

C L I F F O R D
C H A N C E



International
Women's Day

FIRST 100 YEARS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF WOMEN IN LAW:
REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST AND THE FUTURE



INTRODUCTION

This year marks the centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 which paved the way for women to become lawyers for the first time in England.

In commemoration of this milestone, we salute the trailblazers who awakened the world to the power of women in law. We also look to the future and resolve to build on their foundations by committing ourselves to creating an inclusive and diverse environment where there is equal opportunity for all to succeed.

Clifford Chance's new global gender parity group Accelerate>>> has pledged to take bold actions to accelerate the pace of change towards gender parity. We are especially proud this year to sponsor UK charity Spark 21's First 100 Years, an ambitious video history project documenting the journey of women in the legal profession from 1919 to the present day.

The First 100 Years project has inspired us to reflect on our own history and bring together the voices of some of our own 'first' women – each of whom paved new paths, broke new ground and, in their own way, played an important role in shaping the future of our firm.

Reflections compiles just some of these stories. We hope you enjoy them.



FOREWORD

GEETA KHEHAR



As we reflect on a brief period of our firm's history, I am delighted to offer my perspective – not only as a proud alumna, but as someone who personally benefitted from the presence and influence of many of the female trailblazers celebrated by this booklet.

It is remarkable that English law permitted women to practise as solicitors only 100 years ago. It is even more remarkable that it took City law firms another 50 years to open their innermost doors to female Partners. It is great to be able to say that Coward Chance was one of the first, with Rosalind Bax leading the way in 1971.

There were only a handful of female Partners when I joined the firm in 1988 – but their presence was critical. They were both sign-posts to a new order and working examples of how to get there. I strongly believe that visible and relatable role models can be important motivational drivers for those who feel in the minority.

I have always been in a minority. I was a third-generation Indian growing up in Kenya in East Africa, and was the first non-Catholic girl to be admitted to the convent-run school at which I studied. I later went to a university in the UK with a predominantly white campus, and then chose a career in an industry known to be male-dominated. Nevertheless, as a young professional, I remember finding inspiration in the indomitable women who were showing everyone what law firms could achieve if they increased their talent pool by including women – and I am so pleased that others can now read their stories.

“By sharing our stories, we encourage new generations to be part of the future they want to see.”

I became a Partner in 1997 and – in keeping with the “firsts” theme – was Clifford Chance’s first BAME female Partner. I loved the job, but it was undoubtedly at its most challenging after I had children. The pressure of balancing family life whilst continuing to provide first-class legal services to clients is a difficulty that recurs throughout the stories of the women acknowledged in this booklet. I am sure it continues to be a challenge for lawyers at the firm today. What is clear from their stories, however, is that balance can be achieved with compromise and an enormous amount of hard work – and the result can be a long-lasting and highly fulfilling career.

I remember asking about gender parity at partnership level in my interview at Coward Chance. The interviewer responded that, whilst the numbers weren’t yet there, the firm was working towards more equal representation, and hoped to achieve that in the next 10 to

15 years. Sadly, I think an interviewer would provide the same response today. Despite the statistics, however, there has been real progress: the workplace has evolved, our clients’ expectations have changed, and culture has shifted to encourage female participation and to help women voice their specific concerns.

We need more role models, we need more discussion on diversity topics – to better our understanding of how it feels to be visually estranged from your seniors. We need to convince our workforce that the job is worth it, and we need to problem solve for how we can convert our progress into improved statistics. The scene is set, the climate is right. What’s left is for action, and I hope that by sharing our stories, we encourage new generations to be part of the future they want to see.

ALICIA JOLLES

PARTNER, 1981



I studied Spanish and French at University and completed a PhD before deciding on law as a career. My first interview at a law firm in Westminster was, apparently, a success but I received a letter of rejection shortly afterwards on the grounds that the firm's Senior Partner – whose approval was needed – wouldn't hire women as lawyers. What strikes me the most now was my lack of surprise: I meekly accepted what would now elicit a call to arms!

I was interviewed at Coward Chance and remember batting away a line of enquiry about what I would do were I to marry or have children. I replied that I couldn't see the relevance of the question. Although unacceptable now, it was a standard question to ask at that time – firms seemed to believe that there were women who saw being a solicitor as a filler job before marriage and children, and therefore sought to assess a woman's commitment to the profession. It was a challenge to break those inherited assumptions. I remember, for example, paying a visit to a Partner and being mistaken for a secretary.

We had a female Partner, Rosalind Bax, who was one of the first female Partners in the City. She had completed her Articles at another firm but moved to Coward Chance and became a Partner in 1971. I liked to win (I still do!) and it would not have occurred to me to do anything other than strive for partnership. So, it was extremely important that I worked for a firm like Coward Chance where my career prospects would not be limited by gender.

