




Women in Innovation

Uniting, recognising and celebrating women in intellectual property from around the world.



phillips ormonde fitzpatrick
intellectual property





**Women inventors
were represented
in high shares of
PCT applications
relating to
biotechnology and
pharmaceuticals,
at 58.4% and
56.4% respectively.**

– WIPO (2017),
PCT Yearly Review 2017:
The International Patent
System, WIPO, Geneva

Introduction

A word from POF's Managing Partner **Ross McFarlane**.

Important contributions made by women around the globe are driving change in the world of intellectual property. Intelligent, inventive and savvy female innovators are making a tangible difference to our everyday lives.

More than ever before, women are leading the way to drive change to shape our common future. Increased gender diversity is improving our ability to support new and innovative ways of thinking, broadening our personal and collective horizons, developing effective solutions and improving shared outcomes.

While there has been significant progress made, there is still a lot more to be done. WIPO's latest data shows that only 30.5% of the international patent applications filed included at least one female inventor. While it is encouraging that the number of PCT applications with at least one female inventor has nearly doubled since 2007, gender parity is yet to be achieved.

Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick has created this booklet to bring together and celebrate the brilliance, creativeness, passion and courage of women who are powering change in intellectual property.

We are proud to showcase women in intellectual property from around the world, highlighting their experiences, inspirations and motivations through a collection of short interviews.

By sharing these stories, we hope to encourage and inspire the next generation of women.

Ross McFarlane

Managing Partner
Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick



**The total number of
PCT applications with
women inventors
almost tripled between
2002 (24,184) and
2016 (70,857).**

**-WIPO (2017), PCT Yearly Review
2017: The International Patent
System, WIPO, Geneva**



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What is the most important advice you have ever been given?

When I got into rock climbing a few years ago, I became aware of a female climber named Hazel Findlay who has been called “the best female mountaineer in Britain”. At the age of 23, Hazel free climbed El Capitan – a cliff in Yosemite National Park by a route no other woman had ever free climbed before. During an interview for Reel Rock (an annual rock climbing film tour), Hazel discussed that whilst we (women) may not be as physically strong as men, there’s no reason why we can’t be just as mentally strong. I draw a lot of inspiration from this even outside of climbing.

Of course, rock climbing is not the only area where a strong mind and quality of thinking is crucial to achieving the next goal. In our professional careers, our beliefs, focus, emotions and confidence can form the foundation from which we will either succeed or fail.

Having a positive mind set and challenging our fears by pushing ourselves outside our comfort zone to reach for those things that may look impossible will help redefine the boundaries of what is possible.

What are your hopes for the IP industry as it progresses into the future?

I would like to see the IP system help drive innovation in areas where innovation is needed the most - to help solve some of the big problems that we face today, like climate change and plastic pollution. Everyone knows the Spider Man quote – “with great power comes great responsibility”. We have the capability to drive change and reduce our impact on the environment, we therefore have a moral responsibility to take action and build a better future for the next generation. By providing a commercial incentive for businesses to innovate, I hope the IP industry will promote innovation in these key areas so that we can be part of the solution.

How have women helped shape the IP industry?

Women play an integral role at Barker Brettell – indeed we have a 70% female partnership so we’ve been leading the field in this sense for many years. We recruit and promote the right people at the right time, based on skills and expertise, whether they are female, male, gender fluid or anything else. Good attorneys have of course shaped the IP industry - we can add enormous value by ensuring our clients’ IP assets are protected which can help their businesses to succeed.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

Women need to believe in themselves – and believe in each other. Strong women empower other women and have the belief that each of us as individuals can make a difference. Within our own business networks and organisations, we must promote and support those with the required aptitude to flourish. “Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects.” - Dalai Lama.

Women inventors account for just 30.5 percent of all international applications filed under WIPO’s Patent Cooperation Treaty.

-WIPO (2017), PCT Yearly Review 2017: The International Patent System, WIPO, Geneva



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What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as a woman in the IP industry, and how did you overcome it?

Interestingly, I've had more challenges as a scientist in the late 1990s than in my IP roles. I was not allowed to work part-time in research, so after my maternity leave I left the lab (times have since changed at that place!). I did meet with some poor behaviour from a male scientist who found it rather challenging to have a female boss. But overall, my biggest challenge in my whole career (not just being in IP) has been juggling my role as a wife, a mother and keeping an active career going. My recent work place has always been very supportive of work life balance, but my constant challenge, or battle with myself, is the sense that I have not reached my full potential, or I've not fought hard enough for leadership opportunities, because my children have taken priority. I like raising them, I like cooking them good food, I like helping them with their challenges and I like travelling abroad with my husband when work takes him away. I've got this sense that I've not been able to 'do it all' which is what my school principle, who was a staunch feminist, had told us girls at 17 years' old - the work is your oyster. Well, it is if you have a husband at home or no children, or you like nannies.

