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**200 LARGEST U.S. LAW FIRMS REPORT ONLY 17 PERCENT OF EQUITY PARTNERS ARE WOMEN, ACCORDING TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS ANNUAL SURVEY**

CHICAGO – In its eighth year, the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL®) and The NAWL Foundation's® annual Survey on Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms reveals not much has changed in its findings of compensation, leadership roles, rainmaking, and equity partnership at the nation's largest 200 firms. The data this year revealed the same trend as in previous years: the greatest percentage of women (64 percent) occupy the lowest positions in firms (staff attorneys) and the highest positions in firms (equity partners) are occupied by the lowest percentage of women (17 percent). In comparison, the 2012 survey reported 15 percent equity partners were women and 70 percent staff attorneys were women.

“This year's results reinforce that women in private practice continue to face barriers to reaching the highest positions in their firms – as equity partners and members of governance committees,” said Stephanie Scharf, report author, Past President of The NAWL Foundation, and Partner at Scharf Banks Marmor LLC. “It is troubling that women make up the large majority of staff attorneys – those lawyers in the lowest echelon of law firms – at the same time they make up a static minority (on average 17%) of equity partners in BigLaw.”

Highlights of the survey include:

- **There continues to be a disproportionately low number of women who advance into the highest ranks of large firms – in spite of a decades-old pipeline of women law school graduates.** Since the mid-1980's, more than 40 percent of law school

graduates have been women, but the typical firm reported less than 20 percent of its equity partners are women.

- **Lateral hiring at the level of equity partner favors men.** While approximately 66 percent of all new male equity partners are recruited laterally, about one-half of new female equity partners are recruited laterally.
- **The large majority of firms will not report data about compensation of their men and women lawyers.** This year, 33 firms declined to participate in the survey although they previously participated in the survey as recently as last year.
- **The gender composition of law firm governing and compensation committees impacts the extent of the gender pay gap within a firm.** For the 31 firms with two or more women on these committees, women equity partners earn 95 percent of their male counterparts. In contrast, for the 17 firms without this level of gender representation, women equity partners earn only 85 percent.
- **Women continue to lag behind men with respect to credit for rainmaking and client revenue.** Among the nation's 100 largest law firms, women are credited for roughly 80 percent of the client billings credited to men. Among the second hundred firms, women are credited with 89 percent.
- **Firms view women's perceived lack of business development and high rate of attrition as the two primary reasons why the number of women equity partners has not been increasing.** Lack of business development was identified as the greatest obstacle by 44 percent of firms. Attrition was an obstacle identified by 31 percent of firms.
- **Minority women lawyers are not being advanced consistent with the available pipeline and are advanced less often than male minority lawyers.** In the 100 largest law firms, female minorities occupy 2 percent of equity partnerships compared to 6 percent male minorities. In the second hundred firms, women minorities occupy 2 percent compared to 4 percent male minorities.
- **Formal succession planning has not been a means of identifying and grooming women leaders.** An overwhelming 95 percent of firms have not identified their next managing partner and 70 percent of firms do not have a formal succession planning process for practice group leaders.

“The survey has become the gold standard of surveys on retention and promotion of women in the legal profession. The survey captures the progress, or lack thereof, of women lawyers forging long-term careers and attaining leadership roles in large law firms, including the obstacles they face along the way. In addition, it provides important benchmarking statistics for firms to use in measuring their own progress,” said NAWL President Deborah S. Froling, Partner at Arent Fox LLP in Washington, DC.

NAWL Foundation Board member and report co-author, Roberta Liebenberg, Partner at Fine, Kaplan and Black and Chair of the American Bar Association Commission on Women, described the survey's results as: “basically showing very little progress, after years of very little progress. Unfortunately, the current statistics are not significantly different from what they were when the first NAWL Survey was released in 2006.”

Liebenberg adds: “The paradigm will not change unless and until the country's largest firms make a real commitment to implement more equitable policies and practices for compensation, client origination credit and advancement to equity partnership and leadership positions. It is clear from our research over the years that when individual women lawyers advance and succeed, so too do their law firms and clients.”

Christine A. Amalfe, President of the NAWL Foundation and Director at Gibbons P.C. in Newark, NJ, described the survey as “the only national study of the nation’s 200 largest law firms, which annually tracks the progress of women lawyers at all levels of private practice, including the most senior positions, and collects data on firms as a whole rather than from a subset of individual lawyers.”

“Every year, dedicated women lawyers who serve on our Survey Committee donate hundreds of hours to this important project. Because of their insight and commitment, the NAWL Survey on the Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms continues to exist. We cannot thank them enough for their work,” added Amalfe.

The full NAWL Survey Report can be accessed by visiting: [nawlfoundation.org](http://nawlfoundation.org) or [nawl.org](http://nawl.org). Since 1899, the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL®) has been committed to fostering diversity and advancing women in the legal profession. NAWL is the only national women’s bar association with individual and organizational members nationwide, including law firms, law firm attorneys, corporations, in-house counsel, government attorneys, law schools, and law school professors. Please visit [www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org).

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