At 39, on bed rest at five months pregnant with twin boys, and at a time before technology enabled telecommuting, Anastasia Kelly boldly stayed on partnership track that year at her BigLaw firm. “I knew that if I didn’t make partner, there was life outside of the firm. But if I stepped back from going for it, I knew I would die,” says Ms. Kelly. It was one of many career successes achieved and one of many challenges she would overcome in her career, along with helping other women to do the same.

The daughter of a Boston police officer, Ms. Kelly was the first in her family to attend college, graduating cum laude and eventually enrolling in a night program at George Washington University Law School, where she graduated magna cum laude. After making partner seven years into her legal career, Ms. Kelly moved to the first of four general counsel roles, where she focused on helping companies through crises and building effective legal and compliance frameworks. She joined Fannie Mae as general counsel, also serving as senior vice president. This position allowed her the opportunity she sought to demonstrate further her management and leadership skills and to cultivate successful teams. Ms. Kelly would go on to be recruited as general counsel to three additional major public companies, including Sears and MCI/WorldCom, where she helped lead the team that brought MCI out of bankruptcy and restructured the business, culminating in the acquisition of MCI by Verizon in 2006. She joined AIG in September, 2006 as executive vice president, general counsel, and chief regulatory and compliance officer and three years later assumed additional responsibilities as vice chairman, serving with AIG through the financial crisis.

In 2010, she became a partner at DLA Piper (Americas), one of the highest-grossing law firms in the U.S., with 4,200 attorneys worldwide. In 2013, she was appointed co-managing partner of the Americas, the first woman to hold that position. While of counsel to the firm in 2006, she helped to start its Leadership Alliance for Women, which is committed to the hiring, development, and advancement of women lawyers. She is a leader in the fields of governance and compliance and white collar crime and investigations, and, with connections in both the public and private sectors, Ms. Kelly is viewed as a respected and successful rainmaker who can bring in money and big clients to an organization.

Alongside major successes in her career, Ms. Kelly has been involved heavily in assisting other women to succeed in the field. A highlight of her professional and personal worlds has been the role as mentor to women lawyers, especially as related to becoming general counsel and navigating large companies. She is a frequent speaker and author in many forums and also was featured in the book, *Courageous Counsel: Conversations with Women General Counsel in the Fortune 500* (2013). Ms. Kelly is the editor of the *InsideCounsel* magazine Project 5/165, which works to increase the number of women general counsel in Fortune 500 companies.

As a lecturer at Stanford Law School and Georgetown Law School, Ms. Kelly shares her knowledge and experience with young, aspiring lawyers. As the first woman to grace the cover of *Diversity & the Bar Magazine*, she serves as a positive role model to women in the field. Ms. Kelly also is a founding board member of the Minority Corporate Counsel Association and author of the article, *Best Practices Study of Diversity Practices in Law Departments* (MCCA).

In her honor, *InsideCounsel* magazine created the Anastasia D. Kelly Transformative Leadership Award to recognize a general counsel who has shown a sustained commitment to accelerate the advancement of women to senior leadership roles in the law department and beyond. Unafraid to take risks while bringing up talent around her, Ms. Kelly is viewed as an empowering guide who will know when to give a gentle nudge to a woman who otherwise may be holding herself back. Ms. Kelly (or “Stasia” to those who know her) says, “I say women should take charge of their own destiny by leading and helping each other.” Through her work helping countless women who themselves have gone on to help others, and by serving as an inspiring role model in the legal field, Ms. Kelly truly embodies the values of the Margaret Brent Award.