I haven't got an answer for this impasse or dilemma women face. My husband's career is fantastic, my children are on career paths that are amazing and I have a very rewarding career that could've been amazing and fantastic on top of rewarding, and maybe still will be...watch this space.

What is most rewarding about being a woman in the IP industry?

I think on average women are more engaging and sociable than men, and what I find most rewarding from that point of view, is creating working relationships with some great people, in social engagements, or building up a rapport with like-minded people.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

Give them work opportunities that will help them grow and flourish. Challenge them all the time. Give generous parental leave to men so that women can return to the workforce when they want to, knowing that a parent is at home helping to raise the children.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

Promote gender diversity in the workplace, and in particular, in leadership roles. Nominate worthy female candidates in committee roles rather than leave it to chance (women often don't promote or back themselves enough). Provide mentorships (or shadowing) with male leaders to encourage self-confidence and raise awareness of that woman's ability.





**The Honourable.
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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

I didn't choose it - it found me. I had completed a PhD in Biochemistry (it would now be called Cell Biology) and Law. However, we were not then allowed to advertise at the Bar, so no one knew. After I had been at the Bar for a number of years, practising in equity and commercial law, a small article appeared on women at the Bar and a patent attorney saw it and rang me. The rest just followed. I will always be grateful to him.

What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

The best piece of advice was from my father when I was trying to decide whether to go on the Bench: Make the decision and, when you make it, it is absolutely up to you to make it the right one.

What was the most exciting innovation you got to play a role in protecting?

At the time, it would have been rEPO. It was the first molecular biology case in Australia and cutting edge research, with a patent that was a textbook on the subject as it then stood.



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How have women helped shape the IP industry?

I think that women have helped shape the IP industry in the main way women have helped other industries; by putting into the mix a diversity of approaches that are critical to help solve complex problems. In the IP industry particularly, I think that women have been instrumental in creating IP roles outside of the traditional firm role, which has led to IP knowledge being more widely disseminated into SMEs and universities.

What is most rewarding about being a woman in the IP industry?

I have always been an advocate for girls and women in STEM, and it pleases me that the IP industry provides another less-traditional career path for STEM enthusiasts.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

Communicate to them that there are many other paths and models of success other than the law firm-partnership model.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

Encourage them to dream big, and that they shouldn't be afraid to "fake it 'til you make it" once in a while; most leaders do that and I think that it is a key source of confidence.

**POF has been a sponsor
of the Royal Australian
Chemical Institute (RACI)'s
'Women in Chemistry'
group since 2013.**



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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

In my final year of engineering, I was fortunate to participate in an engineering competition which led to some publicity and interest from industry. I had always been interested in patents and several companies enquired about whether I had applied for one. At that time, I had no idea that the patent attorney profession existed. After some time working as a biomedical engineer in the hospital environment, I started looking for a new challenge and discovered an advertisement for a trainee patent attorney at POF. This role has changed considerably over the years and provided the technical, legal and commercial challenges I was looking for - and nearly 18 years in the industry later, I have not looked back.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

I don't consider the challenges of attracting and retaining women in leadership to be specific to IP. However, there are some aspects of the IP profession that could make it more attractive to female leaders. The often autonomous nature of our work genuinely lends itself to flexible work practices both in time and location. However, as in most industries, female IP professionals remain the key family carer, such that part-time attorney positions are held almost exclusively by women. If more of our male counterparts felt empowered to seek better home-work balance by participating in the profession on a part time basis, perhaps this would open up more opportunities for women to advance into leadership roles.

How much has the IP industry changed since you first joined?

It has changed quite a bit – when I started almost 20 years ago there were a few big firms and the number of women (especially in leadership roles) was small. Now we have different types of company structures (sole practitioners, incorporated firms) and a greater number of women in the profession, but the number in leadership roles is still small.

How have women helped shape the IP industry?

I think over the last 20 years the increasing number of women in IP has helped to break the old mentality of 'full-time or nothing', and now there is some accommodation of flexible work hours (although there is still progress to be made).

