

Survey Shows Top Firms for Women Lawyers

The percentage of BigLaw management seats and equity partnerships held by women ticked up again last year, according to a survey released Tuesday that named the 50 best firms for female attorneys.

At the same time, more major U.S. firms counted multiple women among their leading moneymakers, according to the report from Working Mother Media and Flex-Time Lawyers LLC, while the proportion of promotions going to female lawyers at one- and two-tier partnership firms drew even for the first time.

Flex-Time Lawyers President Deborah Epstein Henry said firm responses about female rainmakers showed a particularly healthy trend with an impact on early- or midcareer female partners.

“It’s been shown that when you have more women represented in the rainmaker ranks, you have a smaller pay disparity among women lawyer equity partners overall in those firms,” Henry said. “That’s why we need to watch that rainmaker representation so closely.”

Of 46 firms that responded to questions about rainmakers for the Best Law Firms for Women survey, 22 percent said they had at least three women in their top 10 revenue-generating partners in 2015 — double the percentage from the previous year. The number of firms that had no women among their top 10 rainmakers fell to 19 percent, down from 29 percent in 2014.

Among all 50 recognized firms, 20 percent of equity partners were women, compared

with a national average of 18 percent, according to the report. Women held 30 percent of nonequity partner roles, the highest percentage in the 10 years of the Best Firms for Women initiative.

The proportion of seats held by women on executive and management committees was 25 percent, up from 24 percent in the previous survey and 21 percent in 2012. Women also held one in four compensation and finance committee seats, up 2 percentage points from 2015.

The proportion of equity partner promotions going to women in 2015 was for the first time equal between firms with one-tier tracks and two-tier tracks. At single-tier firms, female equity partner promotions increased 1 percentage point to 34 percent.

Best Firms for Women Lawyers

Arnold & Porter	Foley & Lardner	Kirkland & Ellis	Perkins Coie
Baker & McKenzie	Fox Rothschild	Latham & Watkins	Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman
Bradley Arant Boult Cummings	Fredrikson & Byron	Littler Mendelson	Quarles & Brady
Cooley	Gibbons	Lowenstein Sandler	Reed Smith
Crowell & Moring	Goodwin Procter	Manatt Phelps & Phillips	Schiff Hardin
Davis Wright Tremaine	Gray Plant Mooty	McDermott Will & Emery	Seyfarth Shaw
Debevoise & Plimpton	Hanson Bridgett	McGuireWoods	Shook Hardy & Bacon
DLA Piper	Hogan Lovells US	Morrison & Foerster	Sidley Austin
Dorsey & Whitney	Holland & Hart	Neal Gerber & Eisenberg	Troutman Sanders
Duane Morris	Holland & Knight	Norton Rose Fulbright	Vinson & Elkins
Faegre Baker Daniels	Ice Miller	Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart	WilmerHale
Finnegan Henderson Farabow Garrett & Dunner	Kaye Scholer	O’Melveny & Myers	
Katten Muchin Rosenman	King & Spalding	Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe	

In two-tier firms, female equity promotions rose to 34 percent, up from 30 percent the previous year.

Concern among diversity experts about women being overrepresented in nonequity ranks notwithstanding, Henry argued that having more career paths in firms benefits women as well as men.

“While there are different viewpoints on this, I think it’s important to have different seniority levels where both men and women have an opportunity to thrive,” she said.

“We need to make sure we’re retaining

junior lawyers so we have a robust pipeline and a critical mass to push more women into equity partnerships, and the nonequity rank is a part of that equation.”

As in previous surveys, the use of ubiquitous flexible work policies among the 50 best firms for women remained low. Just 22 percent of all lawyers working for those firms took advantage of a flex time schedule last year; just 9 percent worked a reduced schedule.

The report drew on 2015 data collected in an online survey between November 2015 and February 2016, according to the report.

The recognized firms were selected from applicant firms with 50 or more lawyers. Only U.S. data was collected.



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