

Linda Coberly Featured in Law360's "Female Law Firm Leaders: How We Broke The Glass Ceiling"

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Chicago Office Managing Partner Linda Coberly was featured in Law360's November 20 article titled "[Female Law Firm Leaders: How We Broke The Glass Ceiling](#)." The article examines a recent report on women in law firms and highlights five female managing partners and their tips for breaking the glass ceiling.

According to the article, the number of women in the legal profession who rise to the highest levels of law firm management remains small. An October 2017 report by McKinsey & Co. found that while all law firms call gender diversity a very important or top priority, only 36 percent of women believe gender diversity is a priority for their firm, compared with 62 percent of men who do. And less than half of women say their firm is doing what it takes to improve gender diversity, compared with more than two-thirds of men who do.

Discussing work-life balance, Linda notes a key factor that has contributed meaningfully to her success: Winston & Strawn's openness to her desire to work reduced hours while remaining on the leadership track.

When her oldest child was born, Linda explains, she worked on a reduced-hours basis and continued to do so for the next decade while her children were young. Not only was Winston flexible with regard to her schedule, but the firm also promoted her to equity partner and elected her to its Executive Committee.

"At the time, my family situation was such that it was important that I take some extra time to be with my kids when they were small," she said. "It was important for me, and it made it possible for me to maintain my career," Linda said.

Linda is open about the path she took so others can see that it's possible to work an alternative schedule and still succeed at Winston.

"I think it's important to show women and men coming up that being reduced-hours doesn't put you out of the running," she said. "To be a reduced-hours lawyer is consistent with having a long and committed career in the law. The fact that a lawyer will for a period of time take a reduction in hours and pay, that's just a chapter in the very long book of a career."

Linda emphasizes the importance of law firms not only stating their commitment to diversity but also actually showing that commitment by demonstrating there is a path for women through the experiences of those who have

served in management positions.

“I think it makes a huge difference in terms of the retention of women at junior levels,” she said. “One of the ways we articulate our diversity mission is to say that people of all backgrounds who are talented, we want them to have *and to see* that they can have a long and successful career here.”

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