

Education: JD, Georgetown Law School; BA, Harvard University

Company Name: Latham & Watkins LLP

Industry: Law

Company CEO: N/A

Company Headquarters Location: N/A

Number of Employees: 5000+

Your Location (if different from above): Los Angeles, California

Seize the Opportunity to Mentor

I often say that I grew up in a courtroom. My dad was a criminal defense lawyer, and having spent many hours watching him, I knew I wanted to be a litigator. What I did not know was what my path to that goal would look like and how important a part mentorship would play. The first year after law school, I clerked for a Black female judge in Santa Clara, who advised me that I could always be a prosecutor but I should try a big law firm. Though I had no idea what Biglaw was, if a judge tells you to do something, you say, “Yes, Your Honor,” and do it. Without her sage advice, and her taking the time to invest in me and my career path, I simply would not be a Biglaw partner today.

Setting goals has been essential to my professional drive. As a student athlete, once I reached a goal—whether it was playing varsity

in high school or playing for my college team—I would immediately set a new one. That has remained my approach in my practice. As a junior associate, I worked steadily toward my goal of making partner at my firm. Then, my path took another turn. As a sixth year associate, my mentor and sponsor invited me to follow him to Latham to build out a nascent entertainment, sports, and media practice. I leapt at the opportunity, knowing it might slow my rise to partner but trusting that the new practice would thrive.

When I did make partner, I began to view goal setting and mentorship in new ways. Yes, it felt amazing to reach another personal goal, however it was equally incredible to realize what my achievement meant to others. I received so many congratulations and heartfelt messages from colleagues throughout my firm,

and was struck by the number of notes sent by women associates of color. Though I had never met some of these women, they told me I had inspired them and now they saw that they too had a path to partnership. I was immediately humbled and understood that I needed to seize this opportunity to mentor and invest in others—like my judge did for me.

You cannot reach the top and then not pay it forward. Leadership requires finding the time to talk to people and give them advice. No matter how focused I may be on the details of a specific matter or litigation, I try to do my best to carve out time and invest in the next generation of leaders. It is thus my honor to serve as partner-adviser to my firm’s associate-led Black Lawyers Group, and I seek out other opportunities to offer insight whenever I can.