

WOMEN, INFLUENCE & POWER IN LAW AWARDS

RECOGNIZING TRANSFORMATIVE LEGAL LEADERSHIP

Our 2020 special report honors women who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing the empowerment of women in law.

■ law firm honorees

ROSALIND FAHEY KRUSE

● WILLKIE FARR & GALLAGHER

Partner

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

ROSALIND FAHEY KRUSE IS A PARTNER IN WILLKIE'S CORPORATE & Financial Services Department and a member of the firm's Executive Committee. She focuses her practice on mergers and acquisitions involving public and private companies, private equity transactions, debt and equity financings, and general corporate and securities law matters. Her clients include major private equity firms, such as Centerbridge Partners, Insight Partners and The CapStreet Group and their respective portfolio companies, as well as Versant Health, Inc. She regularly advises private equity sponsors, boards of directors and senior management on strategic and governance matters. Her practice extends to a variety of industries, with a focus on technology/software, financial and mortgage services and insurance.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROUTE TO THE TOP? I've worked extremely hard and have been fortunate to have done so in a supportive and collaborative environment. As I was coming up the ranks at Willkie, I was always pushed — in a good way — beyond my comfort level, and this led me to take on increasing responsibility. Firm leaders supported me, talked through concerns I had at times when I was overwhelmed, and demonstrated that they would work with me to make a long-term career at the firm viable for me, even as I was raising three young children. Many of my mentors and champions at Willkie and among my clients have been, and continue to be, men, and it is important to look for mentors of all types.

LOOKING BACK, WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN WHEN YOU STARTED OUT IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION? I wish I had focused on building my business development and networking skills earlier. This is why I am and have been so passionate about



supporting women and diverse attorneys in developing these skills. I organically developed relationships in my more junior years but wish I had done so more intentionally at an earlier stage. I didn't necessarily envision myself becoming a law firm partner, and programs for teaching these sort of skills simply didn't exist when I started. When I made it into a position of leadership, I made it my mission to press not only for important policy changes around things like paternal leave and support for families, but also for teaching business development to rising lawyers.

WHAT IS THE BEST LEADERSHIP ADVICE YOU'VE GIVEN OR RECEIVED, AND WHY DO YOU THINK IT WAS EFFECTIVE? I have learned the most about effective leadership from observing the best leaders of my firm. The leaders I admire most are driven to succeed, of course, but the most effective leaders take action to promote their vision and have the courage to advocate for choices that may run counter to historical practice. Good leaders communicate a clear vision and are responsible for failures and missteps. This creates trust and support within the organization. I have seen the positive change from this kind of leadership begin to lead to increased hiring, promotion and professional development of attorneys of color and women. ■

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