

Women in IP Leadership

Celebrating achievements and continuing
the empowerment of women



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We give special thanks to Traple Konarski Podrecki and Partners for their dedication and support in continuing the empowerment of women in IP by facilitating this opportunity.

This segment is dedicated to women working in the IP industry, providing a platform to share real accounts from rising women around the globe. In these interviews we will be discussing experiences, celebrating milestones and achievements, and putting forward ideas for advancing equality and diversity.

By providing a platform to share personal experiences we aim to continue the empowerment of women in the world of IP.

This segment is sponsored by Traple Konarski Podrecki and Partners, who, like *The Patent Lawyer*, are passionate to continue the empowerment of women. Anaquas' sponsorship enables us to remove the boundaries and offer this opportunity to all women in the sector. We give special thanks to Anaqua for supporting this project and creating the opportunity for women to share their experiences, allowing us to learn from each other, to take inspiration, and for continuing the liberation of women in IP.



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For Traple Konarski Podrecki and Partners promoting female entrepreneurship, developing their talents, supporting their professional aspirations and independence was a natural path to build our strenght and position on the market. The involvement of the five female Partners we have on board helped us bring diverse business experiences to a common idea. This is the most powerful example for younger female lawyers to prove that their skills are highly sought in law firms and contribute to achieving a lot in a professional career.

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Traple Konarski Podrecki and Partners

If you would like the opportunity to share your experiences with *Women in IP Leadership*, would like to nominate an individual to be involved, or would like to learn more about sponsorship, please contact our Editor.

Lauren Pick: CEO, The PCT Network

An interview: inspirations, experiences, and ideas for equality.



Lauren completed her BA in History and MS in Education and Administration. She joined the IP legal services field 10 years ago working in the field of foreign filing and prosecution. Six years ago, she joined The PCT Network as Managing Director and is now their CEO. In this role, it is her responsibility to shape, drive, and implement the company's vision. Under her leadership, The PCT Network has grown into the largest global foreign filing network and represents some of the most prestigious firms and Fortune 500 companies in the world. In addition to being married with five children, Lauren is an avid reader, a yogi, and an enthusiast of sports and music, among many other interests.

What inspired your career?

I would have to start with my grandparents who immigrated to the United States in the 1950s. They came to the US with no English, no money, and no significant education. They worked at any job that they could find saving every penny until they could eventually afford to start their own small businesses. They overcame every obstacle to support their families and to give them an education so that they could build a better life for themselves. They fulfilled the American Dream, working hard every day.

Unfortunately, my paternal grandfather passed away when my father was 19. My father had hoped to attend medical school, but because of the cost, and the urgent need to get a job and support his remaining family, he had to pivot. He worked during the day and attended City College, also known as 'the poor man's Harvard', at night. He became an electrical engineer and he and my mother were working on building up their careers when the recession hit in the late 1980's. My father was laid off and we were hit quite hard.

My mother became the primary breadwinner of the family and my father, using his background, decided to establish a construction company. It took many years for that to gain traction and during that time I watched both of my parents working nonstop to make ends meet. During that time, I never once heard a complaint from either of them. They managed their work, their

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household, and their children - for sure with some stress, but primarily with a great deal of grace.

They also raised us with very high expectations and wanted us to shoot for the stars. I am one of three girls, I have two sisters. My parents both grew up in pretty patriarchal homes which I suppose was pretty common back then even for non-immigrant families. At any rate, my parents and even my grandparents, by default, became feminists. They wanted the best for us and they taught us that if we worked hard nothing was beyond our reach. The feeling of empowerment that my parents and grandparents gave to us was definitely a huge inspiration.

Aside from that and despite their own struggles and the ups and downs of that period, my parents were also constantly concerned about people whose position in life was less fortunate than their own. They looked beyond themselves and gave of their time and resources to help impact other people's lives for the better, and honestly they still do - they're really amazing, kind people.

So my sisters and I grew up with outstanding role models who gave us a desire to be the best we could be educationally, professionally, and morally. That really inspired every aspect of my life including my career. The times in my life when I feel the greatest satisfaction are when I've been productive, either learning something new for myself that will help me to be a better person or having done something that will have a positive impact for others.

