

Making the List

THE TOP 10 New York "best law firms for women," as determined by Flex-Time Lawyers and Working Mother magazine, are, in alphabetical order:

- Cravath, Swaine & Moore
- Debevoise & Plimpton
- DLA Piper US
- Holland & Knight
- Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel
- Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe
- Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison
- Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman
- Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
- White & Case

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The top 40 firms outside New York in alphabetical order:

Alston & Bird, Atlanta; **Armstrong Teasdale**, St. Louis; **Arnold & Porter**, Washington, D.C.; **Baker & Daniels**, Indianapolis; **Baker & McKenzie**, Chicago; **Bingham McCutchen**, Boston; **Blackwell Sanders**, Kansas City, Mo.; **Bryan Cave**, St. Louis; **Chapman & Cutler**, Chicago; **Covington & Burlington**, Washington; **Dickstein Shapiro**, Washington; **Dorsey & Whitney**, Minneapolis; **Duane Morris**, Philadelphia; **Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellot**, Pittsburgh; **Farrella Braun & Martel**, San Francisco; and **Foley & Lardner**, Milwaukee.

Also: **Folger Levin & Kahn**, San Francisco; **Gibbons**, Newark, N.J.; **Heller Ehrman**, San Francisco; **Hogan & Hartson**, Washington; **Howrey**, Washington; **Hunton & Williams**, Richmond, Va.; **Ice Miller**, Indianapolis; **Katten Muchin Rosenman**, Chicago; **King & Spalding**, Atlanta; **Kirkland & Ellis**, Chicago; **Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Preston Gates Ellis**, Pittsburgh; **Manatt, Phelps & Phillips**, Los Angeles; **Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw**, Chicago; **McDermott Will & Emery**, Chicago; **McGuireWoods**, Richmond, Va.; **Miller & Chevalier**, Washington; **Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo**, Boston; **Morrison**

'Best Law Firms for Women'

Thomas Adcock

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To advance and enhance the careers of women attorneys - and to create what could become a new category of hiring competition in an already hypercompetitive profession - a Philadelphia lawyer and a New York publishing company have teamed up to declare the nation's "50 Best Law Firms for Women," the result of a survey conducted between November 2006 and February.

The survey's co-sponsors - Flex-Time Lawyers of Philadelphia, a consulting firm headed by attorney Deborah Epstein Henry, and Working Mother Media of East 42nd Street - announced their list of favored firms on Tuesday.

Rather than a numerical ranking, the list was released in alphabetical order and according to principal office locations identified by the firms. And rather than quizzing female lawyers, comparative data was sought from their employers.

"We kind of stuck our toe into this to see what the reaction would be," said Tammy Palazzo, vice president of research at Working Mother Media, publisher of Working Mother magazine, which since 1985 has published a survey listing the "100 Best Companies" for women employees.

"The law firms came on like gangbusters," said Ms. Palazzo. "We anticipate that this is really going to grow and become a huge resource for women and men looking to find those firms more sensitive to family issues."

Participating in the inaugural survey, which Ms. Henry and Ms. Palazzo intend as a yearly project, were 200 law firms across the country, each employing 50 or more attorneys.

Ten New York City-based firms were among the top 50. Firms responded to 600 questions divided among six sections: workplace profile, benefits and compensation, parental leave, child care, retention and promotion of women, and schedule flexibility.

The top 50 list was released - and published in the current issue of Working Mother - as the hiring season begins and law school graduates consult a number of published resources as a guide to comparing firms. For the past decade, fully half the U.S. law school graduates have been women, according to tracking studies by the American Bar Association and other organizations.

Each firm that made the top 50 was given a no-cost, non-comparative percentile "scorecard" for each section of questions. Those measurements are confidential, although firms are free to

disclose them to prospective new hires.

"If ultimate change comes from competition, then this is a real effective instrument of change," said Ms. Henry, founder and president of Flex-Time. "To move forward on women's issues, we need to measure where we are. We've been at the same place for a long time."

Paraphrasing an aphorism of business management, she added, "What gets measured gets changed."

Elsewhere in the corporate world, positive change for women has come about due, in part, to Working Mother's "100 Best" list, designed to recognize the nation's most family-friendly employers. Ms. Henry said the joint Flex-Time/Working Mother survey of law firms built on the existing model, but with questions beyond maternity and domestic matters to the entire range of issues of special concern to professional women.

Free From Stereotypes

Suzanne Riss, editor-in-chief of Working Mother, said she was "pleasantly surprised" to discover that many law firms are free of "old stereotypes" and have been "quietly changing their policies in recent years to reflect changes that are afoot in society as a whole."

The no-cost scorecards given to participating firms were based on a survey algorithm weighted toward what Ms. Henry called the three most important factors: the firm's male-female ratio, flex-time policy, and the firm's record of retaining and advancing its female attorneys.