I qualified into Litigation and became the second female Partner of Coward Chance in 1981 – and, indeed, the only female Partner in our Litigation practice for quite some time including after the merger. I profited from the fantastic support of Christopher McGonigal and other male Partners: we early female Partners owed a lot to those men who acted as our advocates. I was the first female Partner to have a baby. The firm responded well; there was no precedent and no rules to determine maternity leave. I was offered as much time as I needed and took three months paid leave. I could have taken longer, but I was aware that I was setting an example and did not wish to prejudice the chances of other women coming after me.

I was a Partner for 10 years before I left the firm to spend more time with my family. I loved the work and enjoyed the stimulus of working with good minds. I think that the training and practice that a top City law firm provides is of such a standard that it stands you in good stead throughout your life.

Today, the climate is much more favourable to women – I believe that women can do anything: the world really is their oyster.

“We early female Partners owed a lot to those men who acted as our advocates.”

FRANCOISE PANNIER

PARTNER, 1966



Looking back on my 30-year career as a lawyer, I remember how much I enjoyed the work.

I studied law at the University of Lille and qualified as a lawyer in 1960. Following this, I moved to Munich where I worked for a short while before moving to Paris to join Sheridan Hickey & Co in 1962. Our firm merged with Clifford-Turner later that year to form Clifford-Turner's first overseas office. I became a Partner in 1966.

For a long time, I was the firm's only female lawyer working in the Paris office. Life as a young lawyer in our small practice was demanding yet rewarding: we learned on the job and had to flex to meet changing economic conditions. It was a time when I personally knew no other female lawyers in Paris. However, I saw myself first and foremost as a lawyer, and I believe my attitude encouraged my clients and colleagues to do the same.

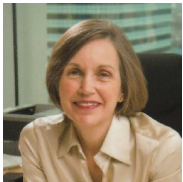
Of course, there were a few challenges along the way. For instance, when I started at Sheridan Hickey & Co, I soon discovered that a male peer was earning 33 percent more than me. I raised the pay discrepancy with the Managing Partner and demanded equal pay. He increased my pay accordingly. I remember a second instance which wasn't resolvable: a client refused to work with me, requesting a male colleague instead. At that time, I had little option but to oblige. I remember not taking any of these instances personally – it was simply a sign of the times – but, as I reflect now, I am glad that there have been such positive strides towards equal gender treatment.

I very much enjoyed my 30 years at Clifford-Turner/Clifford Chance. I experienced two mergers and helped grow our Paris office from five employees to approximately two hundred (as far as I remember). I retired as a lawyer in 1992, grateful for a long and fulfilling career. My advice to young lawyers is to take pleasure in your work and let it instil a sense of purpose.

“I personally knew no other female lawyers in Paris. But I saw myself first and foremost as a lawyer, and I believe my attitude encouraged my clients and colleagues to do the same.”

KATE HOWLES

PARTNER, 1986



When I interviewed for Articles at Coward Chance in 1976, I was uncertain about my career choice but was attracted to law as a language-based discipline and hoped that I would be able to use my French and German (my degree subject at Oxford University) at an international firm. I could not have predicted that I would later become one of the firm's earlier female Partners, the first female chair of the Partner Selection Group and the firm's first Knowledge Development Partner.

I was made a Partner in 1986 – one year before the merger of Coward Chance and Clifford-Turner. During my career as a Corporate/M&A lawyer, I worked on some fantastic deals and was able to use my language skills and cultural affinity with Europeans to build strong relationships with clients (and colleagues) from the continent. A particular highlight was acting on the merger of the leading French, German and Spanish aerospace companies to form what is today the Airbus Group.

I was one of the core team of Partners which represented the UK government on the privatisation of the Water Authorities in England and Wales which was an extraordinarily challenging deal: it involved the simultaneous flotation of 10 different companies on the stock market, required major legislation and was the first significant flotation to take place after the introduction of financial services regulation in the UK.

That deal also coincided with the birth of my first child, in 1989. I remember telling David Childs (as lead Partner on the deal) that I was pregnant and that my baby was due a few weeks before Impact Day. His first reaction was: "That's terrific news, I'm so happy for you"; his second: "What are we going to do?" It is an exchange that has stuck with me – because his reaction was

characteristic of the supportive environment to which I had grown accustomed.

There were not many female Partners in those days, let alone female Partners with children. I joined a small working group of Partners to draft an amendment to the Partnership Agreement which for the first time regularised maternity leave for female Partners: three months paid, and a further three months unpaid. The three months I took off for each of my two children was not long, but I found re-entry to work was eased by my short absence. I think balancing family life with full-time work will always be a challenge; one that inevitably means subcontracting aspects of your parental role to someone else. It's a personal choice whether you are comfortable with that or not.

