

The Women Influence & Power in Law Awards 2021: Law Firm Collaborative Leadership

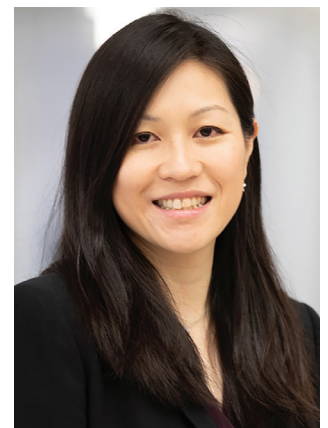
Tiffany Lee, Partner, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

What was your route to the top? I graduated a year early from Stanford University with dual BA degrees in Economics and Chinese, and then went on to earn my JD at Harvard Law School. Between college and law school, I worked as a paralegal at Wilson Sonsini. Upon graduating from law school, I was an associate at Skadden, and later Morrison & Foerster and Paul Hastings, where I made partner during the same year that I took my first maternity leave. I joined Willkie as a partner in December 2018 to start the Firm's first West coast office. Along the way, I have balanced work across international and national time zones with two young children at home, and have confronted and overcome biases related to being an Asian woman.

Looking back, what do you wish you had known when you started out in the legal profession? High quality legal work now includes both business consulting and law and, in order to provide effective legal advice, it is very important to know the clients, their businesses and their concerns. Regardless of your practice area, you should keep up to date with the latest cases and news and prognosticate future implications for clients. This is something I have learned over time and it has proven invaluable. In order to proactively provide advice

to clients, young lawyers should actively track relevant legal issues and news that may affect their practice area and clients, and seek to understand their clients' businesses, including by keeping an open dialogue with both the clients' legal and business teams regarding compliance and regulatory concerns.

What is the best leadership advice you've given or received, and why do you think it was effective? There is no one path to partnership and each of us must find our own path with the advice, guidance and support of others. This advice was effective because it taught me to be confident and believe in myself. While it is very important to have excellent mentors along the way, only you can find your own balance in life and what works for you. This requires listening to the experiences and guidance of others but instead of trying to fit into any one mold, it is important to synthesize all of the information and, sometimes through trial and error, discover your own leadership style.



Tiffany Lee, partner with Willkie Farr & Gallagher.

Courtesy photo