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

I believe greatly in mentorship – it has helped me in my career and we (both men and women) should give back to the profession by doing this.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

A change in culture – as there is really no reason why women cannot do these roles at some stage of their career.





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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

The prospect of working with incredibly brilliant, creative and passionate inventors, and the opportunity to learn about completely new and different technologies every day!

What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

Never be afraid to ask the stupid questions. I can't count the number of times I've uncovered an important detail or feature of an invention we were seeking to patent by asking the inventor something that seemed like a 'stupid' question at the time.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

By supporting each other. Women don't generally self-promote or seek recognition, which means it can often fall on others in the organization to bring their success to the attention of their peers and nominate them for positions of leadership.

What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

Like many patent attorneys I imagine, I chose this career path because I loved learning about science but was also interested in working in the legal profession. This career provided me with the perfect opportunity to do both. I heard about the patent profession in a chance conversation with a family friend at the age of 19. Before then, I had no idea patent attorneys existed!

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as a woman in the IP industry, and how did you overcome it?

I co-founded Secerna LLP, a UK-based patent attorney firm in 2011. Stepping out of an established patent attorney partnership to start a brand new firm was the biggest challenge I have faced so far working in the IP industry. The development of a team of exceptional people to work with at Secerna LLP has been undeniably instrumental in overcoming this challenge, as was a personal commitment to continuously develop and maintain relationships with innovative companies that are great clients to work with. Together they have contributed enormously to the growth of a firm that is very exciting to be a part of.

Many respondents stated that to accelerate women in IP into leadership roles we need to promote women in the workplace, support each other and believe in ourselves.





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How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

Mentors and good role models. Believe in gender equality and walk the walk, don't just talk the talk.

What do you love most about your role in IP?

I love seeing and hearing about new ideas and talking about the potential that these ideas have for my clients. Plus, you meet some very interesting people that challenge you and inspire you. It's an area of law that is not depressing compared to some areas of law, such as criminal law and family law. I also like the variety of subject matters ranging from complicated biotechnology and chemistry, to simple and innovative devices that at first glance appear obvious but are actually really clever.

What do you believe are the greatest attributes of a successful leader?

Inspiring others to follow is not a skill that everyone has. Understanding and knowing your own strengths and weaknesses and being able to empower and motivate others to follow is a great attribute of a good leader. Having empathy for others and engaging them is also important in developing a following for which a good leader can lead. There are many other attributes that successful leaders have, such as having great communication skills, being able to listen, having integrity, passion, and of course, they must lead by example.

How much has the IP industry changed since you first joined?

The IP industry was very different when I first joined in 1987 – the technological revolution had yet to happen and we were still using fax, telex and typewriters! There were no women in senior positions in my firm, although a significant number in the junior ranks of trainees, both in my firm and the UK profession more widely, so change was afoot. I was very proud to become the first female partner at Dehns, and am even more proud to note that out of 31 Dehns partners today, 12 (about 40%) are women. Although there is still work to be done, it is encouraging to see the progression since I first joined the industry. The increasing number of women in leadership roles will help to normalise the presence of females in the industry and inspire young women to consider a career in IP.

For the second consecutive year, more than half of all PCT applications filed by the academic sector listed one or more women inventors.

-WIPO (2017), PCT Yearly Review 2017: The International Patent System, WIPO, Geneva



Charlotte Crowhurst

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What was the most exciting innovation you got to play a role in protecting?

As a chemist, I tend to see inventions a long time before they reach market and I rarely know whether a patent I have work on actually protects a product that is marketed. So it is unusual to see a product that is being used or sold and say "I helped protect that". However, I work with a small antimicrobials company that develops hand sanitisers and surface cleaning products, and when they licensed one of their hand sanitising products to a retail pharmacy chain and the product was available to buy on the high street, that was quite exciting. All my friends and relatives with small children when the product was first launched got a bottle of my client's product for Christmas. I have used many bottles of the product in the subsequent years to keep my own children's hands clean and germ free. Perhaps not the most eye-catching of inventions, but certainly very useful.

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as a woman in the IP industry, and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge is getting your first job in IP. In the UK, most patent and trademark attorney firms do not advertise training positions, but are inundated with CVs. To get that first job you need to be very persistent, regardless of whether you are male or female.



Annabella Newton

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What is the most rewarding aspect of being a woman in IP?

This isn't specific to being a woman but my favourite thing about my job is that I am always learning – the science is always new and interesting and the law is always changing somewhere.

What is the biggest challenge to all women pursuing a career in IP/innovation?

