

Company: Latham & Watkins
Industry: Law
Company Headquarters: n/a
Number of employees: 5,000+
CEO: Richard Trobman, Chair and Managing Partner



Susan Y. Tull, Counsel

My credentials: JD magna cum laude, Temple University Beasley School of Law; BS, mechanical engineering & art history, Duke University

My work location: Washington, DC

Words I live by: “No one can make you inferior without your consent.”
 – Eleanor Roosevelt

My personal philosophy: I try to embody Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s “when there are nine” concept, and actively advocate for women in power in every field.

What I’m reading now: I like to work my way through the Booker Prize finalists, and right now I’m reading *The Promise* by Damon Galgut

My first Job: I worked as a video store clerk for a local chain.

My favorite charity: My local dog rescue

My interests: I enjoy cooking and bartending, as well as running trails.

My family: I grew up in Philadelphia and am still very close with my sister and parents, although we’ve all spread out—my sister is on the West Coast and my parents moved to Florida.

How to Increase Diversity in STEM Fields

Increase diversity at the top. When you place women and minorities into leadership positions and other positions of power, you pull more women and diverse talent in at all levels, and across industries related to STEM. We need diverse CEOs, heads of departments, and lead counsel. When we’re promoted into leadership, we show up-and-coming talent that their ideal career trajectory—whatever it is—is possible.

Leaders also have an obligation, starting with delegating responsibilities and providing opportunities, to junior talent. It’s critical to advocate for junior talent to establish their credentials and hone their skills, thereby preparing the next generation to excel when they get the chance to lead.

Barriers to Closing the Gender Gap in STEM

When you look at incoming talent, women begin as roughly half of each graduating class. But that percentage dwindles as you look up the corporate ladder across industries. It is fantastic that women have so many choices—including the opportunity to stay in or leave the workforce. But if we want them to stay, we need to do more to understand why women leave, and what more we can do to address the leadership gap. That period between women entering the workforce and ascending into leadership is one area we need to focus on.

Moving Women Forward in STEM

The industry can lean into not just acknowledging, but also accommodating the flexible time issues that many women face. Many of my friends are planning their families and having children, so they’re now facing of the decision of staying in the workforce or stepping away. Remote work proved that productivity doesn’t need to suffer when a person has more control over how her time is structured. Helping women advance, both personally and professionally, benefits everyone.

If women do decide to take a step back or take time off, companies should consider more ways to welcome them back to the workforce. Why not reach out to women three or five years after they take time off? These are incredibly skilled professionals, and not establishing that line of communication cuts off a major source of talent for companies.