

ISSUE NO. 15

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Newsletter

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Save the Dates

**Diverse Attorney
Mentorship Meeting**
March 27, 2023

**Law Student
Networking Event**
April 12, 2023 at Kent

Literary Lawyers Series
April 27, 2023
12:00 P.M. CST / 1:00 P.M. EST

MP/GC Forum
May Date TBD

FROM THE WASHINGTON, D.C. CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Dear Coalition Members and Friends,

I am excited and honored to serve as President of the Washington, D.C. Chapter in 2023. I have been a part of the Coalition since 2019, and I have found it to be an invaluable network of talented, collaborative, and entrepreneurial women.

As a tax attorney and former accountant, I have always been very focused on numbers. However, numbers do not tell the full story. Although the D.C. Chapter of the Coalition may be small, it has had an enormously positive impact on its members, myself included. Being an attorney can be incredibly demanding, and the pandemic has forced all of us to reimagine how we serve our clients, interact with our colleagues, integrate our professional and personal lives, and build our practices. Like many of the women in the D.C. Chapter, in the last few years I have experienced an enormous amount of life change. Shortly after giving birth to my son, I was honored to become one of two women lawyers promoted to partner in 2022 at Steptoe & Johnson LLP while on parental leave. When I returned from my parental leave in the spring of 2022, I began the process of learning how to navigate not only being a new working mother, but also how to adapt to the responsibilities and challenges that came with my new role at Steptoe.

In the face of all of this change, one thing that has remained constant is the support, both personal and professional, that the D.C. Chapter has provided to me and to the rest of its members. Our members have referred

business to each other and brainstormed best practices with respect to their firms' women's initiatives and parental leave policies. Our New Mom's Group has provided support and connection through in-person and virtual meet-ups. Additionally, our members have shared information and connections to help one another advance professionally, whether through a promotion, a lateral move, or otherwise. I am constantly impressed by the generosity of our members, who are happy to give their time and energy to champion one another, despite the numerous demands that they must balance on a daily basis.

The D.C. Chapter's primary goals for 2023 are to continue to forge strong connections among our members, to create leadership opportunities for junior women attorneys, and to share best practices for business development. We had a strong start to 2023 with a networking happy hour at Blackfinn hosted by our Associates Committee on January 25th (special thanks to Co-Chairs **Emily Lamm** at Gibson, Dunn, & Crutcher LLP and **Emma Marshak** at Steptoe). Several attorneys from our new member firms were in attendance, and we look forward to getting them more involved with the Coalition.

Meanwhile, our Programming Committee is actively planning additional programming for the rest of the year, with a focus on business development training. There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to building a book of business. What works best for an individual attorney depends on many factors, including personality, career stage, practice area, and available resources. As





busy professionals, each of us wants to maximize the return on our efforts, and thus it is important to be intentional in developing and executing our business plans. We look forward to providing our members with insight and tips on how to determine what works best for them.

It is a privilege to be part of the Coalition, and the D.C. Chapter is excited to join the New York and Chicago Chapters for another great year!

Lauren Azebu

Washington, D.C.
Chapter President



Engaged & Exhausted: The Burnout Profile Leaders Most Need to Monitor

As we dig into a new year, burnout remains an important topic of conversation in organizations. More than 150,000 tech employees lost their jobs in 2022, and more layoffs have happened in 2023. As a result, the remaining workforce is poised to take on a heavier workload even as they continue to worry about their own job security. Uncertainty about the world, the transition to hybrid work, and big work and life events have left employees feeling consistently stressed, overwhelmed, and overloaded. Yet there are certain cues leaders can learn to determine which stressed out employees are more likely to leave the organization.

Burnout tends to be oversimplified as an individual failing of stress management, and many people think it's just about exhaustion and use the term interchangeably with the word stress. Burnout is a specific type of stress and exists on a continuum that consists of these three dimensions:

1. Chronic exhaustion (feeling physically and emotionally drained, tired, overwhelmed, and overloaded more often than not); and
2. Chronic cynicism (people in your work world bother you and annoy you, and you may start to distance yourself from your colleagues and clients ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging, and the result is less empathy); and

3. Inefficacy (the “why bother, who cares” mentality that appears as you struggle to identify important work resources and begin to feel ineffective at [work](#)).

When the World Health Organization updated its definition of burnout, it also reiterated that burnout the combination of these three [dimensions](#).

