

# KANSAS CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Newsmaker: Shook Hardy's McDonough pursues her passions: law, reading and The Boss

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Journal

Starting her career as a clinical pharmacist before heading to law school gave Madeleine McDonough a niche she had passion for that led her through the ranks at Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP until being named as chair in January 2017.

McDonough succeeded John Murphy, who served in the role for 15 years. The Kansas City native has spent her entire 28-year legal career at Shook Hardy, including 10 years leading the Agribusiness and Food Safety Practice and five years leading the Pharmaceutical & Medical Device Practice and the Life Sciences and Biotechnology Practice.

Shook Hardy is the area's largest law firm, with 274 local and 467 total attorneys at the end of 2017.

### **You grew up in Kansas City?**

I was born and raised in Kansas City, Mo., right in the actual city. My dad became an economic forecaster. He started economic forecasting as a department for Southwestern Bell in St. Louis, then they transferred him to Kansas City a few years before I was

Madeleine McDonough has been able to marry her passions for pharmacology and the law into a thriving career at Shook Hardy & Bacon.



born. My mom, after she had eight kids, went back to teaching English. I had her for an English teacher and so did many of my siblings.

### **Where were you in the birth order?**

I've got five sisters and two brothers. I'm the youngest. Now there are a gazillion grandchildren and great-grandchildren. So I come from a huge family, and most of them live around here. The nieces and nephews have

scattered a little bit, but the critical mass is right here in Kansas City.

### **What sparked your interest in law?**

My mom and dad met in the 1940s when they were both in law school. My mom was the only woman in her law school class at the time. They didn't finish law school. My dad went off to World War II and Korea. My mom taught college English at St. Louis University.

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I always think about Jung, who said people live the unlived lives of their parents, and maybe there is something there. I'm sure my parents had some sort of influence on me, but I was always interested in the law.

I practiced as a clinical pharmacist before I went to law school. I worked at Saint Luke's Hospital and KU Medical Center and lots of other places during pharmacy school and continued to do that during law school.

## Were you thinking about becoming a pharmacist, or were you always thinking about law?

I was always thinking about law. I was truly fascinated by pharmacology and still am. But I was lucky that I could combine that passion with law. I worked in our pharmaceutical and medical device area for really the whole time I've been at the firm and ended up chairing that group. We represent companies that make pharmaceutical products and medical devices that are FDA regulated. It worked out really well with my background.

## So how did you get involved in leadership at the firm?

I've had a lot of different leadership roles through the years. I was on the pro bono committee and still do a lot of pro bono work. I've been on our diversity committee for many years. I was on the associates committee, which is responsible for the professional development and evaluation of associates. I was on our

### ► CLOSER LOOK

## MADELEINE MCDONOUGH

**Company:** Chair, Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP

**Education:** Law degree, the University of Kansas; LLM in global health law from Georgetown University

**Family:** Wife, Cyd Slayton

**Hobbies:** Travel, art, music, film and reading

hiring committee. I've also been on our executive committee for about 13 years. Then I was elected chair in June 2017. Having all those roles really helped me.

## What is your typical day like?

I travel a lot. I live and work about half the time in Washington, D.C. We have a thriving office in D.C. and a lot of our clients have regulatory issues, so it's really important to stay in touch with the D.C. area. I've been doing that for about 12 years. But we have offices in Seattle, San Francisco, Orange County (Calif.), Denver, Chicago, Houston, Miami, Tampa, Philly, D.C. and London. I think it's important to try and get to all the other offices as much as possible.

## Are you the glue that keeps the firm tied together?

That's one part of my job, yes. But I honestly view my job as extremely, deeply client focused. I really try to understand what our clients need

and want, sometimes before they know they need it. One part of my job is to identify emerging legal trends and help clients plan for those coming events and navigate them, whether it's regulatory change or new legislation, public policy issues. So when an issue strikes, we can help them because we've got knowledgeable people already on the ground ready to help with whatever they're facing.

## Do you have any hobbies?

I travel a lot for work, and I try to find out what is going on in that city to have an experience while I'm there. I love art and going to exhibits in museums. I'm a big music buff as well. I like all kinds of music, but I'm a big Bruce Springsteen fan, and I just got to see him on Broadway a month ago. It was the single best performance I've ever seen. It was kind of a memoir and not a typical concert.

I also love to read. I love nonfiction and fiction. I love to read *The New Yorker*. I read on planes a lot. Reading is a great relaxation technique for me. So I try to read every day, even if it's just a little bit.

I also go to the Telluride Film Festival every year. It takes a lot of time to get to Telluride and back because there is no convenient airport, but the film festival is really fun. It's pretty small, so you get to meet the actors, directors and writers. There is no really big media presence there so they are very relaxed.