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Spring 2021

Newsletter

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FROM THE CHICAGO CHAPTER PRESIDENT



Malaika Tyson
McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd.

Dear Coalition Members in Chicago, New York, and Washington D.C.,

Happy Women's History Month!

I am honored to serve as the 2021 President of the Chicago Chapter. I've been involved with the Coalition since I was a 2L law student and I'm looking forward to my continued work with this group of amazing women. The Chicago Chapter continues to address tough issues such as the advancement of women in the legal field - including the advancement and retention among women attorneys of color-striving for gender parity, and building unity.

In the spirit of promoting unity among the chapters, the Annual Managing Partner & General Counsel Forum is now a National Coalition Event. Spearheaded by the Chicago Chapter's immediate past president, Sonya Rosenberg, this candid conversation (March 11) will discuss challenges of promoting diversity in the legal industry and concrete steps for creating real, positive change in the post-COVID world. The Chicago Associates Committee also joined the New York and Washington, D.C. chapters on February 25 to co-host a Virtual Trivia Event.

As I'm writing this, I'm watching the snow melt off of my lawn, seeing the tips of tulips peek through the ground, and reflecting on a post-COVID world. This reminds me of a quote from Anne Bradstreet: "If we had no winter the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

This time last year we had no idea that we would become Zoom warriors, DIY teachers, public health experts, or prolific sourdough bread bakers. No one would have guessed that remote trials and loungewear would become the new norm, or that some of us wouldn't have an uninterrupted workday or regular interactions with other adults for over a year. We also continue to live in a world where there is continued violence against Black people and increasing hate crimes against Asian Americans. No matter your personal situation, every one of us will come out on the other side of this pandemic with new appreciations and resilience.

The health and safety of our members are also very important. In addition to making sure we continue to protect our member's physical health, including continuing to hold our programs virtually, we are also committed to their mental health. The Chicago Programming Committee is working on webinars to help our members navigate multiple mental stressors and identify burnout.

Despite all of the challenges of 2020, the Coalition has been able to rise above and continue to be a powerful, collective voice across our three chapters, while serving as a welcoming community for women attorneys from all backgrounds. I'm excited to see how the Coalition continues to build up and strengthen its members and I'm grateful to lead the Chicago Chapter in upholding Coalition's core mission to support and promote women lawyers.

- Malaika Tyson, Chicago Chapter President

3 Strategies Workers Use To Survive a High-Intensity Workplace

By: Paula Davis, JD, MAPP



I practiced law for seven years and worked in both a large law firm and a busy corporate legal department. The legal profession runs on the belief that clients come first in all circumstances, and that in order to be a good lawyer, you must display an unwavering dedication to that tenet. Many other professions also require this “always on” and “always available” mentality and reward those who meet what has come to be called the “ideal worker” standard. Ideal workers are people who are totally dedicated to their jobs and always on call. They must continue to choose to prioritize their jobs ahead of other parts of their lives, their personal needs, and even their health.

The problem is that it becomes difficult for many people to sustain this type of all-or-nothing view of work, and it can lead to a lot of stress and burnout. Professors Erin Reid and Lakshmi Ramarajan have interviewed hundreds of professionals in a variety of industries, asking whether this superhuman devotion to work

is in fact even necessary for organizational success. They found that workers tend to deploy one of [three strategies](#) in order to survive a high-intensity workplace:

STRATEGY 1: Accept and conform to the demands. Many professionals don't see much of a choice and simply elect to accept and conform to the demands of their high-intensity workplace. In one study, Reid and Ramarajan found that 43% of the people they interviewed used this strategy. The ideal worker culture is promoted as your ticket to success, yet it's a Catch 22 in disguise – conform and accept the missed date nights, cancelled plans, all hours emails, less time with family and friends or openly share the other aspects of your life and get labeled as not serious, not a “go-getter,” or not someone who can be counted on to handle the tough deals.

