



Summer 2020

ON POINT

HONE YOUR CAREER
OWN YOUR CAREER

Welcome to *ON POINT*, a newsletter highlighting stories about gender diversity issues and women in the workplace.

LinkedIn Please join our B-Sharp LinkedIn group, which currently has more than 100 women in-house attorney members. We look forward to connecting and collaborating with you!
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12181303>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please contact **Megan Thomas** at mthomas@beneschlaw.com should you like to register for any of the below events.

Virtual General Counsel Roundtable Discussion

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
12:00–1:00 PM CST

Join us for a virtual roundtable discussion on best practices for addressing issues relating to gender and racial equity within your legal department and business in 2020.

Moderated by **Jennifer E. Nichols**, VP, General Counsel & Secretary of Harsch Investment Properties.

ACC Chicago Best Practices of General Counsel Program (Virtual)

Sponsored by Benesch
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020
5:30–6:30 PM CST

This one-hour program brought to you by the ACC and Benesch will feature **Dorothy Capers**, Executive Vice President and General Counsel of National Express LLC, and will be moderated by **Margo Wolf O'Donnell**, Partner and Co-Chair of Benesch's Labor & Employment Practice Group.

ACC Chicago will be applying for CLE credit in Illinois.

B-Sharp—Challenges in Real Estate Within the Era of COVID-19 (Virtual)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
11:00 AM–12:00 PM CST

Presented by:

Jennifer Desser, Partner, Real Estate & Environmental Practice Group
Dana Weiss, Partner, Real Estate & Environmental Practice Group

Kate Vlasek, Partner, Real Estate & Environmental Practice Group

Benesch will be applying for CLE credit in Illinois and Ohio. To register, click [HERE](#).

A Media Report Slammed Your Product—Should You Sue? Practical Steps to Effectively Combat Defamatory or Disparaging Media Reports (Virtual)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2020
10:00–11:00 AM CST

Join the women of B-Sharp for a virtual discussion about your options if your company is being harmed by lies about its business and steps to consider your legal options if it feels that it is being defamed in the news. We'll discuss what makes your case viable, and whether filing a lawsuit is in your company's best interest.

Presented by:

Nicole E. Wrigley, Vice Chair, Trial Practice Group
Kathryn Clausing, Associate, Litigation Practice Group
Benesch will be applying for CLE credit in Illinois and Ohio. To register, click [HERE](#).

RECENT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Contact **Megan Thomas** at mthomas@beneschlaw.com for materials or recordings (if available) from these events.

FIRM EVENTS | JUNE 25, 2020

B-Sharp Virtual Presentation on Diversity & Implicit Bias: Challenges and Strategies for Inclusion

On June 25, the women of B-Sharp hosted a virtual CLE presentation on Diversity & Implicit Bias. This one-hour webinar discussed diversity and implicit bias along with investigative insights related to healthcare and the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 60 individuals virtually attended the webinar, which was presented by Margo Wolf O'Donnell, Suzanne Alton de Eraso, and Sara Shanti of Benesch.

FIRM EVENTS | JUNE 15, 2020

B-Sharp Virtual General Counsel Roundtable Discussion

B-Sharp hosted a General Counsel Roundtable Discussion moderated by Christine Castellano, EVP, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of The Andersons. The roundtable was virtually attended by 20 other industry general counsels. Discussion centered on pertinent and timely topics influencing business in the era of COVID-19.

FIRM EVENTS | APRIL 22, 2020

B-Sharp with Current Business Trends and Legal Guidance in the Age of COVID-19

Sarah Hesse, Margo Wolf O'Donnell, and Sara Shanti, of Benesch's B-Sharp group, hosted a virtual webinar for 40+ attendees discussing critical trends and current guidance involving privacy issues, employment law, and corporate disclosures in the age of COVID-19.

FIRM EVENTS | MARCH 5, 2020

Corporate Governance 2020: Practices and Trends at Mid-Market Public and Private Companies

This B-Sharp at Breakfast segment featured Megan Mehalko, Sarah Hesse, and Samantha Barbara of Benesch discussing Diversity in the Boardroom, ESG Initiatives, Good Governance, and Company Performance.