The measurement of burnout also tends to be oversimplified. While there are a number of empirically validated assessment tools to measure [burnout](#), the gold standard measurement tool is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (“MBI”) because it actually measures the above three dimensions. This is important because there are multiple profile combinations that can result from the MBI assessment. Drs. Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter, pioneers in burnout research and two of the developers of the MBI, have issued updated guidance about what constitutes a [“burnout profile.”](#) According to their research, to earn the label “burnout,” a person must experience high exhaustion, high cynicism, AND low professional efficacy. Based on their work, only about 20% of workers fit this profile. While I think that number is low, you should take with some grain of salt survey results reporting burnout rates like 60 – 80%. Typically, those reports are not using the MBI as a measurement tool.

A new profile has emerged, though, that leaders need to watch because people in this group show higher rates of turnover intention. Specifically, companies need to pay attention to their “engaged-exhausted” workers. These are people who





would likely show the following profile on the MBI (and it's one I see with increasing frequency in my own work): high exhaustion, high cynicism, and high professional efficacy. High professional efficacy sounds like, "I can effectively solve problems that arise from my work;" "I feel effective at getting things done;" and "I know I am contributing to my work and my team."

In one study, more than 1,000 U.S. workers were surveyed, and the results showed that 35.5% of the sample were moderately engaged-exhausted while 18.8% of the sample were highly [engaged-exhausted](#). The engaged-exhausted group was still passionate about their work, but they had strong mixed feelings about it – high levels of interest and still feeling connected to it (the high professional efficacy dimension revealing itself), but also high levels of stress. Strikingly, the engaged-exhausted group showed the highest rate of turnover intention in the study, even higher than the study participants who were most burned out.

Many leaders assume that engaged employees are happy and functioning well at work. That may not always be true because for some, engagement and stress co-exist. In addition, 64% of the highly engaged-exhausted group fell within a "demanding jobs" profile, meaning that they were not experiencing nearly enough resources (defined below) to help counterbalance their high levels of stress.

This study (and others) underscores the importance of job resources at work. Burnout is caused by an imbalance between your job demands (aspects of your work that take consistent effort and energy) and job resources (aspects of your work that are motivational and energy [giving](#)), and many workers don't get nearly enough of the right types of resources that slow burnout. Job resources help to mitigate the effects of the stress associated with your work, but they are also important in their own right. Not only do they help you to achieve your work goals and to learn and grow in your work role, but they also help fulfill key psychological needs – flexibility, belonging, and mastery – central to well-being and motivation at work. Job resources have also been shown to predict dedication, workplace commitment and turnover [intention](#).

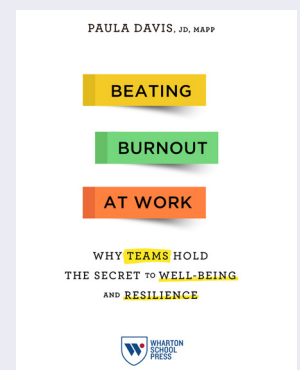
These job resources have been shown to promote well-being at work and slow [burnout](#):

- High quality relationships with colleagues; social support
- Participation in decision making, particularly when it has to do with your specific work role
- Feedback
- Recognition
- Job flexibility and control
- Professional development opportunities
- Leader support
- Role clarity

Four of the job resources from this list – job flexibility and control, professional development opportunities, role clarity, and participation in decision making – are particularly important to creating healthy [workplaces](#).

Burnout is a nuanced problem for organizations, and there are many profiles that workers can fit. Leaders must be particularly aware of those team members who are stressed but still feel like they are effectively contributing to the organization. For them, the grass may be greener elsewhere, and you can't afford to lose good talent.

Paula Davis (<https://www.stressandresilience.com>) is the CEO of the Stress and Resilience Institute, and her book, *Beating Burnout at Work: Why Teams Hold the Secret to Well-Being & Resilience*, published by the Wharton School Press, is on sale now. (<https://stressandresilience.com/burnout-book/>)



Chicago Chapter

CHICAGO MEMBER NEWS

Rising Stars and Super Lawyers

Congratulations to all of of Chicago Chapter members who were recognized as 2023 Super Lawyers or Rising Stars by [Super Lawyers](#).

Chicago Chapter Recognized for Providing Scholarships for Local High School Students

Each year the Chicago Chapter coordinates with the Big Shoulders Fund to provide scholarships to local high school students with an interest in pursuing careers in law. Upon receipt of the most recent round of scholarship funds, Tom Zbierski, the Senior Director of Scholarship and School Relations at Big Shoulders Fund had the following to say about the Coalition: "The continuing and very generous support of the Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law is sincerely appreciated, as well as, the efforts of **Joan McCarthy** and her advocacy for the young women in the schools supported by Big Shoulders Fund. You are all tremendous and I simply can't thank you enough."