How have you found the pathway to your current position? And can you offer advice from your experience?

Throughout college I volunteered at my former high school, and I discovered that I had a talent and passion for teaching. I loved being able to make a difference in the lives of young people, imparting positive values and self-confidence, and I was debating at the time whether I should go for a Law Degree or a Master's in Education and Administration.

I decided that, because of the close age gap, I related well to the students, as they did to me, and that I could have the greatest impact on the world by teaching. I decided that I would give teaching a five-to-ten-year window before moving on to the legal sector, where I felt a late entry could still work.

When I left teaching, I entered the legal services field and started by working as an Account Executive for a company in the IP foreign filing and prosecution space. I found that I was very attracted to this world built on innovation. It was an entire industry based on bringing big ideas into fruition. It really fit into my idealistic outlook

so I found it was a natural fit. As the years progressed, I found that I also became passionate about the relationships I was developing both internally within my company and externally with the colleagues I was meeting throughout the IP world.

I wanted to be able to improve the process for my clients and be able to provide the best services. I wanted to build a system that would take as many of the nuanced considerations of corporations and outside counsel into account in order to do so. My teaching bug still persisted and that also made me want to coach others in the industry and help them achieve success. Those two factors combined led me to a little bit of innovation of my own and created the pathway for me to be hired by The PCT Network, first as the Managing Director and then as CEO.

I have three 'nuggets' of advice that I think are worth sharing. The first is to find your passion and use it for good. I feel so fulfilled in my job and I really wish that for everyone. The second is to muster an unrelenting drive for excellence. Keep that standard for yourself and you will excel at whatever you do. The third is interesting because, although I've talked a lot about teaching and coaching, I see myself foremost as a learner. I have soaked up and internalized an inordinate amount of wisdom from my own coaches, colleagues, direct reports, and clients. There's really an infinite amount to be learned all the time and the best advice out there is to always be open to learning more and to self-improvement.

What challenges have you faced? And how have you overcome them?

I think we would need a few hours to cover the challenges - there's never a shortage!

I would say that work-life balance has definitely been a huge one - The PCT Network has grown very rapidly over the last six years. I have five spectacular children and I want to be there for them in addition to building my career which is also very important to me. I can't say that I've completely overcome these challenges - it's rare that I don't feel torn. I think that is a struggle - I'm not going to say that is unique to women, but that a lot of women feel. On any given day there's highs and lows as we all balance a huge amount.

That being said, having a completely supportive husband has definitely alleviated a lot of the stress for me and building up our management and executive team within the company has taken a lot of the load off of me compared to the earlier years. There's a lot more work to do but I also now have greater bandwidth to delegate to other people. So family and workplace support have definitely helped a lot.

The other major challenge that I have had is

growing into my role. When you're the CEO, at the end of the day, the buck stops with you. This position has required, on many occasions, that I take a hard look at myself, come to some difficult realizations and make some real adjustments. I'm not the same person I was six years ago. It's been a massive challenge but while difficult, it's also been incredibly rewarding.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in your career so far?

Without a doubt it would have to be surrounding myself with the incredible people who've joined me in building The PCT Network from the ground up into what it is today. It takes a village, these things don't happen on their own and it's never just one person - we really have an amazing team.

What are your future career aspirations? And how will you work to achieve them?

I hope I can continue to help The PCT Network achieve its vision of creating industry standards that increase quality and efficiency all over the world. There is still a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done in terms of creating international standards and we see ourselves as very well positioned to take a leadership role in making that happen.

I hope that I can inspire and coach other professionals in the IP world - and that I can continue to be inspired by all of the amazing leaders and innovators in our space. I am mainly just interested in doing work that adds net value to the world - that's what makes me feel good.

What changes would you like to see in the IP industry regarding equality and diversity in the next five years?

I think that there is still a lot of room for improvement but that's because our industry is so global and cross-cultural, we are better off than most and we have a good leg to stand on.

For example, when we have industry conferences and networking events, everyone loves the fact that they are this massive cultural melting pot bringing together professionals from every race, culture, religion, and sex. It's such a huge opportunity to be enriched and to see things from a different perspective, which is, of course, exactly what firms and companies stand to gain by working on a more diverse and equal workplace. I think that in the industry right now there is a huge amount of awareness and desire to improve. I hope that people grab these opportunities, share their ideas and work together to make our industry even better. I really feel like we're moving in the right direction.