Please click [HERE](#) to take a look at the report.

FIRM EVENTS | MARCH 5-6, 2020

Benesch Women's Retreat

Benesch held its first ever Women's Retreat March 5-6, 2020, where our women attorneys across all Benesch offices came together in Chicago for a shared experience and to connect with one another. Over 65 of our women attorneys attended and filled the retreat with a partnership panel, professional development sessions focused on emotional intelligence, leadership, and effective self-advocacy, and time to build and enhance personal and professional relationships with one another.

FIRM EVENTS | FEBRUARY 25, 2020

HR 2020: New Year, New Employment Law

Members of Benesch's Labor & Employment Practice Group hosted a two-hour event on February 25 at the Union League Club of Chicago. Margo Wolf O'Donnell, B-Sharp Founder and Co-Chair of the Labor & Employment Practice Group, along with fellow colleagues presented during this CLE covering timely topics, including Best Practices for an HR Audit, Employee Contracts, Drugs in the Workplace and 2020 Immigration Forecast. The event also hosted a session on EEOC trends presented by Diane Smason, Deputy Director of Chicago District Office, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

FIRM EVENTS | JANUARY 23, 2020

The Legalization of Cannabis and Implications Under the State Law

Benesch's B-Sharp hosted a breakfast on January 23, 2020, on The Legalization of Cannabis and Implications Under State Law. This high-level interactive discussion was led by Ali Jubelirer, General Counsel of Revolution Enterprises, and Benesch Partner Bryna Dahlin.

Summer 2020



Member Profile



NICOLE E. WRIGLEY

Partner and Vice Chair, Trial Practice Group

nwrigley@beneschlaw.com

1. What advice have you received that has helped advance your career?

Years ago during my young associates days, a mentor of mine—who is a brilliant trial lawyer—advised me to make sure that I had my own, distinctive voice. He told me that no matter what the occasion, no matter who was present, it was important to have a presence and an opinion. This advice really pushed me and it helped build my confidence. It has stuck with me, and I still replay that conversation in my mind.

2. How did you become a leader in the legal profession?

To start, I focused on honing my legal skills. I always wanted to be excellent. I was fortunate to work for a variety of different people at various points along my career with many different styles. So I learned different ways of doing things and put them all together to create my own style of litigating that worked for me. I also have really tried to learn by example from various role models of mine...and adversaries. As I encounter various lawyers in my practice, I always pay attention to what they do best and why. Second, you have to look for, take and sometimes make opportunities for yourself. Never back down from a challenge. Third, work and preparation is everything. Every amazing lawyer works very hard and is relentless. That's what it takes. Finally, you have to enjoy the practice of law.

Treat it like a career and not just a job. So many bright, talented people enter the law but not everyone stays. It takes dedication and having a vision for what you want to do 5 and 10 years in the future. I've always envisioned, and still do, a more successful, more powerful version of myself.

3. How can a group like B-Sharp help support the careers of women in-house attorneys?

It is common knowledge that lawyers, just like every other professional, have to network. This is true, as much as we all may hate it sometimes. The key is to find places with other lawyers who are interesting, have varied backgrounds, and with common interests. B-Sharp gives in-house counsel a place to do this. It is a place to network, market yourself and build your brand across a larger legal community, and find opportunities. The in-house counsel who come to the B-Sharp events come from various places. The women range from younger to much more senior attorneys, from different industries, and different areas of the law. Attorneys can market themselves as a leader in a subject matter area, find mentors (or find a mentee!), or learn best practices or alternative ways of doing things from others in similar positions at other companies. Benesch's B-Sharp group tries to make it as easy as possible for attorneys to do this.

OWN
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Member Profile



DANA B. WEISS

Partner, Real Estate & Environmental Practice Group
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1. What advice would you give for women just starting out in the legal profession?

