

A new year will bring new leadership to a long-standing anchor of legal services in Kansas City.

Madeleine McDonough



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TITLE | Chair-elect, Shook, Hardy & Bacon

EDUCATION | J.D., University of Kansas School of Law; LLM, Global Health Law, Georgetown University Law Center.

Jan. 1 will mark the start of a new era at Shook, Hardy & Bacon, the firm with more lawyers in Kansas City than any other. That's the day when Madeleine McDonough officially starts her five-year term as the firm's chair, succeeding three-term chairman John Murphy. Some of her thoughts about how she came to this new role and what it will mean:

Q. Can you tell us a little about your background?

A. "I was born and raised in Kansas City, the last of eight children. I developed an interest in the law very early, in part because both of my parents went to law school in the 1940s. My mother was the only woman in her class. Neither practiced law, and instead, my dad went off to war and ultimately developed the field of economic forecasting for Southwestern Bell Telephone. My mother was from New York, and previously taught at St. Louis University. She returned to teaching when I was 4."

Q. You started your career in clinical pharmacy—how did that come about?

A. "I was always fascinated by pharmacology, chemistry, and physiology, and had considered medical school, but quickly realized that I simply did not have the stomach for dissecting animals or humans. I focused on pharmacy, and worked at Saint Luke's and KU Medical Center before law school. I loved being a pharmacist, and to this day, I think I get more pharmacy questions from friends and family than I do legal questions."

Q. How did you transition from that into law?

A. "I increasingly became fascinated by the public policies underlying the availability of pharmaceutical products and medical devices, incentives for true innovation, and the hope of meeting unmet medical needs. Intellectually, I found myself drawn as much to the legal and policy aspects of medicine as I did to the scientific and chemical qualities of pharmaceutical products. I realized that the law might allow me to learn more comprehensively about these fields and their multiple intersections across areas such as product liability, intellectual property rights, availability and access to medicines, and a wide array of related public policies."

Q. You've chaired practice groups at Shook—pharmaceutical, medical device, animal health, food, and other biotech/life sciences groups—that serve linchpins for the regional economy, but are also important nationally. How might that shape your tenure as chair?

A. "Shook has had a strong KC footprint for decades, but we also have long-established offices based in locations critical to the needs of our clients, who are increasingly multinational. Each of Shook's 12 offices (nationally and internationally) is strategically located to allow us to provide excellent legal services where needed—proximate to clients, hotbeds of litigation, and other important geographic client needs. We work together to bring the best legal services to our clients, no matter the location."

Q. What was the particular attraction of litigation, and what are your thoughts about stepping back from that kind of work to take on day-to-day administration of the firm?

A. "I've always practiced in regulatory, negotiation, and litigation, and I will continue to do so. Shook is known for its scientific, medical, and technological expertise for clients in those industries and sectors, and we encourage attorneys to develop a secondary and/or tertiary adjacent practice area to enhance their capabilities and offer greater context and perspective for clients."

Q. What do you see as the biggest growth opportunities for the firm in the coming years?

A. "Agribusiness and food safety, intellectual property, commercial litigation, and FDA-related litigation and regulation." **I**