

Laura Stein



Laura Stein has served as the first woman general counsel of not one but two *Fortune* 500 companies and has reached this milestone at a remarkably young age. In 2009, she was named one of the “20 Most Influential General Counsel in America” by the *National Law Journal*, and that same year, *Corporate Board Member* also presented her with the America’s Top General Counsel Recognition Award.

Following college at Dartmouth and law school at Harvard, Ms. Stein worked as a corporate lawyer with Morrison & Foerster in San Francisco and Hong Kong. She joined The Clorox Company in Oakland, CA in 1992. Using her skills in speaking six languages, she negotiated acquisitions for Clorox in several countries around the world, ultimately becoming assistant general counsel-regulatory affairs. Ms. Stein left Clorox in 2000 to serve as senior vice president and general counsel of H.J. Heinz Company and was president of the Heinz women’s group and on the board of the H.J. Heinz Company Foundation. In 2005, she returned to Clorox, where she presently serves as senior vice president and general counsel, with responsibility for the company’s worldwide legal, ethics and compliance, corporate secretary, corporate communications, crisis management, and risk management and internal audit matters. Ms. Stein serves on the Clorox executive committee, chairs the Clorox women’s employee resource group, and co-sponsors the company’s social responsibility and enterprise risk management programs. She is a director of Franklin Resources, Inc. (a global organization known as Franklin Templeton Investments) and previously was a director of Nash Finch Company.

Ms. Stein has counseled many women lawyers on becoming and thriving as in-house counsel. She has hired and promoted senior women in-house lawyers at her companies to increase the ranks of senior in-house women lawyers and leaders at these companies. One senior woman lawyer hired by Ms. Stein at Clorox recently became a *Fortune* 500 general counsel due in part to the active development plan that Stein developed for her.

At Clorox and Heinz, she has led the women employee resource groups, and, at both companies, these groups developed the first mentoring programs available to women. To support women lawyers in private practice, Ms. Stein and other Bay Area women general counsel share information on talented women private firm lawyers and have created opportunities for women

law firm lawyers to meet women general counsel to foster client development and advancement in their law firms.

Building on initiatives that she began while at Heinz, Ms. Stein organized a corporate pro bono program when she returned to Clorox in an effort to institutionalize pro bono activities in the corporate setting and to encourage corporations to be a source of pro bono services. Thinking outside the box, Ms. Stein saw an opportunity to bring the rewards of pro bono practice to lawyers who otherwise might not have such opportunities presented to them. Several pro bono programs are undertaken each year, including the appearance by Clorox lawyers on Fridays in Family Court to represent victims of domestic violence, primarily women who seek protection from abuse. She has received the Ted Craig Humanitarian Award for her pro bono leadership supporting domestic violence survivors.

Ms. Stein has served as the third woman chair in the more than 25-year history of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC). She co-chairs the Advisory Board of Corporate Pro Bono, ACC’s joint project with the Pro Bono Institute to encourage and develop a stronger pro bono culture in the in-house community.

A key aspect of Ms. Stein’s efforts is that the work she does is sustainable. For example, when she organizes a pro bono project, she does so with the goal that the project be sustained beyond her tenure.

Among her numerous honors, Ms. Stein has received the Sandra Day O’Connor Board Excellence Award, has been named one of the Bay Area’s “Most Influential Women in Business” by the *San Francisco Business Times*, and was named one of Pennsylvania’s “Best Women in Business” by Pennsylvania’s governor. In 2003, the *Harvard Law Bulletin* named Ms. Stein as one of 50 women graduates who used her education to take her to “extraordinary” places, stating that “Stein is working to shorten the wait for women who want to achieve the kind of career success she has enjoyed.”