 11/32 (34%) | 14/35 (40%) |
| McGuire Woods | 7/15 (47%) | 4/13 (31%) | 6/15 (40%) | 4/15 (27%) |
| Milbank | N/A | 1/7 (14%) | 1/4 (25%) | 1/8 (13%) |
| Morrison & Foerster | 6/19 (32%) | 3/14 (21%) | 5/16 (31%) | 7/20 (35%) |
| Nixon Peabody | 2/11 (18%) | 2/11 (18%) | 4/13 (31%) | 1/9 (11%) |
| O'Melveny | 4/15 (27%) | 4/13 (31%) | 6/15 (40%) | 5/20 (25%) |
| Orrick | 2/10 (20%) | 5/9 (56%) | 4/16 (25%) | 1/13 (8%) |
| Parker Poe | N/A | 1/7 (14%) | 2/7 (28%) | 0/8 (0%) |

New Partner Chart

(year is effective date; U.S. partners only)

| Firm | Women/Total for 2005 (%) | Women/Total for 2006 (%) | Women/Total for 2007 (%) | Women/Total for 2008 (%) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Patton Boggs | 1/8 (13%) | 3/12 (25%) | 0/9 (0%) | 4/9 (44%) |
| Paul Hastings | 5/13 (38%) | 2/11 (18%) | 3/13 (23%) | N/A |
| Paul Weiss | 1/3 (33%) | 1/5 (20%) | 1/3 (33%) | 1/4 (25%) |
| Phelps Dunbar | 2/4 (50%) | 1/2 (50%) | 2/7 (29%) | 1/4 (25%) |
| Pillsbury Winthrop | 1/12 (8%) | 3/18 (17%) | 2/11 (18%) | 1/11 (9%) |
| Powell Goldstein | 5/11 (45%) | 2/6 (33%) | N/A | N/A |
| Proskauer Rose | N/A | 2/6 (33%) | 2/14 (14%) | 1/11 (9%) |
| Reed Smith | N/A | 10/24 (42%) | 3/16 (19%) | 14/26 (54%) |
| Ropes & Gray | 6/14 (43%) | 1/7 (14%) | 4/11 (36%) | 7/10 (70%) |
| Seyfarth Shaw | N/A | 4/13 (31%) | 5/20 (25%) | 5/17 (29%) |
| Shearman & Sterling | 1/3 (33%) | 0/4 (0%) | 3/7 (43%) | 3/6 (50%) |
| Sidley Austin | 11/26 (42%) | 8/34 (24%) | 9/29 (31%) | N/A |
| Simpson Thacher | N/A | 3/11 (27%) | 2/11 (18%) | 4/6 (67%) |
| Skadden | N/A | 6/28 (21%) | 5/22 (23%) | N/A |
| Sonnenschein | 2/7 (29%) | 10/17 (59%) | 7/17 (41%) | N/A |
| Squire Sanders | 2/7 (29%) | N/A | 2/8 (25%) | N/A |
| Steptoe & Johnson | 1/3 (33%) | 1/4 (25%) | 1/4 (25%) | N/A |
| Stroock & Stroock | 0/4 (0%) | 1/5 (20%) | 0/3 (0%) | 2/6 (33%) |
| Thelen, Reid | N/A | 4/8 (50%) ^{vi} | 2/9 (22%) | 5/15 (33%) |
| Thompson Hine | 3/9 (33%) | 3/8 (38%) | 2/5 (40%) | 1/6 (17%) |
| Venable | 3/9 (33%) | 5/12 (42%) | 5/17 (29%) | 4/9 (44%) |
| Vinson & Elkins | N/A | 2/11 (18%) | 1/12 (8%) | 1/9 (11%) |
| Weil, Gotschal | N/A | 4/10 (40%) | 10/13 (77%) ^{vii} | 4/13 (31%) |
| White & Case | 2/11 (18%) | 0/9 (0%) | 2/16 (13%) | 1/7 (14%) |
| WilmerHale | N/A | 5/15 (33%) | 6/15 (40%) | 7/22 (32%) |
| Womble Carlyle | 3/12 (25%) | 0/9 (0%) | 4/9 (44%) | 4/8 (50%) |

ⁱ 2008 numbers are for the newly merged firm, 2007, 2006 and 2005 numbers are for the pre-merger firm of Dewey Ballantine.

ⁱⁱ Both of the women who were promoted worked part-time.

ⁱⁱⁱ Two of the women promoted took maternity leave in the year promoted and 5 recently worked part-time or flextime.

^{iv} May include non-US offices.

^v May include non-US offices.

^{vi} Three of the women promoted worked part-time.

^{vii} One woman was made partner while on maternity leave.