

Education: JD, University of Miami School of Law; LLM, University of London; BSBA, Georgetown University

Company Name: Latham & Watkins LLP

Industry: Law

Company CEO: Richard Trobman

Company Headquarters Location: N/A

Number of Employees: 5,400

Your Location (if different from above): Washington, DC

Words you live by: Always try to look for the silver lining even when you face a setback.

Who is your personal hero? My mum

What book are you reading? *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie

What was your first job: Sales associate at Harrods department store in London

Favorite charity: Legal Aid of DC

Interests: Baking, traveling and exploring new cuisines



Mentorship, Preparation, and Imagination Really Do Matter

As the daughter of Bangladeshi immigrants, growing up in small towns across the UK, I was often the only person of color at school. There were no other students, much less teachers or leaders, who looked like me. Fast forward thirty years and I am in a senior position at a major law firm in Washington, DC. As I reflect on how I got here, a few important ingredients stand out—mentorship, preparation, and imagination. They are small things really, but they mattered.

After graduating from Georgetown, where I studied business and Chinese, my first post-college job, in London, was in investment banking—a traditionally male-dominated profession. There were very few women at the bank, particularly at the more senior levels, and I was the only

person of color. One of the few women at the bank was a managing director, who made a point of ensuring that I had opportunities to interact directly with clients; her mentorship shaped my experience at the bank.

When I transitioned to a career in law, I again knew I stood out. As a summer associate, my mentor put me in front of clients, so that I could build trust and rapport. I became a part of the core team, and now, 15 years later, I am still working with many of those same clients. Another mentor reached out to me during my first year and asked me to work on an IPO with him. I really liked it, which opened the door for me to spend seven months in at my firm's Hong Kong office focused exclusively on that type of work.

I am immensely grateful for

the doors that were opened for me, and I try to pay that forward. I focus a lot on retaining great colleagues here at Latham. I make sure they know that that they have allies who will support and propel them. I help them imagine a place for themselves, just as I was able to imagine succeeding.

A number of years ago I worked on a bond deal with a recently arrived associate. Just as my mentor had supported me, I helped her build a relationship with that client. Years later, at her wedding, her mom pulled me aside and thanked me for that early support, which she felt was critical to her daughter's success. I had not imagined my actions had had such an impact, but it serves as a reminder that the little things—mentorship, preparation, and imagination—do matter.