I would recommend that new associates participate in a women in law group if your firm offers one and also join a women's industry group related to their practice. I have found that the programming offered by these internal firm and industry groups are invaluable, offering different platforms to hear about how other women have navigated a profession and industries that have been built, and mostly still run by, men. In addition, if you can find a similarly situated senior associate or partner as either an official or unofficial mentor, that is usually very helpful for navigating your career at your particular firm.

2. What special challenges, if any, do women face in the field of real estate? What do you like best about your practice?

The biggest challenge in real estate is that so many of the opportunities in this space arise outside of the office. In a male-dominated industry that is centered around activities to which women often do not receive the invite - think rounds of golf, tickets to college and professional sports game, cigar smoking rooms - it is very easy to miss out on business development opportunities and ultimately, a seat at the deal table, on the assumption that as a female I would not be interested in these things. Spoiler alert—I am a HUGE sports fan!

The thing I like best about my commercial real estate development and finance practice is that in addition to being able to assist clients with getting their projects off the ground (pun intended), there is additional reward in seeing a tangible "product" when all is said and done. I can drive through my hometown of Cleveland and countless other cities throughout the country, including Chicago, look at a building or development, and see the end result and its impact on the surrounding area.

3. Tell us how Benesch's programming has helped support women attorneys.

Benesch has a womens' initiative that puts together programming both internally with our female attorneys and externally with existing and prospective clients. The initiative also helped lead to the firms adoption of one of the most generous family leave policies in the legal industry. The firm also regularly sponsors participation in various development programs for female attorneys, such as a "Perfecting You Pitch" training for women that will I will be attending virtually this fall with at least a dozen of my Benesch colleagues to enhance our verbal presentation skills.

Recent Recognitions for the Women Attorneys at Benesch



Janet Feldkamp



Megan Mehalko



Margo Wolf O'Donnell



Kate Harmon



Nicole Wrigley



Tara Kamradt



Yelena Boxer



Leslie Drockton



Martha J. Sweterlitsch

Chambers Ranking 2020

Janet Feldkamp Healthcare

Megan Mehalko Corporate/M&A

Miscellaneous 2020 Achievements

Margo Wolf O'Donnell . . . Crain's Chicago Notable Women Executives over 50 List 2020

Kate Harmon Listed, Super Lawyers—Rising Stars, 2020 in area of Creditor Debtor Rights

Nicole Wrigley Recognized by Chicago Daily Law Bulletin & Chicago Lawyer as one of 50 Salute! Women in Law for 2020.

Megan Mehalko Distinguished Nominee Global M&A Network, 2020 Women U.S.A. Leaders & Top Dealmakers in M&A

2020 Best Lawyers Rankings

Tara Kamradt Health Care Law

Margo Wolf O'Donnell . . . Commercial Litigation

Yelena Boxer Commercial Litigation; Litigation – Labor and Employment

Leslie A. Drockton Corporate Law; Securities / Capital Markets Law

Megan L. Mehalko Corporate Law; Securities / Capital Markets Law; Securities Regulation

Janet K. Feldkamp Health Care Law

Martha J. Sweterlitsch . . . Health Care Law; Non-Profit / Charities Law

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Benesch COVID-19 Resource Center

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Benesch has created a Resource Center for clients to quickly find information they need. The COVID-19 situation is dynamic and fluid, requiring constant attention and appropriate measures for the health and safety of all. [Benesch's COVID-19 Task Force](#) is plugged in and reviewing the latest developments to ensure we are taking appropriate steps to help educate and respond to our clients during this time of uncertainty.

In our resource center, you will find some of the topics we have recently addressed in webinars and client bulletins. Benesch will continue to monitor COVID-19 as the situation develops, so please check back for additional information.

View the COVID-19 Resource Center [here](#).

Corporate Governance Trends and Best Practices Among Middle Market Public Companies

Please click [HERE](#) to take a look at the second annual Benesch Corporate Governance Report which focuses on trends and best practices at middle market public companies.

