Sara Holtz has been devoted to helping other women lawyers succeed throughout her legal career. By her example and through her work, she has paved the way to professional influence, leadership, and success for women lawyers.

Sara Holtz’s career has included many firsts. She was in the first class of women at Yale College, from which she graduated magna cum laude in 1972. She attended Harvard Law School when the class was only 14 percent women and, while there, was instrumental in organizing the Women’s Law Association. She was the first woman lawyer at the D.C. law firm she joined after graduating from law school cum laude in 1975. She was in the “first wave” of women general counsel. She was the first woman chairperson of the American Corporate Counsel Association (now the Association of Corporate Counsel), the nation’s largest professional organization for in-house counsel. She was a pioneer in developing programs to coach and train women lawyers to develop business.

Ms. Holtz’s legal career has included stints in private practice, where her practice focused on antitrust law; at the Federal Trade Commission, where she worked on several high-profile rulemaking proceedings; and at the Clorox Company, where she served as division counsel, and at Nestle Beverage Company, where she served as vice president and general counsel, as well as vice president and deputy general counsel of Nestle USA. Throughout her legal career she was one of a small number of women, and many times the only woman, in the room.

During her in-house career, she helped found and then chaired ACC’s Young Lawyers Committee. For more than 10 years, she served as a leader of the association and ultimately became the first woman to be elected board chair in 1995. While chair, she oversaw the first-ever diversity training for the ACC board. She was recognized by the State Bar of California for her outstanding leadership of the in-house community in California and nationwide.

The Bar Association of San Francisco also has recognized her as a pioneer in the legal profession.

But Ms. Holtz’s most important contribution to the success of other women lawyers has been through the company that she founded in 1996, ClientFocus. In founding ClientFocus, she recognized the critical importance that having one’s own clients plays in the achievement of professional satisfaction, success, and security for women in private practice. She realized that influence, personal autonomy, and financial reward depended upon the ability of women to develop their own “books of business.” And she recognized that the skills needed to “make rain” could be taught.

She has been very generous in sharing her knowledge about how women can be successful business developers. She literally wrote the book on rainmaking for women lawyers, Bringin’ in the Rain: A Woman Lawyer’s Guide to Business Development. In addition, she has freely given of her time to other organizations that are committed to helping women lawyers advance. She has been the featured speaker at numerous ABA Women Rainmakers programs and has made presentations to many other bar associations. Her articles have reached a large audience throughout the legal community.

Her Women Rainmakers Roundtable brings together women partners from all over the United States and Canada to learn critical business development skills. The results of the program are concrete—with most women participants feeling that their business development efforts are more effective and efficient as a result of participating in the program. Many members of the Roundtable have gone on to assume leadership roles in their firms, including becoming equity partners, practice group leaders, compensation and executive board members, and even managing partners.

Through the hundreds of women she has trained directly, and the thousands more who in turn have been mentored by these women, she has given women in private practice the confidence, inspiration, and skills necessary to achieve business development success. She has demystified the process of business development and made it accessible to women lawyers, whatever their personal strengths or practice area. By helping women lawyers become rainmakers, she has given them the tools they need to achieve their full potential.