

The 25 Best Law Firms For Female Partners

By **Jake Simpson**

Law360, New York (April 20, 2014, 4:29 PM ET) -- Law360 is pleased to announce its 2014 class of Ceiling Smashers, the 25 U.S.-based law firms out of nearly 400 surveyed that have the highest percentage of female partners.

The Glass Ceiling Report: 2014, based on a survey of more than 380 law firms, found that while women make up 43 percent of the nonpartner ranks at U.S. law firms, they comprise just 21 percent of partnerships.

"It is a professionwide problem," Holland & Hart LLP Chair Elizabeth Sharrer said of the paucity of women in top positions. At Holland and Hart, roughly 26 percent of partners are female, and the firm has primarily equity partners, unlike many law firms surveyed by Law360.

"It's never been good enough and it will continue to not be good enough," Sharrer said. "We won't be satisfied until the head count numbers reflect the [gender] demographics. And the only way it will keep improving is to keep people talking about it."

While no U.S. firm has 50 percent or more women at the partner level, the inaugural class of Ceiling Smashers all fall well above the average. Women make up at least 29 percent of the partnership at all the Ceiling Smashers, and at the top 10 firms, at least one-third of partners are women.

The firms in the inaugural class of Ceiling Smashers are smaller on average than traditional national and global firms. Only six firms in the top 25 have more than 400 U.S. attorneys, and none of them are in the top 10. Littler Mendelson PC, a San Francisco-based firm that specializes in employment law, has the best female partner percentage among firms ranked in the top 100 of the Law360 400 rankings released in March.

Two firms stand out for their exemplary inclusion of women at the partner level: Adelson Testan Brundo Novell & Jimenez and Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy LLP. Like Littler, both firms focus on workers' rights — Fragomen is a corporate immigration boutique that also focuses on employment and labor issues — and women make up more than 47 percent of the partnership at both firms.

Two other Ceiling Smashers, Jackson Lewis PC and Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC, also specialize in employment law. On average, employment law firms have a higher percentage of female partners, which labor lawyers attributed in part to employment attorneys seeking to create an equal-opportunity workplace for their clients on a daily basis.

Congratulations to all the 2014 Ceiling Smashers.

CEILING SMASHERS: 25 TOP FIRMS FOR FEMALE PARTNERS			
RANK	FIRM	U.S. ATTORNEY HEAD COUNT	FEMALE PARTNER %
1	Adelson Testan	137	47.62%
2	Fragomen Del Rey	280	47.37%
3	Coblentz Patch	77	40.00%
4	von Briesen	103	38.18%
5	Cassiday Schade	108	37.70%
6	Cohen Milstein	80	35.48%
7	Miller Nash	110	34.67%
8	Frankfurt Kurnit	67	34.38%
9	Kitch Drutchas	99	34.00%
10	Fredrikson & Byron	269	33.33%
11	Davis Graham	145	32.84%
12	Littler Mendelson	967	32.70%

13	Best Best	184	32.69%
14	Verrill Dana	114	32.14%
15	Jackson Kelly	188	31.96%
16	Cades Schutte	69	31.58%
17	Sutherland Asbill	441	31.49%
18	Shipman & Goodwin	153	31.25%
19	Jackson Lewis	767	31.23%
20	Thompson Coe	149	31.11%
21	Garvey Schubert	113	30.91%
22	Lewis Brisbois	902	30.34%
23	BuckleySandler	152	30.30%
24	Ogletree Deakins	694	29.97%
25	Quarles & Brady	452	29.50%

Methodology: Law360 surveyed U.S. law firms in early 2014 and received responses from roughly 380 firms with male and female attorney head count information. Only U.S.-based law firms were surveyed, and only head count numbers for U.S.-based attorneys were included in the results. For the purposes of this ranking, "partner" includes both equity and nonequity partners for firms that use a multitier partnership structure.

Head count numbers are as of Dec. 31, 2013. Only firms with more than 50 domestic attorneys — roughly 98 percent of respondents — were considered for the Ceiling Smasher designation. Firms appearing in the Law360 400 that did not submit attorney head count data were not considered.

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