Not only is burnout a potential reality for those who accept and conform, as conformers advance in their career, they internalize the ideal worker mentality and can

start to judge people who don't follow suit. In addition, conforming can lead to a lot of regret if it's not adopted intentionally and examined regularly. I have coached both men and women who have expressed profound sorrow at not pursuing romantic relationships, deciding not to have families, or deciding not to pursue other work or personal interests that they found truly meaningful and more closely aligned with their own personal values in service of dedicating their lives solely to work.

STRATEGY 2: Try to pass as ideal workers while quietly finding ways around the norm. Passers seek to protect their careers while also sustaining other aspects of their lives. Reid and Ramarajan discovered that 27% of their study participants were in this group. When I started my law practice, I was 100% accepting and conforming. I quit my co-ed softball and football leagues, stopped hanging out with my friends as much generally, and prided myself on working late into

Continued on page 3





the night and on most weekends. Over time, though, I started to become more of a passer. I asked my assistant to keep my light on in my office, even after hours, and I made sure I had a jacket hung on the back of my office door to give the appearance that I was somewhere in the building in case someone checked. The problem is that passing becomes exhausting. It feels inauthentic to not be able to talk to your work colleagues about your family, training for a marathon, or whatever it is about your outside of work life you want to sustain. Not surprisingly, Reid and Ramarajan discovered that over time, passers have a high turnover rate. They also note that a very quietly destructive aspect of passing is that passers allow the ideal worker culture to persist by failing to openly challenge it.

STRATEGY 3: Open sharing. For various reasons, some workers cope with the high intensity by

sharing other aspects of their lives at work while asking for changes in the form of reduced schedules or other accommodations. Thirty percent of those interviewed were open sharers. Interestingly, Reid and Ramarajan noted that they have not found large gender differences in their research – many men were also open sharers at work. While there are risks associated with each style, open sharers may risk actively damaging their career and sacrificing the credibility they may need later to push for change.

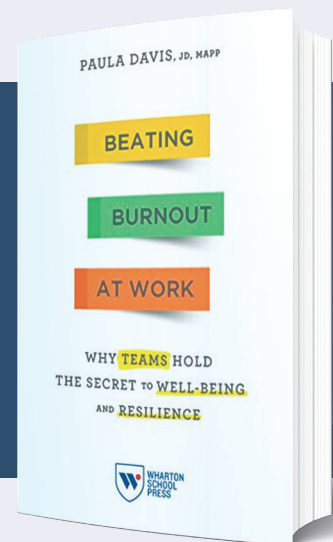
Reid and Ramarajan suggest that moving away from time-based rewards, protecting workers' personal lives with clear boundaries that are openly supported by leadership, and asking leaders to model and talk about their own outside of work identities can lead to more professional fulfillment and more value for organizations. While I agree these things can help,

the ideal worker mentality can be a strong value and belief system to break once it's adopted. Many ideal workers have become the boss and reinforce the standard within company culture. Leaders are generally under a tremendous amount of pressure and just need the work to get done and will push it to the people who are "always on." In addition, when you see other people working at the ideal worker standard, it's hard not to conform. And lastly, the ideal worker standard is rewarded monetarily, with promotions, assignment to highly visible projects, and praise.

Leaders need to examine whether the ideal worker standard is actually translating into truly beneficial organizational outcomes, or is it simply a myth that has over time become an accepted part of doing business in today's fast-paced world?

Paula Davis is the CEO of the Stress and Resilience Institute.

Paula's latest book comes out on March 16! **Beating Burnout at Work: Why Teams Hold the Secret to Well-Being & Resilience** is a science-backed toolkit that takes a holistic approach to burnout prevention by helping individuals, teams, and leaders build resilience and thrive at work.



Chicago Chapter

CHICAGO HAPPENINGS

On Wednesday, March 3, the Chicago Chapter hosted a webinar on **Law Firm Economics**, featuring **Michelle Weiss**, Regional Director for the Mid-Atlantic & Northeast Region of Wells Fargo Private Bank's Legal Specialty Group. Using key metrics, Michelle examined how law firms make money and what factors are within an individual lawyer's control that positively contribute to the firm's financial success.