I was at the firm for 34 very happy years. Clifford Chance has always been forward-looking, built by many talented people who pass on their skills and experience from one generation to the next. As a result, the firm has constantly evolved and created new opportunities for its people (the mergers in 1987 and 2000 being obvious examples). Based on my own experience, I would encourage lawyers to work with as many different people as possible, to volunteer for opportunities and to seek out regular feedback and career guidance.

“I would encourage lawyers to work with as many different people as possible, to volunteer for opportunities and to seek out regular feedback and career guidance.”

HELEN COX PARTNER, 1989



I started my Articles at Coward Chance aged 21 having graduated top of my class in Law at University College London. I qualified into our banking practice but shortly left the firm following my marriage and a move to St Albans which preceded the birth of my three children (all of whom, at one stage, were under the age of 18 months).

I started work at a regional law firm in Watford, but it soon became clear to me that I missed the faster pace and big-ticket deals of the City. I returned to Clifford Chance in 1984 having agreed with my husband that he would assume the main household responsibilities. Within five years I was a Partner.

I effectively re-joined the firm as a newly qualified and ranked behind my contemporaries as a result. I wanted to accelerate my career growth. I drew inspiration from the (predominantly male) Partners around me who offered their clients a 24-hour service. So, I never took a sick-day and I sought to grow the firm in a new direction.

I benefitted from the support of two senior Partners, Michael Mockridge and Tom Woodburn, who saw that I was determinedly ambitious and encouraged me to explore new opportunities in Pensions which had, until then, only been provided by private client services. Pension Funds were becoming bigger players in the market – and it was an exciting area of potential growth for the firm. I recruited associates and grew the practice and eventually became Head of our (much larger) Pensions team, leading on matters such as the privatisation of the coal industry where we acted for the British Government. Ultimately, I have always been a self-starter and I love that the firm afforded me the opportunity to be an entrepreneur in a big business.

I never felt that I was treated differently for being a woman. I think this is because I didn't feel any different: I performed the job exactly as my male peers did. I live by the maxim that "a man can do all things if he will" (Leon Battista Alberti) and I have never considered that this adage applies any less to women than it does to men.

“ I live by the maxim that ‘a man can do all things, if he will’. I have never considered that this adage applies any less to women than it does to men.”

KATHERINE COATES

PARTNER, 1990



I knew I wanted to be a City lawyer from the age of 16. I studied law at Oxford and applied for Articles at several of the top London firms. I chose Coward Chance because it felt more modern: not only was I impressed to be interviewed by a female Partner, Rosalind Bax, but it was the only firm not to ask me (aged 20) about my marriage aspirations. 38 years later, I have helped establish three market-leading practice areas, headed the firm's Global Insurance Sector Group and managed a team which currently boasts more female Partners and Associates than male.

There were two female Partners when I started in 1981– Rosalind and Alicia Jolles – both extremely approachable. Kate Howles soon after became a Partner in Corporate (where I qualified) and served both as an inspiration and a source of support throughout the early stages of my career. The Corporate team also benefitted from the leadership of Michael Mockridge who was very open-minded and advocated for men and women alike.

I enjoyed the cut and thrust of M&A transactions, but it could be tough: there were so few women in that area at that time, and certain clients and investment bankers struggled to work with

us. You often felt like you had to be twice as good to achieve the same level of respect. I made the decision in 1988 to join Tim Herrington who was building a new practice area which would provide both transactional and regulatory advice to financial services clients. I was asked to focus on private equity funds formation and insurance clients. The practice grew rapidly and at one stage covered Private Equity funds, Financial Institutions corporate and regulatory advice and Derivatives.

I became a Partner in 1990. Client networking continued to be heavily male-focused for a while: I remember having to miss a closing dinner because the venue was a men-only private members club. But there was real camaraderie amongst the female Partners. We established a dinner club which met monthly and which both facilitated internal networking and functioned as a forum where we could chat openly about our experiences.

For me, one of the trickier aspects of being a Partner was balancing work demands with family demands. The firm was, however, generally very helpful, and I was fortunate to have an incredibly supportive husband and good childcare – but it was hard work nonetheless. I am pleased to have seen it through and it's important to me that I acted as a role model to my two daughters who are fiercely independent and haven't thought

twice about the prospect of managing a career alongside their family commitments - one has even decided she wants to be a City lawyer.

I hope I have also helped and encouraged the women in my team. I feel strongly that only enabling flexible working is not synonymous with female career investment. We need to help our female lawyers believe that the road is open to them and

that they can aspire to career progression and manage their family responsibilities. I am proud that we have consistently retained female Associates and promoted several women to partnership in the group. I think it shows that the presence of proximate and visible role models can help break down some of the psychological barriers inhibiting women from believing that partnership is both achievable and worthwhile.

“My two daughters are fiercely independent and haven't thought twice about the prospect of managing a career alongside their family commitments.”

DANIELA WEBER-REY

PARTNER, 1992



I believe that when you conquer one room, you should look for the door to a larger one. That ethic drove me throughout my career and continues to drive me in life.

