

Women Leaders in Tech Law

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October 24, 2023

Melanie Blunsch, a partner and co-chair of the Bay Area Litigation & Trial Department at Latham & Watkins, is being recognized as one of 30 Women Leaders in Tech Law as part of The Recorder's California Legal Awards.

Blunsch recently shared with The Recorder her accomplishments over the last year and advice for women starting out in tech.

What's your proudest professional achievement of the past year and why?

This year I had a trifecta of very meaningful and impactful victories in tech class actions. I'm most

proud that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed dismissal in a long-running case I've been leading for Apple. A sizable putative class alleged they had been harmed by Apple's swift actions to fix security vulnerabilities that rocked the computing industry and potentially affected all iPhone, iPad, iPod and AppleTV devices, and we were able to explain why Apple's actions were fully consistent with the law and protected consumers. But I was also able to help two other tech companies beat back novel attempts to expand liability under the California Information Privacy Act. For Otonomo, our motion to dismiss was granted with prejudice from the bench, and for Pindrop Security, plaintiffs agreed to drop all of their claims the night before the hearing on our motion to dismiss. All of these were very high-stakes matters involving novel claims, and it was incredibly gratifying to be able to close the book on these cases.

What's one piece of advice you'd give to a woman starting out in tech law?

Find out as much as you can about your client's business and its technology. Your ability to give

good legal advice depends on your understanding of what your client is doing and what it is trying to achieve. Some of that may come from reading up on it online (don't forget to check out its 10-K), but much will also come from asking questions and really listening to the in-house counsel, engineers, and other subject matter experts that you deal with on your matters.

What is a group or tool that has helped you grow in your career or contributes to the development of pipelines for women leaders in tech law?

ChIPS! ChIPs is a fantastic professional organization that advances and connects women in technology, law and policy, and its global summit is coming up in San Francisco in early November, so join it now, and I'll see you there!

What aspects of your work do you find meaningful?

Helping clients navigate cutting-edge legal challenges, especially when they impact the technology that is shaping our futures.