

WOMEN, INFLUENCE & POWER IN LAW AWARDS

RECOGNIZING TRANSFORMATIVE LEGAL LEADERSHIP

With these profiles, we aim to shine a spotlight North American women in-house and law firm leaders who demonstrate extraordinary leadership and business acumen. These women are business strategists, complex problem-solvers, and of course, great lawyers. But what particularly makes these women stand out is their personal dedication to the promotion of diversity in the legal industry. The profiles have been edited for length and style.

■ law firm honorees

MADELEINE M. MCDONOUGH

● SHOOK, HARDY & BACON

Firm Chair, Partner
Since 2017



INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

WHAT WAS YOUR ROUTE TO THE TOP? Before and during law school, I worked as a clinical pharmacist, primarily in research hospitals, including the University of Kansas Medical Center. I was fortunate to find a firm that is known for representing clients in science, health and technology. I could easily combine my passion for pharmacology with my interest in the law. I have spent my legal career at Shook, where I previously chaired the Pharmaceutical & Medical Device Practice and co-chaired the Agribusiness & Food Safety and Life Science & Biotechnology Practice. I have served in various leadership roles throughout the years—including serving on Shook's pro bono, diversity and inclusion, and associates committees. I was a member of our executive committee for nearly 15 years, until my election as firm chair in 2017.

WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT? I am most concerned about always offering the highest quality legal services to clients, every time. And to do that, we must attract, include, promote, and advance diverse talent. Through my work with the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession, the Human Rights Campaign, and many other organizations, I am keenly aware that we still have a long way to go. We are trying to overcome historic and societal roadblocks that have kept creative and talented people on the sidelines. Our Scholars Institute has been a great success in identifying law students early and nurturing their success along the way. We focus on having candid conversation with clients and our colleagues to

set measurable goals and expectations for recruiting, sponsorship, opportunities, and succession planning so that we are always their first call.

WHAT IS THE BEST LEADERSHIP ADVICE YOU'VE GIVEN, OR RECEIVED, AND WHY DO YOU THINK IT WAS EFFECTIVE? Align your time with your goals. Plan long-term, mid-term, and short-term, and then make sure that each day furthers those objectives. Developing a shared strategic plan—and communicating about it frequently—sets a true north while encouraging individuals to explore different routes of getting there. Tailoring options for different mindsets and temperaments can work wonders. We like to try new things, check assumptions, and forge creative options for clients. At Shook, we've seen the results of this approach in deeper client service offerings and stronger client connections.

LOOKING BACK, WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN WHEN YOU STARTED OUT IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION? The importance of listening cannot be overstated. I always knew that relationships are central, but over the years, that has become more conscious and more intentional. I am prioritizing active listening, providing excellent tailored legal work, and communicating in a meaningful way. That attention to adding value, understanding clients' challenges and specific needs, and crafting practical approaches to solving problems makes all the difference.

MIKE MCGREGOR