

# CORPORATE COUNSEL

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## National Women in Law Awards

### RECOGNIZING TRANSFORMATIVE LEGAL LEADERSHIP

These 2018 awards recognize North American women general counsel, in-house leaders and law firm partners who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership and business acumen as they have guided their organizations through often treacherous roads to success. These women stand out because they are business strategists, complex problem-solvers, and of course, great lawyers. And as important (especially to them) is that they are great leaders of people: They care more about the success of the team than their individual success.

## LINDA MYERS

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP - PARTNER (SINCE 1996)

**WHAT WAS YOUR ROUTE TO THE TOP?** I joined Kirkland & Ellis in Chicago in 1994 as the second debt finance lawyer at the Firm, and built a practice focused on complex debt financing transactions for private equity groups, commercial lending institutions and major private and public companies. I was fortunate to work on interesting, challenging matters alongside partners including Jeff Hammes and Jamie Sprayregen, who were important sponsors throughout my career. I am proud of my contributions to the Debt Finance Practice Group, which now includes more than 200 incredibly talented lawyers across 13 of Kirkland's offices around the world. I was elected partner in 1996 and joined the Firm's Global Management Executive Committee in 2010. In that role, I have contributed to the Firm's strategic and business initiatives as a leader or a member on a number of committees of our Firm. I am passionate about diversity and inclusion and have championed those causes within and outside of Kirkland for my entire career. I was a founding member of the Firm's Women's Leadership Initiative in 2003 and have been an active member of The Chicago Network, the Advisory Board of Kinzie Capital Partners and sev-

eral philanthropic boards outside of Kirkland. I hope my efforts on initiatives such as WLI, our Diversity Integration Task Force, parental leave and re-entry policies, management and business development training for young lawyers, upward performance reviews, wellness and other programs will have a long-term, positive impact on lawyers at my Firm and throughout the profession.

**WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT? (I.E. WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST BUSINESS-RELATED CONCERNS?)** I worry quite a bit about our most important business asset, our talented lawyers. To stay at the top of the game, we need exceptional talent at every level, but the competition for stars has never been more fierce. We spend a lot of time thinking about how we make Kirkland an attractive place for recruits and how to keep our lawyers and employees happy and motivated to stay. We strive to lead the profession in terms of challenging, complex work, training, early responsibility and exposure to clients, compensation and benefits, career counseling and wellness programming, and many other areas, but our efforts and our offering need to constantly evolve and grow with the expectations of our workforce.



TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

**WHAT IS THE BEST LEADERSHIP ADVICE YOU PROVIDED, OR RECEIVED, AND WHY DO YOU THINK IT WAS EFFECTIVE?** I have been so fortunate over the years to get great advice, so it is hard to narrow to just one. A very good piece of advice I got early on was about the importance of taking risks—smart ones, of course—where stretching beyond my comfort zone would make a difference. Sometimes you have to get a bit uncomfortable because that's when you learn and grow, and prove yourself as a leader. You stay relevant in this business by evolving and making change happen, and if you stay in the same lane for your whole career, you may not have as much impact or feel as satisfied. ■