COVID-19 and the Importance of Corporate Board Diversity

By Margo Wolf O'Donnell

JULY 28, 2020

Research shows time and again that businesses with diverse boards of directors tend to be more profitable. In particular, it has been noted that including women and people of color as corporate directors positively impacts board decision-making and governance. *(To read the full article, click [HERE](#))*

Source: Chicago Law Bulletin

Coast Guard Names Its First Female Judge Advocate General and Chief Counsel

JULY 14, 2020

The Coast Guard promoted Rear Adm. Melissa Bert to judge advocate general and chief counsel. She is the service's first woman to hold that office. Officials say Bert was most recently the director of Governmental and Public Affairs for the Coast Guard, where she was responsible for external engagement with Congress, the media, and other intergovernmental entities. In her new role, Bert will lead a group of legal professionals who are responsible for the delivery of all legal services in support of the Coast Guard's missions, its units, and its people. She is the Coast Guard's 20th chief counsel and seventh uniformed judge advocate general.

Source: WTKR

Parity.org Launches 2020 Best Companies for Women to Advance List

JULY 14, 2020

Parity.org today revealed its Best Companies for Women to Advance List 2020. A total of 35 companies made the list, including Adobe, Best Buy, the Clorox Company, Nasdaq, PepsiCo, and Ralph Lauren Corporation. Companies on the 2020 list share several common best practices, including work-from-home or telecommute options (92%), flexible working hours (82%), and equal paid family leave for men and women (73%). Companies that made the list were also very likely to measure and report on gender parity to the executive team (95%) and/or board (68%). Among these companies, there was also a strong relationship between having gender parity on the board of directors and having a female CEO. Where more than 50% of board directors are composed of women, 67% also have a female CEO.

Source: Parity.org

**Event: Mobilize Women Week 2020:
A Virtual Experience**

JULY 14, 2020

To adapt to today's current challenges, Mobilize Women is a multiday experience designed as a space for authentic, courageous, and fresh conversations. The event runs online from Aug. 24 through Aug. 28.

Source: Ellevest Network

**Netflix Names Bozoma Saint John Chief
Marketing Officer**

JULY 13, 2020

Netflix appointed Bozoma Saint John as chief marketing officer, starting in August, adding a high-profile Black executive to senior management. Saint John, who has been vocal about inequality in corporate America, joins from entertainment and talent agency Endeavor, where she was the head of marketing since 2018.

Source: CNBC

**BMO Creates \$100K Grant Program for
Women-Owned Businesses**

JULY 8, 2020

As part of its longstanding commitment to helping the advancement of women, BMO Financial disclosed the details of its new grant program for women-owned businesses, in collaboration with Deloitte. BMO Celebrating Women pledged \$100,000 in grants to Canadian entrepreneurs, which will award 10 women-owned businesses with \$10,000 to put toward their business. GroYourBiz, Women Presidents' Organization (WPO), Women Get On Board, Women Business Enterprises Canada, Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, and Deloitte are all strategic partners.

Source: BMO

**RBC Commits to at Least 30% Visible Minorities in
Executive Roles, Other Initiatives**

JULY 6, 2020

RBC is raising its target for visible minorities in executive roles to 30% while also boosting support for young people of color and Black entrepreneurs, making \$100 million available in loans for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). CEO David McKay acknowledged systemic racism remains a blind spot in the bank's efforts to promote diversity, and pledged to do more. RBC is also making anti-racism and anti-bias training mandatory for all staff. The target for summer internships is to fill 40% of spaces with candidates who are BIPOC, up from 30%.

Source: The Globe and Mail (sub. req.)

**Catalyst Workplace Study Reveals Optimism
About Gender Equity During COVID-19**

JUNE 30, 2020

A Catalyst study reveals seven in 10 working people believe workplaces will accelerate gender equity in the wake of COVID-19. Furthermore, eight in 10 business leaders think the disruption caused by the pandemic presents an opportunity to create a more inclusive workplace for people of color. While survey respondents expressed optimism for the future, 41% of working people think their company is fully committed to, and already taking steps to create, an inclusive workplace in which employees can thrive during this time of remote working, physical building closures, and other changes as a result of the pandemic. Business leaders are more likely than employees to believe that COVID-19 provides companies with an opportunity to create more inclusive workplaces for women (75% vs. 60%). Business leaders are also more likely to believe that working remotely has facilitated a more inclusive environment (56% vs. 28%). There's also a division in perception of company action: Business leaders (56%) are more likely to believe their company is taking steps to enhance gender equity during this pandemic, as compared with employees (34%).