Unconscious bias is something that affects all of us and can negatively affect the careers of everyone, particularly women and minorities. I think educating ourselves about our own biases and trying to address systemic problems that reinforce these biases will be an excellent way forward.

What are your hopes for the IP industry as it progresses into the future?

I hope that we continue to become more inclusive and equitable. Diversity of ideas will make the industry stronger.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

We can help by providing mentorship, sponsorship, training and networking opportunities. Equal paternity leave is something I would love to see.

**It has taken more than
36 years to get to 36% participation
of women delegates at the WIPO
Assemblies. Following this trend, it
will take us until 2035 to reach parity.**

-WIPO (2017), PCT Yearly Review 2017:
The International Patent System, WIPO, Geneva



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What is life without a dream?

I was born in Sri Lanka and had to undertake my tertiary education overseas due to the closure of universities in Sri Lanka at the time. While the thought of separating from family was difficult, the prospect of becoming an educated, independent woman was a key driver and an opportunity not to be missed. Having an education is a luxury for most people, having a career that you like is a blessing. I have been blessed and I'm very grateful.

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as a woman in the IP industry, and how did you overcome it?

There is a perception that after having children, women are less committed to their careers. While that might be true for some, women I work with, and have worked with, have managed both family and careers exceptionally. My mother was a working mum and I was determined to be the same. Those who do it well know what hard work is and you wouldn't do it if it wasn't a rewarding experience.

How have women helped shape the IP industry?

It's not so much about being a woman or a man. I think the industry has been shaped by people who have good grey matter. After all, just like good inventions, you need to think outside the box in developing an IP industry. Women have played a big part in this process in encouraging other women to get involved.



How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

I have had the privilege of sharing my own story with other women and providing them with the support they need during challenging times. We need opportunities and forums to do more of this. There are a number of people who have inspired me on my journey. Among them are three women - my mother (Phyllis Fernando), my PhD supervisor (Prof. Margaret Brimble) and the CEO of the first biotech firm I worked in (Dr Elane Zelcer). Each of them have played an invaluable part in my life and I'm forever grateful.

How can we accelerate women in IP into leadership roles?

Give women opportunities to shadow and learn from senior leaders in organisations. We can also challenge and encourage women in career development.

Many respondents believe the best way to support the next generation of women patent and trade mark attorneys is through mentorship and providing them with opportunities to flourish.



Tracy Bornman

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What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as a woman in the IP industry, and how did you overcome it?

When I started at my firm, I was the first full-time female attorney. The two before me had been part-time over the course of a then 68-year old firm's existence. That was tough, and several times I figured I'd just have to make it 2 years, and then I could look elsewhere. However, it turned out that just doing the best work I could and letting that speak for itself started changes taking place, particularly as the firm itself became younger in its makeup. It is 20 years later, and I'm happy to say I'm still at the same firm, and we've had many female attorneys (including partners) and agents since.

How much has the IP industry changed since you first joined?

Aside from the law changes, I've noticed a substantial increase in the number of women practicing in this area. I started in 1997, and we hardly received a resume from a female applicant. Now, I would venture to guess that 50% of the resumes that I see are female applicants.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

Training is important, of course, but having a 'more seasoned' counterpart is incredibly beneficial, even if it's an informal mentorship. Women tend to be collaborative and having someone to act as a sounding board is very important. When I started at my firm, there was a woman who worked part-time as an attorney who had started at the firm 20 years earlier as a secretary before quitting to go to law school. Her history with the firm and sage advice kept me on the best path. I have no idea how things would be different if not for her, and I hope I have been able to pass that along to others over the years.



Kathy Leviton

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Do you have any advice you would give your younger self starting out in the IP industry?

The advice that I would give my younger self is pretty much the road that I elected to follow – that is, you do not have to 'choose' between a career or family – if you are lucky enough to have both, then do it! Whilst some exceptional women manage to work full time and be mother, I was lucky enough to work part time once I had children, which allowed me to enjoy being involved in my children's lives on a day-to-day basis, as well as proceed with my career.

Unfortunately, I think there is still the perception in some work places that part time equals part commitment, but I have seen a softening over the years of this view. The more mothers there are that hold down professional careers, the easier it will be for our daughters to do the same.

The countries closest to gender parity for PCT submissions are Korea, with 46.6%, and China, with 43.8%.

-WIPO (2017), PCT Yearly Review 2017: The International Patent System, WIPO, Geneva



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What is most rewarding about being a woman in the IP industry?

