



National Association of Women Lawyers
The Voice of Women in the Law™

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For further information contact:

Kendall Bram
Hellerman Baretz Communications
202-274-1836
kbram@hellermanbaretz.com

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS RELEASES FIFTH ANNUAL
SURVEY**

CHICAGO – Today, the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL®) and The NAWL Foundation® released the results of their fifth annual Survey on Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms. The Survey is 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.

“The 2010 NAWL Survey data is stunning for its constancy, underscoring the negative impact that changing law firm structures are having on women's success in firms,” said NAWL President Dorian Denburg, General Attorney for AT&T. “Women attorneys continue to lag behind their male counterparts in firm leadership, equity positions and as rainmakers—three areas so critical to law firm success where women need to be present and be represented.”

For the first time, the Survey specifically addressed the impact of non-partner track roles on women’s advancement and the role that part-time status plays in the retention of women lawyers in private firms. “Women make up the majority of staff and part-time attorneys at large firms. Staff attorney positions offer little possibility of career advancement, and part-time attorneys are often the first to be let go,” said The NAWL Foundation President Stephanie Scharf, Partner at Schoeman Updike Kaufman & Scharf in Chicago, who has designed and developed the Survey since 2006.

“We find some reward in that every year the Survey has identified new opportunities, as well as the barriers, for women to succeed in private practice,” added Scharf. “But the snail's pace at which women are advancing and the continued adverse impact of evolving law firm structures on women, especially part-time women, remain disconcerting.”

Highlights of the Survey include the following findings:

- **The Impact of Partnership Structure:** Partnership structure continues to evolve with one-tier, two-tier, and mixed-tier firms. The data shows that women appear to be more successful in one-tier firms and mixed-tier firms. In 2010, women lawyers constitute 18% of equity partners in one-tier firms, 17% of equity partners in mixed-tier firms, and 14% of equity partners in two-tier firms.
- **Fixed-Income Equity Partners:** In the typical mixed-tier firm, approximately 6% of all equity partners are "fixed-income equity partners," and women represent a surprising 73% of these fixed-income equity partners. Fixed-income equity partners are those lawyers in mixed-tier firms who are required to contribute capital to the firm but nevertheless receive only an annual salary and performance-based bonus rather than sharing in the overall profits of the firm.
- **The Impact of Contract and Staff Attorneys:** Approximately 80% of *AmLaw* 100 firms and 50% of *AmLaw* 200 firms hire staff attorneys. Half of large firms hire contract attorneys and about half of the large firms hire both staff attorneys and contract attorneys. The Survey shows that over 60% of staff attorneys are women. This is the highest percentage of women lawyers in any category of practice, and by definition it is a category with little possibility of career advancement.
- **Terminations:** During the 2010 Survey period, 93% of large law firms terminated lawyers. Termination ratios for men and women have remained proportionate to their numbers as associates and partners since the 2009 Survey. But, terminations are highest among part-time attorneys, a position largely occupied by women: 56% of firms terminated one or more part-time employees, and in 83% of those firms, more women than men were terminated.
- **Equity Partnership:** The percentage of women equity partners is unchanged over the last five years; women still only account for about 15% of equity partners. It continues to be much more difficult for women than men—by a factor of almost six to one—to become equity partners in large firms.
- **Law Firm Leadership:** The average firm's highest governing committee includes only one or two women among its members. And about 10% of the nation's largest firms have no women at all on their governing committees.
- **The Compensation Gap:** As in previous years, female associate compensation appears to be on par with male associate compensation. However, thereafter the compensation gap widens at every higher level. This year the compensation gap widened further at the equity level, as women equity partners earned only 85% of the compensation earned by their male counterparts.

- **Rainmaking:** The pattern seen in the 2009 Survey continues, with women attorneys by and large not receiving credit for rainmaking. 46% of firms credited no women at all among their top ten rainmakers

The full NAWL Survey Report can be accessed by visiting:

<http://www.nawl.org/Assets/Documents/2010+Survey.pdf>.

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.