How do you think the empowerment of women can be continued and expanded in

the IP sector?

From the time that I started in this industry I've seen major changes and improvements. I remember going to IP conferences years ago and there would only be a handful of women. It's definitely not the same now. I see more women in the IP space in general, more women receiving recognition and being promoted to leadership roles within firms and companies and I think that's fantastic.

In truth, I think that in light of the way the world has changed due to COVID-19, we are in for more rapid change in the right direction in the very near future. Working from home and having flexible hours has pretty much become the new normal and that opens doors. The pandemic has showed how adaptable we are, that many people can do just as well if not better while working flexibly and remotely. I've spoken with so many firms and corporations who have said that after the initial trauma at the beginning of COVID, they were amazed at how their teams rebounded and by the resilience that was shown during this time. I think it really opened people's eyes to what's possible and that can only benefit women in the IP space and continue to empower them to take on broader roles.

Obviously I'm a huge proponent for having women in prominent roles within the IP sphere (and everywhere else) and this has been a part of The PCT Network culture from day one. We've always offered a great deal of flexibility in order to encourage women who need a greater level of work/life balance to join our team. It's nice to see that this is beginning to become common practice for many other companies and firms and I hope the trend continues. We would love for more amazing women to apply for roles at our company!

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Wanda French-Brown: Partner, Loeb & Loeb

An interview: inspirations, experiences, and ideas for equality.

Wanda is an accomplished litigator, Partner at Loeb & Loeb, and has represented clients in patent infringement matters in federal courts, the U.S. International Trade Commission, and Patent Trial and Appeal Board. With a decade of experience working as a registered pharmacist in the health care and pharmaceutical fields, Wanda is well-

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versed in Food and Drug Administration guidelines created by the Hatch-Waxman and Biologics Price Competition and Innovation acts, which are crucial to the entry of generic and biosimilar pharmaceutical products. Wanda counsels pharmaceutical clients about the scope and coverage of patents, new drug product exclusivity, and litigation strategies related to Paragraph IV certifications filed under the Hatch-Waxman Act.

What inspired your career?

Law is a second career for me. I took a non-traditional path since I did not go straight to law school immediately upon obtaining an undergraduate degree. I worked as a registered pharmacist practicing in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries for over 10 years before practicing law. While in pharmacy school, I studied the Food and Drug Administration's regulations related to new and abbreviated new drug applications, and the Hatch-Waxman Act; and it was then that I was hit with the “patent law bug.” As a pharmacist, I continued to focus my Pharmacy Continued Education study on Hatch-Waxman, pharmaceutical law and innovation and their interplay with FDA regulations.

Even though I was a successful pharmacist, I still had aspirations to be an attorney working on Hatch-Waxman patent litigation matters and representing innovative drug companies. I went to law school while working nights as a Pharmacist. While in law school, my interest in patent law expanded into the biotechnology, medical device, and telecommunication industries. As a former collegiate athlete, I was naturally attracted to the adversarial nature of litigation as well as the team mentality involved in strategizing with clients. When I was a 1L summer associate I worked on a trade secrets and patent litigation matters and loved it; at that point, I knew that I made the right decision to switch careers.

How have you found the pathway to your current position? And can you offer advice from your experience?

The path from law firm associate to partner has

been rewarding; however, the path was not without obstacles and adversity. The best rewards resulted from taking on legal matters and issues that got me out of my comfort zone. Some advice I can offer from my experience is that you should rise to the challenges that life presents you. You can't develop genuine character and ability by sidestepping adversity and struggle. No matter what the problem is, the way it is interpreted can have a positive or negative effect on one's career. By adopting a positive interpretation, one can make one's problems a source of nourishment for personal growth. The following quote by Daisaku Ikeda has resonated with me throughout my career, which has helped me become more resilient:

"When your determination changes, everything will begin to move in the direction you desire. The moment you resolve to be victorious, every nerve and fibre in your being will immediately orient itself toward your success. On the other hand, if you think, 'This is never going to work out,' then at that instant every cell in your being will be deflated and give up the fight. Then everything really will move in the direction of failure." Daisaku Ikeda

What challenges have you faced? And how have you overcome them?