Source: Catalyst

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Parity.org Announces Strategic Executive Search Partnership With Mogul

JUNE 30, 2020

Parity.org, a not-for-profit that advocates for women's representation at the highest levels of business, has become an official partner with Mogul, the leading platform for advancing and cultivating diverse talent. Together, they aim to close the gender gap and reach parity in top companies worldwide. Through the partnership, both organizations will merge their strengths to tackle gender inequality at the leadership level. Mogul, who owns the largest network for directors, VPs, executives, and board-level women, will collaborate with Parity.org to support its partners with access to fully diversified searches across the entire Mogul network.

Source: Mogul

BMO Harris, 1871 Name Women in Fintech Innovation Contest Winners

JUNE 24, 2020

1871 and BMO Harris Bank's WMN•FINtech initiative has accepted five finalists to the program:

1. DelShan, Inc. by AtkCo: Finance, employee safety, and human resources partner based out of Chicago
2. Hope Trust: Working as a trustee, the firm provides financial planning, case management, and fiduciary services in Eatontown, NJ
3. Plinqit by HTMA: Based out of Ann Arbor, MI, a mobile-first platform that pays users for engaging with content and improves financial literacy for users
4. Pocketnest: Headquartered in Detroit, the start-up provides comprehensive financial planning to GenX and millennials through a white label of its software
5. The Wealth Factory: Based in Washington, D.C., the firm designs WealthyLife Financial Literacy education technology games, curriculum, and fintech products

Source: BMO

Google Introduces Accelerator Aimed at Growing Female-Led Start-Ups in Canada, U.S.

JUNE 19, 2020

Applications for Google's accelerator for women founders are underway, with the program rolling out over the next several months. Early-stage tech businesses led by women in Canada and the U.S. will receive mentorship, training, and residency, as well as international contacts. Google plans to accept 10 to 12 start-ups for the accelerator, with the first 10-week cohort beginning September 28. Successful applicants will join the Google for Startups Women Global Community, a group of more than 400 women from around the world that offers expertise, insights, and support to scale companies.

Source: Betakit

Scotiabank Women Initiative Launches Resilience-Focused Podcast Series

JUNE 12, 2020

Scotiabank's forum for women entrepreneurs includes insights to grow business, and the Go-To podcast features topic experts for owners to excel in their industries. The special edition added five episodes with topics including building resiliency, managing finances, and delivering value.

Source: Scotiabank

Tufts Health Plan Partners With Lawyers for Civil Rights to Support Minority- and Women-Owned Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19

MAY 20, 2020

Tufts Health Plan is collaborating with Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR), which provides free legal assistance, business support, and technical assistance to minority, immigrant, and women business owners, to provide support to minority and women-owned small businesses located in communities impacted by the pandemic. Eligible small businesses can apply for \$1,000 grants to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE), technology to allow employees to work safely remotely, and other health- and wellness-related support to help their reopening. Tufts Health Plan is providing funding for this initiative.

Source: Lawyers for Civil Rights

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Native American Women Entrepreneurs Offering 0% Loans for Female-Led Indigenous Businesses in New Mexico

MAY 13, 2020

In response to business disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, a group called Native Women Lead, from Albuquerque, NM, is offering up to \$100,000 in emergency loans through a local credit union to enterprises in the state led by Indigenous women. The funding, of up to \$5,000 for each business, carries a 0% interest rate and is an extension of a micro-lending initiative the group and the credit union have undertaken since 2014 to support female Native American business owners. Over the six years of the micro-lending program, about \$1 million was disbursed to 450 enterprises.

Source: Albuquerque Journal

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