I became a Partner and later an Equity Partner at the German and Continental European law firm, Pünder, Volhard, Weber & Axster, which merged with Clifford Chance in 2000. Whilst at Pünder, I opened its New York office as the resident associate, oversaw a 'clean-up' operation of the Moscow office, and was Head of the Corporate practice in Germany – and for a while was the only female Partner with children. It was very unusual in those days for women in Germany to pursue a career fulltime and have children. So much so that my children were once interviewed by the press on how they coped in a family with two working parents. I was also instrumental in driving Pünder's merger with Clifford Chance in 2000.

Post-merger, I continued with Clifford Chance as Co-Head of Corporate in Germany. I later became Continental European Head of the Financial Institution Group, a member of the Partnership Council and ran for the position of Clifford Chance's first non-UK (and first female) Senior Partner up to a final tie-vote. I also worked a lot in our Paris office for my French clients which led to the creation of the firm's Franco-German team.

My greatest challenge – without doubt – was managing my career whilst making the best of family life. I think it is important that you don't hide such challenges nor apologise for them. To make up time, I used to invite both colleagues and clients to my home to dine with my family which strengthened relationships and contextualised my position. I spent time investing in my support network at work: Thomas Gasteyer, a former Managing Partner who still works in our Frankfurt office, mentored me

throughout my early years at Pünder and continues to be a friend, and my secretary, Maria, has been with me my entire career (part-time even after Clifford Chance). But rigorous organisation, mental resilience and determination also drove my career forwards. I took a very short maternity leave for each baby and even held a conference call a couple of hours after giving birth to one of my children.

I left the firm in 2013 to assume the position of Chief Governance Officer and Deputy Head Compliance at Deutsche Bank – after five years on the board of BNP Paribas as a non-executive member (whilst at Clifford Chance). I am since a long-term member of the Governmental Commission of the German Corporate Governance Code and the Board of the European Corporate Governance Institute – and now also a non-executive member of the Boards of HSBC Trinkaus & Burkhardt AG and FNAC DARTY group.

I have learnt many lessons during my career. First, do not choose between family or career – go for both. There is never a right time for children: so just get started. Second, create your own opportunities and strive for greater contribution – do not shy away from responsibility. Finally, you need to weather challenges and be ready to adapt to change. As Clifford Chance looks to navigate a post-Brexit Europe, this sentiment is as relevant today as it was in the 90s.

“When you conquer one room, you should look for the door to a larger one. That ethic continues to drive me in life.”

JANE CARVER

PARTNER, 1989



I graduated in London with first class honours and started my career at a boutique City law firm. Two years after qualification, I decided to leave: I wanted to be a Partner and it was clear that women were not able to progress to partnership at that firm. I interviewed at other firms and recall often being asked whether I intended to marry and have children. I always refused to answer on the basis that they would not have asked the same question of a man! Fortunately, no such questions were asked in my interview at Coward Chance and I joined the firm in 1986.

I was impressed by the number of female Partners at Coward Chance at that time (compared with other firms). Kate Howles was a role model for me – she was great with clients and made law fun, all with apparent effortlessness. I joined the then nascent Real Estate Finance practice and became a Partner in 1989 aged 30. Over the next 20 years, I helped build the Real Estate Finance division into its now market-leading practice and also helped train IT electronic documentation.

Overall, I felt Clifford Chance was a progressive and meritocratic place to work – especially compared with certain contemporary firms which were renowned at the time for being ‘boys clubs’. Of course, we did have to fight for the right to wear trousers.

I was also involved in the campaign to amend the Partnership Agreement to provide for three months paid (plus three months unpaid) maternity leave. I was the first female Real Estate Partner with children – and it was important that the Partnership Agreement reflected the changing composition of the partnership.

I was very invested in the recruitment, training and development of associates. I enjoyed being a member of the firm’s interviewing panel for Trainees and Associates and remain in touch with some Trainees for whom I acted as a mentor. Clifford Chance always had an amazing collegiate atmosphere – despite its global reach – and I have been fortunate to convert some of those relationships into life-long friendships.

I saw three recessions over the course of my career and it taught me the importance of being adaptable in a world which is constantly changing. I can honestly say that I never experienced a boring day in my career. Of course, there were stressful ones! I found the hardest part was juggling work with family responsibilities: it necessitated efficiency and organisation in the office as well as exceptional and reliable help at home. Oh, and an incredibly supportive husband and a well-developed sense of humour!

“Three recessions over the course of my career has taught me the importance of being adaptable in a world which is constantly changing.”

NANCY JACKLIN

PARTNER, 1992



I joined Clifford Chance in 1992 as the first female Partner, and US national, in its New York office and arrived via an unconventional route.

