

by Kate Artman

Redefining Success in the Legal Profession: A Leadership Roundtable

Happiness and success are concepts that are much desired but difficult to define. Historically, success might have been defined by money and prestige, but with diversification of the legal profession comes new perspectives of what it means to be a happy lawyer: Modern themes include achieving work–life balance, helping others, and professional autonomy. On April 10, judges, lawyers, and law students came together to discuss how concrete changes in promoting happiness could give a new definition to what success means within the legal profession, as well as promote diversity.

The event followed on the heels of the 2014 Leadership Roundtable, “Women, The Law, and Leaning into Leadership,” which addressed the female leadership gap in the legal profession. From the success of the 2014 Leadership Roundtable came the goal of the 2015 event: concrete suggestions for improving happiness and diversity in the legal profession. Stephanie Marchman, chair of the Roundtable Planning Committee, worked closely with a number of local bar associations, including the Clara Gehan Association for Women Lawyers, Eighth Judicial Circuit Bar Association, Josiah T. Walls Bar Association, and North Central Florida Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, as well as the University of Florida Levin College of Law, to organize and host this event. The program would not have been possible without the efforts and resources of these sponsors and the Federal Bar Association Activity Chapter Grant and the Florida Bar Voluntary Bar Association Diversity Leadership Grant.

The 2015 Roundtable opened with a presentation by Lawrence Krieger, clinical professor and director of clinical externship programs at the Florida State University College of Law, on the results of his study that correlated responses from 7,800 lawyers in four diverse states to determine what makes lawyers happy. Krieger’s presentation began with a separation of objective success factors—including affluence, prestige, and status—from subjective factors, such as human needs, internal motivation, intrinsic values, and

supportive supervision. The study’s results show that the greatest indicators of happiness in lawyers are directly linked to specific subjective, internal needs, including autonomy, relatedness, competence, internal motivation, autonomy support, and intrinsic values. The happiest lawyers are those who can make their own choices, who feel well-connected with others, feel competent in their tasks, and have support from their supervisors—thus explaining why many public-service lawyers report greater happiness and professional fulfillment than their higher-paying, private-sector counterparts.

Following Krieger’s presentation, distinguished lawyer leaders, including Sara Alpert, Mac McCarty, Martha Peters, Stacey Steinberg, Gloria Walker, and Mary K. Wimsett, participated in a panel discussion on professional and personal fulfillment and what it means to be a happy lawyer. Following the first panel, the speakers joined small discussion groups—each a mix of experienced lawyers, new lawyers, law students, and other legal professionals—to address what changes could be made in the workplace and among the local bar associations to promote a happier and more diverse legal profession. At the end of the discussion, table moderators reported back to the larger group on their small group’s discussion. Then, a second panel of judiciary members, including Hon. Monica J. Brasington, Gary R. Jones, Philip R. Lammens, Sheree H. Lancaster, Mary S. Scriven, and Mark E. Walker, took up the topic of diversity in the legal profession and how each of their career paths indicate a change in the definition of success.

Several major themes emerged as a result of the panel and table discussions. Chief among them was the importance and value of mentorships. Roundtable panelist Gloria Walker encouraged young attorneys to actively seek relationships with more experienced lawyers and then later pay it forward and act as mentors themselves for newer attorneys. Indeed, the vast majority of the roundtable at-

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Endnotes

¹See Pub. L. 104-191 (Aug. 21, 1996) and Pub. L. 106-102 (Nov. 12, 1999).

²Target Corp., *Form 8-K Filing* (Nov. 19, 2014), available at investors.target.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=65828&p=irolSECText&TEXT=aHR0cDovL2FwaS50ZW5rd216YXJkLmNvbS9maWxpbcmcueG1sP2lwYWdlPTk5MTE0NTMmRFNFUT0yJlNFUT04JlNRREVTQz1TRUNUSU9OX1BBR0UmZXhwPSZzdWJzaWQ9NTc%3D.

³Community Health Systems, *Form 8-K Filing* (Aug. 18, 2014), available at www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1108109/000119312514312504/d776541d8k.htm.

⁴Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Pub. L. 112-158 (Aug. 10, 2012).

⁵U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, *Form 8-K*, available at www.sec.gov/answers/form8k.htm (last accessed June 5, 2015).