The most rewarding thing about being a woman in the IP industry is that those in the IP field and the clients we serve value our expertise and trust us with important technologies, transactions and disputes. I have been fortunate to have great women role models and mentors within my firm, and have developed strong relationships with clients who trust me with their important matters. It's also inspiring to have several women judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which is the court of appeals for all U.S. patent cases. I work in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology space which has a greater representation of women than other STEM fields, so I get to work with brilliant women scientists, have a number of close women colleagues, and have an opportunity to mentor younger women attorneys. All in all, I feel like I work in a field where women leaders are accepted and expected, and are moving the field forward.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

I think the best way to support the next generation of women is to give them opportunities to excel. As a partner, I mentor several younger women attorneys, and try to ensure that they have opportunities to work directly with clients, interface directly with patent examiners, and provide input on legal and technical arguments. I also encourage them to get involved in legal and scientific organizations, for education, networking, and growth. I think we do need to realize that supporting and promoting the next generation of women may require an effort at deliberate inclusion. In my practice, including women is natural because we have so many great women in our group, but in organizations where women are not as well-represented, it is important to ensure that women are invited and encouraged to take on prominent roles (committee leadership, speaker selection, etc.), and given the mentoring and support they need to succeed.

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as a woman in the IP industry, and how did you overcome it?

I've been lucky. I honestly can't say that I have an awareness of having faced gender based challenges in my industry. While there are certainly more male than female IP professionals right now, I think that will change in the future, as women are taking up more STEM subjects in school and university. That, taken with progressive firms and companies who support gender equality, means a brighter future for women in IP.

What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

It might sound obvious but firstly, look after your client's work and funds like they are your own. Secondly, accept that you can't know everything, but given the desire and opportunity, you can find out anything. You can't go too far wrong in my view with both of those tips.

How much has the IP industry changed since you first joined?

The biggest change I've noticed is the sheer size of the profession. For example, from when I started studying to qualify as a European Patent Attorney in 2006 in Ireland until now, the number of European qualified attorneys has tripled in size. I think we are seeing a similar trend in Australia.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

By encouraging gender diversity initiatives to halt gender programming from the get-go, starting in schools, universities and in the workplace.



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How much has the IP industry changed since you first joined?

I was the third woman registered as a patent attorney in Australia. I started my career in IP at Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick in the pre-computer days of typewriters and telex machines. Mail was sent by post and a response took weeks to arrive. Searching was performed at the sub-office by scrolling through microfiches. There were only a handful of women in the profession when I started, so I could go to a patent attorney function and be the only woman there. A lot has changed in terms of technology and the number of women in the profession, but I would love to see more of them progressing to senior roles.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

Mentor them. Men have lots of male role models in senior roles but it is harder for women as there aren't as many in leadership positions. When I started in the profession I had some great teachers but they were all men. There were no senior women for me to look up to and to give me advice. There also needs to be more access to, and acceptance of, flexible working conditions (for everyone). In my current role, I instruct patent attorneys and I have worked with some fantastic attorneys who were working part time. It has never affected the service I have obtained from them.

What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

When I was 5, I was left in a doctor's room for a few minutes. I pulled apart a light to try and figure out what made the arm of the light extend. It may have got me in trouble, but sparked my interest in engineering. I have always enjoyed figuring out how things work and what facets of a design are interesting and novel. Twenty years and a degree in engineering later, I worked with start-up companies to commercialise research projects. Watching small ideas become spin-out ventures was fascinating and I wanted to be able to help foster that level of innovation. This turned my attention to a career in IP - I returned to university to gain my degree in law in order to better equip myself for the legal aspects which are instrumental in this field.

POF has been a proud sponsor of the BioMelbourne Network 'Connecting Women Lunch' every year since its inception in 2009.



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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

Advances in science/technology are exciting, and I liked the idea of learning about new technologies with every matter. I also liked the idea of engaging with innovative clients.

What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

Read *Lean In* by Sheryl Sandberg (COO of Facebook). It examines behaviours that stunt women's progress in achieving leadership roles in the workplace. It's both an entertaining and enlightening read, and I'd recommend it to any women wanting to maximise opportunities for professional success.

