

The 2021 WIPL Awards: Law Firm Lifetime Achievement

Ora Fisher, Partner, former Global Vice Chair of the firm,
Latham & Watkins

What was your route to the top? I worked for four years at J.P. Morgan after college, fueling my interest in transactional law. I joined Latham's San Francisco office in 1991, a year after it launched, moving to the Silicon Valley office when it opened in 1997, and was elected partner in 2000. That same year I was selected to lead the firm's new Venture & Technology practice group. As I built my practice, I also served as Office Managing Partner in Silicon Valley from 2004-2009, overseeing tremendous growth as Latham seized market share from hometown Valley firms. That helped earn a spot on Latham's Executive Committee in 2009, and two years later I ran for election as firm Vice Chair, a full-time management role, which I held for ten highly successful years.

Looking back, what do you wish you had known when you started out in the legal profession? I wish I had earlier sought out fellow female lawyers at the firm and in the legal community who shared my passion for diversity and inclusion. As a young lawyer, I unwaveringly focused on doing excellent work and building a practice to earn my place at the table. Over time, I met more successful women lawyers (and supportive male colleagues) who sought tangible ways of improving diversity and inclusion at Latham and in the legal community. For example, since 2006 I've championed programs like Latham's Women Enriching Business (WEB), an ongoing series

of networking events and learning opportunities addressing the business challenges and opportunities of female lawyers and clients and in my Executive Committee role championed a series of initiatives and programs to bolster belonging.

What is the best leadership advice you've given or received, and why do you think it was effective?

I learned quickly from Latham leaders such as Bob Dell, Dave Rogers, and Pete Kerman that motivating colleagues and incentivizing collaboration is a key part of leadership. I also know that practicing law is a fabulous profession, while at the same time it can be an incredibly hard one. I've always encouraged colleagues to embrace and nurture a collaborative culture inside our firm, as well as carry that esprit de corps into activities out in the community. Being supportive of each other and true to oneself is essential, both to deliver our best work to our clients and develop our talents to the maximum. At the same time, I also tell colleagues to own – or take charge – of their careers, no matter their roles.



Ora Fisher, partner, with Latham & Watkins.

Courtesy photo