I was an international economics major at Georgetown University: despite there being circa 25 women in a class of 200, two women graduated top of the class – and we were both named Nancy! My first job was to serve as Attorney Advisor to the US Treasury, my second as Assistant General Counsel to the Federal Reserve, and my third as Sector Counsel of International Banking and Finance at Citibank.

Whilst at Citibank, I worked with Clifford Chance as our principal English legal counsel and became familiar with several senior Partners. At a panel event on International Sanctions in Vienna, I remember discussing the increasingly global nature of the world's financial markets with Hugh Pigott and the potential it created for law firms to develop an international “one-stop” finance practice for their clients. Whilst Clifford Chance had opened a New York practice in 1986 (staffed with lawyers from London and Europe), there was still entrenched separation between UK and US firms when it came to the practice of UK and US law. Hugh and I conceived a vision which we pitched to the remainder of the partnership: we were going to plug the gap, and I was to be the ‘man on the ground’.

The US practice grew steadily as we recruited lawyers from top US firms. Within nine years we became a team comprised of 60 lawyers and 10 Partners, and eventually merged with an established US firm. I remember attending a dinner on foreign relations a few weeks after first joining the firm and being referred to by a senior partner of a Wall Street law firm as “Nancy, the most notorious lawyer in New York today”. I confess that whilst I knew Clifford Chance was ahead of its peer firms,

I hadn't computed quite how pioneering our step into the US market had been.

I worked predominantly with men whilst at the firm – but I was used to operating in a male-dominated environment. I remember my Associates bidding me luck before a strategic partnership meeting on an issue where my viewpoint was known to be in the minority – and I also remember enjoying the expressions of those Associates when I left that meeting with a smile on my face. I enjoyed acting as a role model to male and female associates alike – but I was sad that we weren't able to recruit more women ready to break new ground.

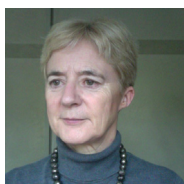
After leaving Clifford Chance in 2002, I became the US Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund, and after retiring from that post in 2006, became a director on the boards of the Alliance Bernstein mutual funds. I also lectured at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies until 2015.

I have found that a successful career is often the product of passion for your work, a willingness to learn and take risk, as well as working hard to excel. Your career is yours alone – and only you can take proactive steps to ensure its success. My advice to young associates is look for career trajectories, keep building towards the next dimension and if you are not in the right environment, move on.

“Your career is yours alone – and only you can take proactive steps to ensure its success.”

JANE BUSH

PARTNER, 1988



I remember my interview at Clifford-Turner vividly. I had travelled to London from Exeter and was grilled by three Partners on various technical aspects of the law. Despite (or perhaps because of!) this, I was instantly attracted to the firm and was thrilled to accept an offer to start my Articles at Clifford-Turner in 1980.

It was a great time to be a woman entering the legal profession. I joined when Katherine Hill was a Partner and law firms were recruiting close to equal numbers of men and women. Marian Thomas soon became a Partner in 1984 and a further handful of women were made-up as part of the merger in 1987. I remember admiring Kate Howles in particular, who was making inroads in a very male-dominated space. In 1988, I took my seat amongst the female Partners in the newly merged Clifford Chance.

I truly felt that Clifford Chance was a meritocracy: I was good at my job and was oblivious to any obstacles of gender. But I did benefit from the fantastic sponsorship of Armel Cates who helped promote me, and several other women, to partnership.

I remember that he always took the time to teach and share his knowledge with his Associates. In turn, he inspired me to do the same. I endeavoured to support junior lawyers and offer direction whenever and however I could.

One of my career highlights was working with Habib Motani, a real pioneer of Clifford Chance's derivatives team, to expand the firm's derivatives practice. We worked extremely well together, and our collaboration was very successful. I have learnt that it is important to stand up for yourself and not to worry about what others think. You must ask questions – especially if you don't understand: it's never too early to find your voice.

I left the firm in 2009 after 29 years but continued to support the firm via the Academy. I am a car enthusiast, famously buying a Ferrari in the mid-1990s – my car collection has now expanded and aged, and you can sometimes find me participating in mildly competitive vintage motor sport!

“ You must ask questions – especially if you don't understand. It's never too early to find your voice.”

VANESSA MARSLAND

PARTNER, 1987



I did not always know I wanted to be a lawyer. In fact, I started at Cambridge University studying French and Latin. It was only when I decided to change subject midstream and consulted my parents that I was struck by law as an option. My father pointed out (as only parents can) that I was argumentative by nature, so why not try the law?

I completed my Articles at a West End firm, Boodle Hatfield, and qualified into their Litigation team. Although the firm was best known for its real estate practice, I was fortunate to work on a couple of IP cases as a Trainee and post-qualification. It was soon clear to me that I wanted to practise at a firm where IP litigation work was mainstream. I interviewed at several firms but enjoyed my experience at Clifford-Turner most by far.

