

Foreword

THE FIRST EDITION of *The Woman Advocate* was published in the 1995–1996 bar year, during the tenure of the American Bar Association’s first woman President, Roberta Cooper Ramo. Since then, other distinguished woman lawyers have earned the honor of leading our association: Martha Barnett in 2000–2001 and Karen Mathis in 2006–2007. I am proud to be the fourth woman to serve as ABA President this bar year.

All four of us can remember a time when women were not given a seat at the table. Our association and profession have made progress toward greater gender equality. Yet, as woman lawyers across the country know all too well, we also have a long way to go before woman lawyers will have the same opportunities as their male colleagues. Although women now make up about 45 percent of students entering law school, we comprise only about 30 percent of lawyers and roughly 15 percent of partners in large law firms or general counsels in Fortune 500 companies. Significantly, we have only two woman justices on our Supreme Court and few in the most powerful positions in the leadership of our government.

This book is a resource for woman lawyers striving for equal opportunities at their workplaces. Leading woman lawyers from various practice settings offer their views of the distinct challenges women face in the profession, tips about how to overcome these challenges, and thoughts about what the future holds.

We all can relate to, learn from, and be inspired by the contributors to this important volume. Their stories will help us overcome adversity and demonstrate on the merits that women deserve parity in the legal profession. I wish through some of the inspirational stories that you will set a course professionally to become all you are capable of being.

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