What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

I will always remember a comment made to me by a US attorney. She told me "You've succeeded by being yourself, never change that." It seems like such a simple piece of advice, but really brings home the realisation that in what is a traditionally middle-class, white male dominated career, there is actually a place for everybody with every personality type. There is always a place for those who are true to themselves because you bring a perspective that is different to everybody else. If you change to fit a 'norm', you do yourself and your clients a disservice.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

Leading by example has to be the best way of inspiring and supporting the next generation of patent & trade mark attorneys. All attorneys, both women and men, in senior roles need to champion diversity and learn how to draw out the individual strengths of all up and coming attorneys. By championing all types of skills within the industry, we can give women the freedom to utilise their strengths for the betterment of clients and the companies they work.



Mary Dixon Kies was the first woman to be issued a U.S. patent in 1809, inventing a process for weaving straw with silk or thread.



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What do you believe are the greatest attributes of a successful leader?

A successful leader should be willing to listen to different opinions and be open minded. He or she must be able to create a strong bonding force that holds the team together, so that the team as a whole can achieve a lot more than what a single great leader could possibly achieve.

What do you love most about your role in IP?

I love the fact that I get to see some of the most exciting technologies before the whole world sees them. It is also an absolute privilege to work with some of the most successful companies in each field and help them protect their intellectual property.



Jenny Donald

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What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

You need to ask the right questions. To get the best results for your client, you need to fully understand their invention and brand, the commercial area in which they work and their specific commercial needs. By asking the right questions, you can provide your client with a strategy that best meets their needs and allow them to achieve their commercial goals. In my experience, this approach also leads to the most satisfying result from a professional perspective.



Margaret Ryan

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What do you love most about your role in IP?

I love seeing products that I have had some involvement in on retail shelves. It shows the practical application of the work that I do for clients.



Natalija Gak

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IP Manager
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What do you love most about your role in IP?

Without a doubt it's the challenge that is inherent in almost every task I tackle. Every day brings new opportunities to learn while surrounding me with great people, experts in their field, who are so knowledgeable that it pushes me to strive for excellence on a daily basis.



Clare Salisbury

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How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

Through mentorship and having a strong diversity and inclusion culture. In my opinion, one of the biggest issues is retention of women through to partnership and leadership positions. I believe flexible working arrangements allowing women (and men) to balance parenting and work is essential for retaining women in this industry.

What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

Find yourself a great mentor and work in a team with smart, engaged, personable people.



Xiaochun Zhu, Esq., Ph.D.

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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

I was a post-doctoral research fellow at Dana Farber Institute, Harvard Medical School, and read articles in Science and in Nature on whether expression sequence tags (ESTs) are eligible for patenting (in the U.S.) and what functional characterizations are required for an EST to meet other patentability requirements. I became immediately interested in the patent law profession and the cross-discipline challenge it presents.



Michelle Blythe

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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

I was always interested in patient care and improving health outcomes for society, which is why I became a biomedical engineer. I was looking for an alternate career path from the typical hands-on engineering roles that could combine my technical, communication and business skills in a different way. Intellectual property was the ideal career which matched my skills with my passion for the health care industry.



Dr Nina Webster

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What has been the best piece of advice you have been given?

Put your head down, work hard and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Don't wait for things to happen: make them happen; don't give up; and when an opportunity presents, grab it with both hands.



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Anita Brown

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What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

After two years of postdoctoral research, I started considering patent law as a career path which, as I understood, offered exciting exposure to a diversity of scientific innovations. In addition, the various skills I acquired from rigorous scientific training could be applied directly in this field.

How can we best support the next generation of women patent & trade mark attorneys?

I believe that mentoring and sponsorship are critical to support the next generation of women attorneys. Just as important though is workplace flexibility that allows women at all levels to combine a successful career and family life.

What are your hopes for the IP industry as it progresses into the future?

I hope to see greater diversity in the leaders in the IP industry, whether that be as partners, CEOs, senior managers or board members. I'd like government to fund more research and development to drive IP creation and to also help companies fund the protection of valuable IP.



Saskia Jahn

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Katy Davis

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What do you love most about your role in IP?

The opportunity to work with clever people from all walks of life to assist them in identifying, protecting a leveraging their intellectual property. There is particular satisfaction that comes from working with an inventor to secure patent rights that are a stepping stone to a successfully commercialised product. And the sheer variety of inventions that come across my desk on a weekly basis.

What led you to choose intellectual property as your career path?

I was born into it as my mother worked at an IP boutique firm for over 20 years and her boss was my first IP mentor. I remember learning the Nice class headings way back when! After studying English at university, the trademark world was a perfect fit for my arts background and desire to pursue a legal career.

**“Just as ripples spread out
when a single pebble is
dropped into water, the actions
of individuals can have
far-reaching effects.”**

– Dalai Lama XIV





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