Clifford-Turner felt entrepreneurial and modern. It distinguished itself from other firms of its calibre by recruiting outside of Oxbridge and outside of the top public schools. I think this outlook helped to accelerate its attitudinal shift towards women. When I started at Clifford-Turner in 1982, not only were there female Partners at the firm but also strong female associates in the IP team. It was a happy team doing interesting work. In the years that followed, the group worked on many high-profile

cases for clients such as Apple and Lego, as well as a massive and long-running trade secrets arbitration for PPG Industries and a dispute regarding the rights to make James Bond films.

I became a Partner in 1987 (on the day of the Clifford-Turner/Coward Chance merger) aged 30. I was, and still am, devoted to IP law – it's such an interesting and constantly evolving area. I have also been fortunate to work in and lead an extraordinary team who have supported me unwaveringly throughout my career, and to whom I feel a deep sense of loyalty.

My impression as an early female partner was that some women thought we were mono-dimensional because they defined us as our job and assumed we had completely outsourced or abandoned any family lives. I vividly recall an early session with an academic from Harvard in the 80s who reported that our female associates did not necessarily see the current female partners as role models. I learnt from that session that sharing our broader lives, including as working mums, was really important to help broaden the debate. I have two daughters aged 26 and 29 – both forging very interesting and very different careers from mine. I am very proud of my girls and they partly define me.

So much has changed since I first started – perhaps most conspicuous is the introduction of the internet and the impact of advanced technology. We are now always online, and I am pleased to see the firm develop policies on agile working to mitigate the toll of feeling permanently on-call. Women can now wear trousers! Men can benefit from contractual parental leave and law firms are being kicked off pitches for failing to have women on their teams or implying thought leadership is a white male province.

Lawyers today have an opportunity to contribute to the shifting landscape of law firms: make the most of the fantastic opportunities available, be adaptable, and enjoy the journey. I am certainly still enjoying mine.

“ Make the most of the fantastic opportunities available, be adaptable, and enjoy the journey. I’m certainly still enjoying mine.”

MARIAN THOMAS

PARTNER, 1984



I joined Clifford-Turner in 1979 from the Office of the Solicitor of Inland Revenue. At my interview, the tax Partners were friendly and encouraging and, upon joining, I was delighted to discover that the entire tax team was congenial and afforded a supportive working environment. I became Clifford-Turner's second ever female Partner.

There were no female Partners in the tax team, so my role models were predominantly male – all excellent lawyers and very decent people. I was accustomed to working in male environments (I studied at Oxford University at a time when the vast majority of undergraduates were male) and, in any event, I was warmly welcomed and treated as an equal from the start. I was made a Partner in 1984 – five years after our first female Partner, Katherine Hill.

As I knew Katherine, seeing her gave me encouragement that there was a path to partnership for women at the firm. Katherine left soon after I became a Partner – so there was a year or so when I was the only female Partner at Clifford-Turner. Following the merger of Clifford-Turner and Coward Chance, many more women were made up: it was a really exciting time for the firm and I think we started to believe that gender was irrelevant to a person's career prospects – which was notable, given that some City firms still had something of a reputation for hiring few women.

I work by the rule that anything worth doing, is worth doing well. I became thoroughly absorbed in my work, with many of my deals requiring both mental and physical endurance. I remember weekends when a meeting would start Saturday afternoon and finish with breakfast on Sunday before drafting documents into the next night in advance of Monday. I recall spending consecutive days and nights in offices overlooking Lincoln's Inn Fields – feeling like we arrived in summer and left in winter! I have always admired others who can compartmentalise their lives but that's not me: I work best when I fully immerse myself in one project at a time.

Although I wouldn't say that I consciously set out to be a role model to others, I'm a firm believer in leading by example. If I did inspire anyone, I hope that I encouraged them not to be afraid to throw themselves into transactions. You have an outstanding opportunity at Clifford Chance to work on complex deals with market experts: make the most of it. After 31 years at the firm (I still think I am catching up on sleep!), I can honestly say that I did my best to do so.

“ We started to believe that gender was irrelevant to a person's career prospects – which was notable, given that some City firms still had something of a reputation for hiring few women.”

WENDY MILLER

PARTNER, 1991



I joined Clifford-Turner in 1982 as an articulated clerk: the firm felt young and dynamic despite that (as was not uncommon for the time) there was only one female partner, Katherine Hill. Katherine was incredibly bright and didn't conform to the style of the time which was to act and dress like a man. In summer, she would come to work in a floral skirt and t-shirt. It was refreshing to see a successful woman be her own person and she soon became a role model.

I shared an office with Katherine during my Trainee stint in Real Estate and later qualified into her department in 1984 before moving to Litigation. I remember her offering some advice which proved salient at the time: don't hide the fact that you are working hard – it's important for people to know. Although attitudes were changing, the old culture still expected women to be less ambitious and less "pushy". She wanted me to be aware of this and to mitigate against that assumption by demonstrably showing my commitment.