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, *SEC Guidance* (Oct. 13, 2011), available at www.sec.gov.

⁸*SEC Bars, Fines Advisory Owner for Misrepresenting GIPS Compliance*, blogs.reuters.com/financial-regulatory-forum/2014/06/03/sec-bars-fines-advisory-owner-for-misrepresenting-gips-compliance (last accessed June 5, 2015).

⁹13 FR 8183, Dec. 22, 1948, as amended at 16 FR 7928 (Aug. 11, 1951).

¹⁰*Supra*, n. 3.

¹¹See www.ssa-16.com.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Rachel V. Rose, *HIPAA/HITECH Risk Assessments: Are the Standards Being Met?*, *BECKER'S HOSPITAL REVIEW* (Aug. 15, 2012), available at www.beckershospitalreview.com/healthcare-information-technology/hipaahitech-risk-assessments-are-the-standards-being-met.html.

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tendees' concrete, specific suggestions for change related to mentoring, including the creation of a program to mentor and provide scholarships to at-risk minority high-school students, the provision of free or reduced-price memberships to local bar associations for young and government lawyers, and the development of a diversity mentoring event for minority law students, local lawyers, and judges.

Attorney wellness was another focus during the panel and table discussions. During the judicial panelist discussion, Judge Scriven urged lawyers to take care of themselves and their physical health, to commit to jobs they love and know that the wealth will follow. She also advised the women lawyers in the room to invest in a good pair of flats to promote their happiness, as well as encouraged lawyers to never say yes right away when someone asks them to commit to something (unless it's the president, of course—then they should say yes!).

Judges and attorneys present at the event were also interested in balancing a demanding career with their family commitments. In fact, many of the participants suggested that family-friendly workplace and bar association policies were critical to happiness and diversity. They suggested hosting family-friendly bar meetings and

socials, limiting work demands during family times, allowing attorneys more flexibility by working remotely, creating more generous maternity- and paternity-leave policies, and developing child-friendly spaces in offices and courthouses.

Finally, the panelists and small groups discussed happiness for minorities and diverse communities within the legal profession. Women and people of color are entering the legal profession at higher rates than ever before, yet too few seem to stay. To this end, participants emphasized the importance of giving young minority lawyers client control on legal matters, thus increasing their professional autonomy, and continuing work on bridging the female leadership gap in the legal profession by appointing more women to leadership positions in law firms.

However individualized the definitions of happiness and success might be, the 2015 Leadership Roundtable discussion demonstrated that most lawyers are not that different. As a group, we want to feel like our decisions matter, that our opinions have been heard, and that we have support from those closest to us—an experience created and shared during the roundtable itself. ☺

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We continue to work together as respected colleagues.

More than any court I know of, our judges work together as friends and colleagues.

I hope you will excuse a brief personal reference. In this neighborhood, I worked on the docks, in the freight yards, and in an office for a small trucking firm while going to free Brooklyn College at night. Aspiring to be a federal judge would have been absurd. I argued my first motion before this court in a Post Office courtroom across the street more than 60 years ago. Almost half a century ago, when a half dozen judges did its work, I joined it, turning to them for guidance. Chief Judge Joseph Zavatt, Judge Jacob Mishler, and Judge John Dooling set the court's tone of practicality and compassion that still marks our work.

Over the years, our judges and magistrate judges, despite a huge increase in number, have continued to share a deep affection—and an unwavering desire to provide the rule of law to all our people in this district.

New York's senators and our presidents have ensured the high quali-

ty of our bench—women and men, representative of our district's ethnic diversity, many of us lifted to this high office from humble beginnings.

The decisions of our individual trial judges, our magistrate judges, and our bankruptcy judges depend in important part on each of our diverse backgrounds. The luck of the draw is a necessary aspect of judicial independence.

Each of us respects each judge's view of the judge's role. For example, a number of our judges and magistrate judges work closely with pretrial and probation services and outside agencies in criminal diversion and treatment programs that are admired throughout the nation. Other judges take a more traditional view.

We know our community. We have been around the block.

What a joyful and humbling experience it has been for each of us to participate in the work of this great court. Paraphrasing the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "We love this court with the breath, smiles, tears of all our lives! and . . . we shall love it and the law ever better in the years ahead." ☺