On Thursday, March 11, the Chicago Chapter—along with sister Chapters in New York and Washington, D.C.—will hold the first-ever virtual **Managing Partner & General Counsel Forum**, a candid conversation about the challenges of promoting diversity

in the legal industry and concrete steps for creating real, positive change in the post-COVID world. Be sure to [register today](#) for what is sure to be a very engaging discussion. Panelists include **Joel Unruch** (General Counsel & Corporate Secretary, Accenture), **Sherina Maye Edwards** (Chief Executive Officer, INTREN), **Leila Hock** (Director, Legal Department Partnerships & Inclusion Initiatives, Diversity Lab), **Michael E. Martinez** (Chicago Managing Partner, K&L Gates and Chair of The Chicago Committee), **Phil West** (Chair, Steptoe & Johnson), and moderated by **Sonya Rosenberg**, (Partner, Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg LLP).

CHICAGO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Gray Mateo-Harris

*Fox Rothschild LLP
2021 Chicago Chapter Board Member at Large*



Why did you join the Coalition?

I joined the Coalition early in my career because I was drawn to its woman-led and woman-centric mission as well as its laser-sharp focus on strengthening the legal profession by increasing women in partnership and other leadership roles in BigLaw and beyond. I joined the leadership ranks of the Coalition more recently because I was excited about its genuine and enthusiastic interest in ensuring it was reaching all women lawyers across various demographics.

What committees are you active on?

I co-chair the Diversity and Inclusion Committee which aims to collaborate with all other committees to ensure our panels, speakers, vendors and selected beneficiaries reflect the racial and ethnic diversity we see in

our community. We are working to continue to diversity our membership, strengthen our DEI footprint and celebrate true allyship. I'm deeply proud of the significant strides we've made as an organization and excited for what the future holds.

Give us your elevator speech... or "Call me if you have..."

Call me if you want a relationship partner that will *actually* leverage her Equity Partner status to ensure your Company's legal spend benefits high-performing, responsive attorneys that form part of a growing and diverse team. As a bilingual employment litigator and traditional labor lawyer, I fully understand how critical workplace culture can be in minimizing legal risk and enjoy partnering with my clients to defeat such risk through litigation,

mediation, internal investigations, policy implementation and training.

Tell us something interesting about you that people may not know.

I am NOT named after the color grey. I'm named after a Latin-American actress who lived humbly and gave of her wealth to poor people in the Dominican Republic, including my mother's family.

Share your favorite book or podcast – or an at-home resource or tip you've found particularly helpful.

I'm a fan of the lessons Valorie Burton shares in her book, "It's About Time: The Art of Choosing the Meaningful Over the Urgent." As a busy lawyer and mother, I have found her tips incredibly valuable though I'm certainly not "living timelessly" yet.

New York Chapter

NEW YORK HAPPENINGS

The New York Chapter is proud to celebrate its 5th anniversary this year!

The Chapter held its annual meeting on December 9, which included a presentation from [TakeRoot Justice](#) and a shopping event from Kendra Scott to benefit that charity.

Thanks to all who attended our Winter Workshop, **Women Helping Women Develop Business**, on Thursday, January 21, where Stewart Hirsch, a former firm and in-house attorney and the Managing Director of Strategic Relationships LLC, examined how our firms' important efforts around equity can also help with business development. After the formal program, we spent time working in small groups for targeted discussion and networking.

And on Wednesday, April 21 the New York Chapter invites you to join us for **Group**, a virtual presentation focusing on ways lawyers can prioritize mental health. Christie Tate, former Skadden attorney and author of NYT bestseller *GROUP: How One Therapist and a Circle of Strangers Saved My Life*, and Marcia Nickow PsyD, CADC, CGP will lead the discussion. More details and registration [here](#).

NEW YORK MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Kaitlyn Fallon

*Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
2021 New York Chapter Secretary*

Why did you join the Coalition?

I joined the Coalition to further my connection to the community of excellent female attorneys in New York City. I am grateful for this group and the relationships I have fostered with these women.