I moved to Litigation where I built the firm's Real Estate Litigation practice. It was hard work treading an untrodden path, but I really enjoyed the process of building a specialist practice where there had been none before and I was generally well-supported in my ambition.

I became a Partner in 1991 and was the only female Litigation Partner for a while (Alicia Jolles left the firm shortly before I was made-up). Clifford Chance was nimble and quick to adapt to the changing demands of its clients; I enjoyed working in a culture that was forward-thinking and sought to anticipate its client's needs. It was an exciting time to be a Partner in the firm. I had my first child shortly after I became a Partner in 1991 and benefitted from the recently-enshrined maternity leave drafted into our Partnership Agreement – although I never considered

taking the full entitlement of leave. I can't pretend that it wasn't tough managing my family life with my career; I imagine it's much the same for women today. But I think it's important to be true to yourself at work and honest about how you are feeling.

I remember working with a fierce and excellent litigation Associate who sat in my office and had been my Trainee. She had a habit of rattling off razor-sharp arguments on calls with the other side, phone tucked under her chin and her free hand painting her nails. I was once asked by another Partner to ask her to stop: I remember responding that he should explain why it matters – and ask her himself! I wonder now if Katherine's example influenced that exchange. In any event, I hope that I helped that associate to be herself – as Katherine had helped me. I know she went on to achieve partnership at an excellent law firm.

I left Clifford Chance after nearly 25 years to become Head of Real Estate Disputes at Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner – where I continue to work.

“Don't hide the fact that you're working hard – it's important for people to know.”

KATE GIBBONS

PARTNER, 1991



I never intended to be a lawyer. In fact, I took proactive steps to redirect my path away from law, including an attempt to change degree behind my father's back. My grandmother was a suffragette, my mother was an officer in the Airforce, and my father was a real proponent of women. He believed in me and my sister completely: he wanted us to be career-orientated and to prove ourselves as women. Eventually, I did surrender to the call of law – and I am still today driven by my father's ambitions for me and the example of my mother and grandmother.

I became a Partner at Clifford Chance in 1991 and now act as the firm's Global Knowledge Partner, chairing the firm's Knowledge Committee and Thought Leadership Board serving on the global and London legal opinions committees and the Executive Operations Group. I interviewed at Clifford-Turner in 1985 having completed my Articles at another firm and worked at the Royal Bank of Canada. Arnel Cates and Stuart Popham interviewed me. They were both great advocates of women with Arnel overseeing the promotion of many female Partners in Finance.

There were a few female Partners when I joined Clifford-Turner. I was impressed by Marian Thomas who was an intellectual powerhouse and Jane Carver who offered a great mixture of fierce intellect and comradely support. I also vividly remember meeting Elizabeth Knox when she was a Partner at Coward Chance (our opposing counsel). I had never sat in a room with a female Partner on a transaction. She was charming and commanding – a different model of Partner which was exciting to see as a female associate.

There are many career highlights including from my time in the Japan and Hong Kong offices. From a professional perspective, I developed our relationship with Natwest not by tapping into their syndicated loans work (which was the original brief) but by finding other significant opportunities in their structured finance workstreams. Within three years, Natwest went from being a low-billing client to the third highest billing client of the firm. Perhaps another moment of note was when I received a letter from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority thanking me for saving the Hong Kong monetary system.

From a personal perspective, however, it was the support I received from the partnership when I most needed it. When I returned from Hong Kong, I had three children, a number which at the time one nanny agency described as rendering me un-nannyable. My billings were excellent, my client base growing, but the cost felt too high and, after failing to find suitable care for the children, something had to give so I submitted my resignation. The Partners asked me not to resign and gave me three months' leave to consider my options. I returned to a curated role which focused on writing our firm's securitisation templates. That role has developed over time into my current position. With the technology that exists today, I could have managed the situation. Technology has certainly revolutionised the way we work. But I think lawyers continue to find it very hard to manage child care with client demands.

Clifford Chance is not alone in needing to rise to the challenge of matching the life balance expectations of its lawyers with the sometimes-all-consuming demands of its clients. We need to continue to work hard to resolve this conundrum. What keeps me going and, indeed, is a source of great career satisfaction, is the people with whom I work. We cannot afford to lose sight of their importance as colleagues and clients. After all, our job is nothing if it is not about people. How they think, what concerns them, and whether they repose trust in you: that must be our bottom line focus.

“Our job is nothing if it is not about people. How they think, what concerns them, and whether they repose trust in you: that must be our bottom line focus.”