When tensions are high and businesses hang in the balance, sometimes it's easy to let the stress and pressure pierce your armor. Over time, I've become very adept at the art of negotiation and learned to be diplomatic. It's been a long road. Learning to compromise and to navigate politics is not something that is taught in law school.

In addition, as a diverse attorney, I faced discrimination (both explicit and implicit bias) that has had an adverse impact on my career. But I did not let situations of discrimination discourage me. I continued to believe in my capabilities and worked even harder knowing that I can be successful despite any discriminatory action.

There is no such thing as a life without trials and tribulations. My advice is simply this: never give up.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in your career so far?

There have been a number of milestones and great achievements in my career, such as successful trial and appellate wins for clients. However, I do not overlook the "small daily" achievements, which are equally as important. Much of my success has resulted from having a deep understanding of my client's business goals which has allowed me to bring the most efficient and effective results to the table. I know that I have done my job well when the



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client is happy with the results.

Clients hire me, as outside supplicated counsel, to take on the hard issues where the solutions are not so "straight-forward" or readily apparent. It is rewarding to come up with creative and analytical litigation strategies that best fit my clients' objectives. My work ultimately resolves around reaching my clients' goals, which in-of-itself is a great achievement.

What are your future career aspirations? And how will you work to achieve them?

I will continue to look for ways to get out of my comfort zone. In other words, if I am too comfortable then I am not growing. I constantly ask myself, "what is it that I should be doing now, at this very moment" to accomplish what needs to get done either for a client, win a case, resolve issues, or achieve personal goals.

What changes would you like to see in the IP industry regarding equality and diversity in the next five years?

I believe that any law firm or corporate organization that is willing to embrace change will thrive. It all starts from a leader who is willing to change themselves. The changes that I would hope to experience within the IP industry

is the intentional and constituted efforts to address the need for, and make solid gains toward, ensuring more equity and inclusion for diverse attorneys. I would like to see the industry embrace, on a foundational level, not only diversity but also inclusion and equity as key factors in growing and expanding the IP industry. To embrace inclusion and equity for diverse IP attorneys will ensure that the industry continues to grow and develop across the board for everyone.

A commitment to diversity and inclusions is a commitment to support and explore new ideas and cultivate skill sets and experiences to better meet the needs of an ever-changing industry. I believe the differences between people need not act as barriers that wound, harm, and drive us apart, rather, these very differences among cultures and race should be valued as manifestations of the richness of our shared creativity.

In order to have significant and continued movement towards a more inclusive IP industry for diverse attorneys, particularly attorneys of color, there needs to be more effort towards increasing equity (and inclusion) for diverse IP attorneys. Clients that hire outside counsel should not simply look at diversity numbers but insist that diverse attorneys take an active role in developing the client relationship or take a leadership role in a client matter, and receive some type of equity or origination credit for that client relationship / case.

Efforts to increase equality and diversity in the IP industry is not new. There have been some gains within the industry in terms of diversity. However, efforts focused on inclusion and increasing equity for diverse IP attorneys continue to fall short. In other words, some companies and law firms are simply hiring diverse IP attorneys, particularly attorneys of color, for the sake of increasing their diversity statistics but have no plans, and, indeed, fail to have genuine support or inclusion for the diverse attorneys that they hire.

How do you think the empowerment of women can be continued and expanded in the IP sector?

As we encourage young girls and women in STEM, we should also be educating them about intellectual property law, which is interrelated to STEM. Basic intellectual property law, in general, should be incorporated into STEM education.

I believe that there are three components critical to continuing and expanding the empowerment and influence of women within the IP sector: recruitment, opportunity, and recognition. In terms of recruiting, there should be targeted recruitment and mentoring of

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women entering STEM and the IP sector.

Opportunities then need to be provided for women to access positions of decision making and leadership. In terms of recognition, there needs to be a concerted effort towards developing an industry-wide and systematic shift that not only recognizes the work of women in IP, but values it as a benefit to the IP sector.

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