

## ▶▶▶ DISTINGUISHED LEADERS

### JENNIFER GRADY

PARTNER, CROWELL & MORING

#### What are some of your proudest recent achievements?

**M**y proudest recent achievement is leading our team through the completion of a successful combination with Crowell & Moring. Like many businesses, Kibbe & Orbe faced a difficult and uncertain pandemic year. We had to work together to address challenge after challenge. I assembled a talented and supportive team to help me guide our partners through the difficulties we face in 2020 and the arduous process of selecting the right law firm combination partner. I'm grateful to so many for the assistance I received throughout this process and am excited to see our team fully integrated here and engaged in the process of growing our client relationships alongside our new partners.

#### Name a lawyer or mentor whose leadership inspired you.

Two lawyers have been invaluable mentors. Throughout his career, Jon Kibbe has been a strong promoter of women as leaders and taken an active interest in guiding and supporting multiple women lawyers through leadership positions at Richards Kibbe & Orbe. I'm grateful I was able to experience the many opportunities he provided for professional growth, with the added benefit of his experience. Lisa Opoku was my formal mentor at RK&O and is now a partner at Goldman Sachs. She's a tireless champion for women and people of color. Lisa has used her position and influence to promote diversity, and has been a fierce advocate and sponsor who has always inspired me and everyone she encounters. One of the most enduring memories in my career is interviewing Lisa as part of an RK&O-led women's networking event. She so inspired and captivated the audience with her honesty and enthusiasm that a group of attendees committed that night to create a women's committee at the Loan Syndications and Trading Association to promote the interests and careers of female attorneys in our industry. I'm so thankful to Jon and Lisa for their guidance and support over the course of my career, and humbled to recognize how many others each of them has supported.

#### How are the business and profession of law changing, and how should lawyers adapt for the future?

Corporate law and the complexity of a transactional practice, including regulatory concerns and other risks facing clients, are rapidly evolving. Lawyers and firms must be nimble and devoted to following clients to new spaces and expanding their ability to meet clients' changing legal needs.

Additionally, law firms are increasingly unafraid to pursue diversity as a primary business goal. Clients are keenly focused on improving diversity and expect the same from their service providers. The legal industry has redoubled its efforts to expand diversity and embrace inclusion. Diversity is now recognized not just as the right thing to do, but also as a method of improving a firm's ability to develop business.

Finally, in a post-pandemic world, there is a re-thinking of office space. Firms discovered people can be effective while working remotely, and such arrangements will now be tolerated more than they traditionally have been. High-end office space, historically a hallmark of an elite law firm, may increasingly be viewed as more of a hindrance to adaptability and business success.

#### What is the best advice for someone considering a career in law, or someone already in the profession who is seeking to make a greater impact?

Experience as much as you can. Don't be afraid to take risks or venture outside of your comfort zone. A career in the law offers a striking variety of opportunities and my only regret is not having taken the time to explore as many areas as I could. The greatest impact I've had on my own career involved forcing myself to do something of which I was deathly afraid—public speaking. I was convinced it was something I could not do, but once I got past the first (very difficult!) presentation, I developed my speaking skills with relative ease and shifted my focus to the many career benefits and networking opportunities public speaking can bring.

