

Ice Miller wins kudos as women's employer

Indy-based operation's policies, promotions earn title as one of 50 best law firms for women



By Dana Hunsinger

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When it comes time for that annual mammogram, women at Ice Miller can have it done at work. They can bring in their laundry to be dry-cleaned and breast-feed in private "mommy rooms." And if they have to work late, they don't have to cook dinner. The firm provides it.

It's these perks, along with a high percentage of female partners and associates, that landed Indianapolis-headquartered Ice Miller as one of the 50 best law firms in the nation for women, according to Working Mother magazine and Flex-Time Lawyers. It was the only Indiana-based firm to make the list, which was announced last week.

Angela Krahulik, an attorney at Ice Miller, can attest to the firm's accolades. She is the mother of two daughters, ages 3 and 5. After her second child was born, she was allowed to switch to a flexible schedule that includes a four-day workweek and privileges to work from home the rest of the week.

"I need flexibility in my life, and it's worked out wonderfully," said Krahulik, who has been with the firm eight years. "I absolutely believe we stand out as a great place for women."

The law firm also ranks No. 1 in the nation among the 180 largest law firms for the highest percentage of female equity partners, those who share in the firm's profit -- 27.3 percent, compared with 16 percent nationwide. And it ranks fifth nationwide for the percentage of female partners.

For the top 50 list, firms were evaluated on their profile, family-friendly benefits and policies, flexibility, leadership, compensation and advancement and retention of women, among other factors.

Ice Miller stood out for multiple reasons, including 12 weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child, as well as the fact that women who choose to work a flexible or reduced-hour workweek are still eligible for equity partnership, said Jennifer Owens, senior director of editorial research and initiatives at Working Mother.

"We love that there's a law firm who says it's OK to have those flexible hours and you can still have a long and fruitful career with us," Owens said.

It's the third year the magazine has compiled the list and the third year Ice Miller has made it. More firms should follow Ice Miller's lead, Owens said.

Other Indianapolis law firms are also making strides when it comes to female associates.

Barnes & Thornburg, for example, has 47 female partners, said Jan Carroll, one of those partners.

"From the time I started, I was given the same opportunities and challenges as my male colleagues, not that I expected otherwise," said Carroll, who joined in 1986.

During the 1970s, Ice Miller was one of the first major firms in the state to elect a woman to partnership and the first such firm to vote a minority woman into partnership.

For Mary Nold Larimore, partner and co-chair of Ice Miller's drug and device practice group, partnership came quickly. She started at Ice Miller in 1980 and became partner seven years later at age 30.

"Certainly, being a mother and an attorney 29 years ago was relatively new. There weren't that many women who had navigated that," she said. "(Now) we have so many women coming in, and all of these programs are in place and you no longer are breaking new ground."