



WOMEN IN THE LAW

2010

An ALM Product

A Special Section of the Connecticut Law Tribune

EDITOR'S NOTE:

'An Amazingly Diverse Group'

Where did all these people come from?

That was our thought as we compiled the 2010 edition of our Women in the Law: High Achiever's yearbook. We received about 50 percent more nominations than we did when we put out a similar publication in 2008.

Did we do a better job of spreading the word about our project? Are more women gaining higher footholds in big law firms? As the practice of law evolves — a process hastened by the recession — are we seeing a sea-change in thinking where people no longer believe they *must* work for big firms to be successful?

We believe the answer to all three questions is "yes."

In the following pages, you'll meet an amazingly diverse group of women professionals. Women who came to their jobs straight out of prestigious law schools, and those who came to the profession after careers in teaching, science and business. Women who deal in real estate and business litigation, of course, but also those who focus on government ethics and IP issues such as virtual worlds. Women whose life is clearly wrapped up in their jobs, and others who find time to serve as officers on national legal committees, regional economic councils and local school boards.

No one is suggesting that the playing field is a level one yet, or that women are on equal footing with males in the legal profession. But read closely, and it's easy to see the change that's taking place. Many entries mention how this professional was the first woman on a firm's management committee or the first to head a prestigious association for certain types of lawyers.

Some disclaimers: We're not even remotely suggesting these are *all* of the high-achieving women in Connecticut legal circles. Only women who were nominated by peers or firms (or themselves) are in this yearbook.

Also, while we tried to have an expansive definition of achievement, not everyone who was nominated made the cut. Some submissions simply provided too little biographical information. Others listed only routine job descriptions or indicated that the nominee had been in the profession for too short of time to have made her mark.

In short, we may well have left out a number of deserving candidates, but we made the best decisions we could, given the information provided to us.

With that said, we hope the women profiled feel a justified sense of accomplishment. And we hope all readers will find inspiration in success stories and grist for further conversations about gender issues in the legal profession.

Paul Sussman
Editor-in-Chief

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Connecticut Law Tribune (ISSN 0198 0289) is published weekly by Law Tribune Newspapers, 201 Ann Uccello Street, Hartford, CT, 06103. Periodicals postage paid at Hartford, CT. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Connecticut Law Tribune, c/o ALM Media Properties Customer Service, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271-1101. Basic Annual Subscription price is \$425. Single copies are \$10. Group rates may apply. Copyright 2010. ALM Media Properties, LLC. All rights reserved. Duplication without permission is prohibited.



JENNIFER M. CELENTANO

Firm: Law Offices of
Jennifer M. Celentano

Age: 39

Law School: Quin-
nippiac University

School of Law (2000)

College: Hartwick College (1993)

Grad School: Program for Women in
Government and Politics, McCormack
Institute of Public Policy, University of
Massachusetts, Boston (1995)

Job Title: Principal

Responsibilities: Practice focuses on
personal injury litigation, general civil
litigation, and representation of chil-
dren, parents, grandparents and foster
parents in child welfare proceedings
brought by the Department of Children
and Families.

Distinction in Practice: Regularly
appointed to represent parties in Chil-
dren's Regional Probate Court proceed-
ings involving transfers of guardianship,
transfers of custody, and the termination
of parental rights • Represented a group
of taxpayers in a class action against the
City of West Haven regarding collection
fees for back tax bills. Although the court
ultimately found that the city could add
the collection fee, the lawsuit effected
changes in the city's notice provisions on
taxpayers' bills • Was recently successful
in a five-day trial at the child protection
session in Middletown wherein the court
returned her clients three children after

being in state care for 96 days. • Vice chair-elect for the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Women's Caucus and member of CTLA Membership Committee and Connecticut Bar Association Professional Discipline Committee.

Public Service: Co-chair of Connecticut Trial Lawyers' Women's Caucus Domestic Violence Pro Bono Project. The Project seeks to bridge the gap for victims who file protective orders by representing the victim at the time of the show cause hearing. Attorney Celentano has represented several victims through this project and is responsible for assigning cases referred by victim advocates or other community agencies to volunteer attorneys.