ELIZABETH KNOX

PARTNER, 1985



When I read History at Cambridge, one in nine places was available to women. I knew that to achieve the long-term satisfactory career that I wanted, it would be more difficult for me than my male contemporaries and I would need to work harder to be taken seriously. I decided post-graduation that a professional qualification would be the best objective (and least disputable) evidence of my abilities and commitment. I chose law because it seemed to offer an opportunity to combine academic and practical skills. It was unusual for women to work in the City at that time, but the financial world appealed to me. I did not want to be pushed into the traditional female work of family law and divorce.

I completed my Articles at Slaughter and May as the firm's third ever female Trainee. It was a great firm but, in those days, Trainees did not choose their post-qualification department and I was sent to the Private Client department. I moved as soon as I could to another major firm to pursue transactional finance but eventually hit the glass ceiling. I had two children and it was assumed that my domestic considerations had consumed my partnership ambitions. One was isolated as a woman at that time: I remember being five years qualified before I worked with another female solicitor on one of my deals.

I was pregnant with my third child when I interviewed for Coward Chance and even offered the firm a chance to rescind their job offer when I informed them of my pregnancy – such were the times. Fortunately, they did not rescind the offer and three years later I became the firm's first female Finance Partner.

My career at Clifford Chance was extremely varied and interesting. I managed the Singapore office from 1997 to 1999 after a five-year stint in the Hong Kong office. I also worked in Milan from 2003 to 2009 advising on multiple European cross-border

securitisation deals and the first Italian covered bond. I loved working, being challenged constantly and the camaraderie of a deal. If we encountered someone rude or difficult, I used to advise my juniors to retaliate with overwhelming charm.

I feel very fortunate that I enjoyed a rich professional and personal life – but it has required hard work, the fortune of good health, and determination. I have seven children but had in total less maternity leave than is now usual for one child. When I first had children, there was considerable hostility to working mothers. I was told many times that my career risked damaging my children's wellbeing. My children are now variously employed: two of them are even solicitors. When I see my elder daughter working as a full-time solicitor in the financial world with two children (leading much the life I led), I know my children do not think that having a working mother put them at a disadvantage. Given my temperament, it would have been a pity not to have had a family; and impossible not to have worked. I am glad that I did both.

I think it is extremely important that you take the time to determine what you want and to work out what you need to do to achieve it – and then to be vocal about your ambitions. Today, women have greater opportunities and better support systems than ever: use them to strengthen your voice. If you know what you want, do not wait to be invited to the party.

“ I think it is extremely important to take the time to determine what you want and what you need to do to achieve it – and then to be vocal about your ambitions.”

FIRST FEMALE PARTNERS

CLIFFORD CHANCE

1966	Françoise Pannier	Clifford-Turner
1971	Rosalind Bax	Coward Chance
1979	Katherine Hill	Clifford-Turner
1981	Alicia Jolles	Coward Chance
1984	Marian Thomas	Clifford-Turner
1985	Elizabeth Knox	Coward Chance
1986	Kate Howles	Coward Chance
1986	Anne Williamson	Coward Chance
1987	Gabrielle Abbott	Clifford Chance
1987	Jeanne Constable	Clifford Chance
1987	Vanessa Marsland	Clifford Chance
1988	Jane Bush	Clifford Chance
1988	Elizabeth Heister	Clifford Chance
1988	Elizabeth Young	Clifford Chance
1989	Jane Carver	Clifford Chance
1989	Helen Cox	Clifford Chance
1990	Katherine Coates	Clifford Chance
1990	Diane Relf	Clifford Chance
1991	Kate Gibbons	Clifford Chance
1991	Wendy Miller	Clifford Chance
1992	Nancy Jacklin	Clifford Chance

CLIFFORD CHANCE

Accelerate>>> was founded and chaired by Alice Jefferis and Stephanie Huts. Melissa Coakley and Hermione Allen lead Clifford Chance's collaboration with the First 100 Years Project and Reflections was curated by Hermione Allen with assistance from Priyanka Paunrana, Jack Lewis, Tom Marr, Rachel Williams, Jay Jamooji and Anna Buscaglia.

For more information, please email:
[**hermione.allen@cliffordchance.com**](mailto:hermione.allen@cliffordchance.com)

Our thanks to the following of our First Women for participating:

Alicia Jolles
Katherine Coates
Daniela Weber
Elizabeth Knox
Francoise Pannier
Geeta Khehar
Kate Gibbons
Helen Cox
Jane Bush
Jane Carver
Kate Howles
Marion Thomas
Vanessa Marsland
Nancy Jacklin
Wendy Miller

Clifford Chance, 10 Upper Bank Street, London, E14 5JJ

© Clifford Chance 2019

Clifford Chance LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales under number OC323571.

Registered office: 10 Upper Bank Street, London, E14 5JJ

We use the word 'partner' to refer to a member of Clifford Chance LLP, or an employee or consultant with equivalent standing and qualifications.

[**WWW.CLIFFORDCHANCE.COM**](http://WWW.CLIFFORDCHANCE.COM)