Beyond the scorecard, firms may purchase a detailed "benchmark" report for \$5,000, a detailed breakdown of scoring based on comparisons with competing firms in aggregate categories of size and region. The benchmark report is based on template measurements developed from Working Mother's long-standing "100 Best" surveys, said Ms. Palazzo. Information in these reports is also confidential.

Many of the 600 survey questions "were designed to educate as well as measure," said Ms. Henry. Questions such as whether a firm has a formal program to help women lawyers re-enter the profession after maternity or family leave, and whether a firm keeps in touch with such lawyers during extended leaves.

Early feedback, Ms. Henry suggested, has already planted seeds of change.

"I can't tell you how many firms have asked me who else has this sort of program or that sort of program," she said. "That's how things get started."

Making the List

Several Manhattan firms questioned by the Law Journal had definite ideas as to how they made the list of 50 "best."



**Claudia L.
Hammerman**

• Two women attorneys advanced to partnership during the past three years at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison - Lynn B. Bayard and Liza Velazquez - rose from the ranks of flex-time associates.

"They didn't have to go on an extended partnership track. They weren't stigmatized for being flex-time associates," said Paul Weiss litigation partner Claudia L. Hammerman, head of firm's Women's Initiatives Committee. "That's a really powerful fact. It's meaningful and inspirational to the [women] associates."



Lorraine McGowen

• Likewise at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, an associate working part-time since 2004 was made partner earlier this year and is now on maternity leave.

"A supportive work environment can ease the burden and help women meet the challenge of balancing professional success and family life," said Orrick partner Lorraine McGowen, in charge of her firm's diversity policies.



Timothy B. Goodell



Deborah Johnson

intensified our the retention B. Goodell, head

Winthrop Shaw the firm's part-remedied a year in a survey that



Heidi Levine

• Over the past few years at White & Case, "We have efforts on developing and implementing programs that help with and advancement of our women lawyers," said partner Timothy of the firm's Women's Initiative Program.

• Deborah Johnson, chief human resources officer at Pillsbury Pittman, acknowledged "widespread confusion" in 2005 about time, flex-time and telecommuting policies. The confusion was ago, she said, when nearly half the firm's lawyers participated formalized and expanded such practices.

"We also responded to the expressed needs of new mothers by reaching out to them before their return to work," said Ms. Johnson, "to help determine how to make their re-entry as smooth as possible" by way of "phase-in" work schedules, private nursing rooms and child care options.

• Heidi Levine, a partner at DLA Piper US, is co-chair of her firm's Leadership Alliance for Women, which "strives to foster a culture where working mothers feel they can succeed in both their careers and family lives because they feel welcomed, engaged and valued."

She noted that fellow partner Amy W. Schulman, a rainmaker of significance at DLA Piper, is a mother of three children 18 years of age and younger.



Susan Webster

office of Holland Women's launched in for female practice.

• Cravath, Swaine & Moore established the first on-site child-care facility in New York in 1989. Currently, some 350 children are registered in the program. Under the Women's Initiative, formalized four years ago by Cravath partners Susan Webster and Julie A. North, the firm's women partners provide informal mentoring and networking programs throughout the year.



Judith M. Mercier

• Seven years Naftalis & - Charlotte



Jennifer L. Rochon

• Judith M. Mercier, a partner in the Orlando & Knight and national chair of the firm's Initiative, said the "Rising Stars" program 2003 provides a year-long leadership program attorneys beginning in their seventh year of

after opening its doors in 1968, Kramer, Levin, Frankel elected its first woman partner in 1975 Fischman.



Margaret Andrews Davenport

Since 2005, about 25 percent of associates promoted to partnership have been women. During the second of her two six-month maternity leaves, Jennifer L. Rochon, chair of the Women's Initiatives Committee, said, "I received a call from the firm at home telling me that I'd been elected to partnership - quite a nice call to receive as I juggled the phone and my two children."

• In 1995, Margaret Andrews Davenport became the first part-time associate promoted to the partnership at Debevoise & Plimpton, where she is now co-chair of the private equity group. Since then, five other part-time associates have made partner, as well as three associates who were part-time at earlier stages of their Debevoise careers.

"Our lawyers do not have to ask permission to work part-time for parenting reasons," said Ms. Davenport. About 10 percent of the firm's associates and counsel are part-time, she added.

Best 100?

Ms. Epstein foresees greater participation by firms around the country during next year's survey, which could lead to a doubled "best 100" list.

Meanwhile, she and her associates at Working Mother magazine are planning a special awards luncheon event for this year's "best 50" on Sept. 24 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel at Manhattan's Columbus Circle.

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