Chicago Chapter Member Elected Fellow of the ACMA

Congratulations to **Janet Wagner** of Chuhak & Tecson, P.C. who has been accepted as a fellow of the American College of Mortgage Attorneys (ACMA) for 2023. Formed in 1974, the ACMA is comprised of lawyers in North America who are authorities in mortgage law. The members of ACMA or fellows share a commitment to giving back to their profession, improving and reforming laws and procedures affecting real estate secured transactions and raising the level of performance of lawyers practicing in this area. Fellows have distinguished themselves as practitioners in the field of real estate mortgage law through their skills and practice experience, knowledge, professionalism and related accomplishments that are significant to mortgage transactions. [Here](#) is the full press release.



New York Chapter

NEW YORK MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations

Elizabeth Eilender of Law Office of Elizabeth Eilender PC, successfully concluded a 6-year contentious litigation by obtaining a favorable result at trial for a former 8th grade student who was repeatedly sexually assaulted in school by an alleged and so-called "intern." Elizabeth litigated this action in one of New York's most unpredictable boroughs and proved once again that lawyering skills outweigh predictability.

Joanna M. Roberto of Gerber Ciano Kelly Brady LLP continues her nationwide speaking engagements and presented on Extra-Contractual insurance coverage at the 2022 CLM Focus Conference, and spoke about mediation strategies and liability evaluations at DRI's Sexual Torst Conference.

New York Chapter

NEW YORK MEMBER NEWS

AVRA Estiatorio Rockefeller Center

On March 14th, the NY Chapter held a high energy fun networking event at AVRA Estiatorio Rockefeller Center hosted by the Law Office of Elizabeth Eilender PC. In addition to meeting new friends and having more than a few laughs, delicious food and bottomless wine and cocktails were enjoyed by all.



A short message from Friends of the New York Chapter

Did you know that the traditional gift on International Women's Day is a sprig of yellow mimosa flowers? The golden mimosa has been an integral part of Italy's La Festa della Donna (Women's Day) celebrations for more than 75 years.

According to an article published in the *Financial Times*, mimosa is an enduring symbol of strength and beauty. It symbolizes a mark of solidarity.

The vibrant color of mimosa also exerts a springtime feel. So, this year – and not just in the month of March- think about picking up a mimosa for yourself or give it to someone you know as a gesture of encouragement.

There are a lot of local and national organized events on International Women's Day and in March that commemorate the cultural, personal, and socioeconomic achievement of women.

But, at some point, let's also remember to individually pause so we can take a minute to look in the mirror and acknowledge our own achievements as well.



Washington, D.C. Chapter

WASHINGTON, D.C. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Melissa Kopit, Associate at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher



Why did you join the Coalition?

The Coalition's core mission of enhancing the recruitment, retention and promotion of women lawyers, especially in law firms, is important to me. I've watched qualified women colleagues repeatedly leave law firms prior to making partner, as well

as, personally working as a woman at a law firm in a male-dominated practice area.

What positions have you held in the Coalition?

I started with serving on the Associate's Committee and then served as a Board Member, Treasurer and now the Vice President of the D.C. Chapter. Being active in leadership in the Coalition is the best way to build relationships with your fellow members.

Describe what you do.

I'm a problem solver and a deal-closer. To keep it short, I often just say I'm an "airplane lawyer". The more detailed answer is I'm an equipment finance attorney with a focus in aviation advising my clients who include leasing companies, private equity funds, banks and Fortune 500 companies on a wide variety of international structured finance and leasing transactions. I've worked on deals with connections in every continent except Antarctica (so far!).

What is the best career advice you ever received?

This is a toss-up between "just don't quit" and "you don't get what you don't ask for". Often when work or life seems overwhelming, just "not quitting" can be easier said than done, but simply persevering and being resilient will get you far. With respect to the second piece of advice, while I have been blessed to receive much more than I've asked for in sponsorship, mentorship and other support in my career, this idea has helped me countless times when I've been nervous to "make the ask". More often than not, when I've made a thoughtful request such as to attend a conference, meet a client or join an organization (like the Coalition!), it's been granted.

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

My mom immigrated to the United States from El Salvador, and she met my dad in college in North Carolina. Having family from two very different backgrounds has played a large role in my life - and gives me an appreciation for both pupusas and biscuits!

Coffee or Tea?

Coffee, 100%.

WASHINGTON, D.C. HAPPENINGS & NEWS

Happy Hour

To kick off 2023, our Associates Committee hosted a happy hour at **Blackfinn** on Wednesday, January 25. We enjoyed reconnecting with old friends and meeting some new ones while enjoying drinks and snacks. (Pictured Right)



Member Recognition

Congratulations to **Alexandra Krisch**, who started a new position as Senior Counsel at Bechtel Energy shortly before the new year.



Questions or Comments?
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