What committees are you active on?

In addition to serving as the secretary in 2020 and treasurer in 2021, I am also working with the programming committee to plan some exciting events for Spring 2021.

Give us your elevator speech... or "Call me if you have..."

As a member of the Employment Services Group at Davis Wright Tremaine, I represent employers in all aspects of their labor and employment law needs, including by providing employee training, conducting internal investigations and representing clients in state and federal court, administrative agencies, and in arbitration.

Tell us something interesting about you that people may not know.

I played Division III basketball at Middlebury College.

Share your favorite book or podcast – or an at-home resource or tip you've found particularly helpful.

The best book I've read in the recent past is *Becoming* by Michelle Obama. I highly recommend!

Congratulations to New York Chapter member **Hon. Tanya R. Kennedy**, who is the recipient of the New York State Bar Association 2021 John E. Higgins, Esq. Diversity Trailblazer Award. Justice Kennedy received the award during NYSBA's Annual Virtual Meeting on January 19, 2021, as part of the Constance Baker Motley Symposium sponsored by the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. Justice Kennedy is an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, First Judicial Department. Justice Kennedy received the 2020 Inspiration Award at the Coalition's Leadership Forum last fall. She is a former president of the National Association of Women Judges and has served as a role model and mentor to women and African American attorneys.

In January, New York Chapter secretary **Cassandra Porsch** (Scarola Zubatov Schaffzin PLLC) published [an expert analysis article](#) in *Law360* examining the lack of consistency around COVID-19 commercial lease decisions in New York.

New York Chapter Vice President **Blythe Lovinger** (Vedder Price PC) co-authored [an article reviewing updated guidance](#) from New York State on its Covid-19 Sick Leave policy.



Washington, D.C. Chapter

WASHINGTON, D.C. HAPPENINGS

On February 25, the D.C. Chapter—along with sister Chapters in New York and Chicago—hosted a fun and successful virtual trivia night, where Coalition members and friends had a chance to flex their trivia knowledge together. A fantastic time was had by all, and we were grateful for this lighthearted opportunity to connect and share laughs, facts, and a drink together!

Congratulations to D.C. Chapter Board Member **Liz Yaeger** who was recently promoted to partner at Katten. Liz counsels

clients on the acquisition, disposition, development, financing and leasing of commercial real properties and mixed-use multifamily housing throughout the United States.

D.C. Chapter Treasurer **Lauren Azebu** and DC Chapter President **Amanda Varma** (both of Steptoe & Johnson LLP) published an article called "[Repeal of the Limitation on Downward Attribution: Three Years Later](#)" in a recent edition of *Tax Notes*.

WASHINGTON, D.C. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Alexandra Busch

*Cozen O'Connor
2021 DC Chapter Vice President*



Why did you join the Coalition?

I joined the Coalition in February 2020 because I wanted to exchange ideas with other women lawyers about how to promote, advance, and support each other in our careers – particularly as it relates to business generation and rising into leadership. Shortly after I joined, we were launched into the current remote environment. Over the past year, the Coalition has provided a community and forum for me to raise my profile, share experiences, and brainstorm ways to adapt to the changing landscape of our respective practices.

What committees are you active on?

I co-chair the credentialing committee and am active in the associates' and programming committees.

Give us your elevator speech... or "Call me if you have..."

Call me if you need advice regarding construction or other commercial issues. I counsel owners, general contractors, and subcontractors in all phases of construction projects and dispute resolution in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, across the country, and around the world. My practice focuses on equipping my clients to make smart business decisions and generate creative solutions.

Tell us something interesting about you that people may not know.

I am an avid soccer player (in the before times) and fan. I traveled to Lyon, France in July 2019 to witness the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team win the World Cup. I am hoping to make it to Australia/New Zealand for the 2023 World Cup!

Share your favorite book or podcast – or an at-home resource or tip you've found particularly helpful.

My favorite podcasts are "Unladylike" and "You're Wrong About."

Questions or Comments?
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