

THE WOMEN IN LAW INITIATIVE INTRODUCES
JUSTITIA AWARDS 2023



EDITORIAL

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the *Justitia Awards 2023!* *The Women in Law Initiative* is proud to present the most outstanding women in the legal professions this year. Once again, the response to the Call for Nominations was overwhelming and exceeded all our expectations. All nominees are champions in their own right and deserve the recognition they receive by being nominated. Nonetheless, our *Laureates' Election Committee* mastered the daunting task of reviewing over 170 nominations from 5 continents. They identified stellar women in law for the shortlists and chose the winners in each category in a painstaking pro-

cess. As President of the *Woman in Law Initiative* and *Secretary General* of the *Justitia Awards*, our sincere thanks go to the *Members of the Laureates' Election Committee* for their diligent work.

Now let's celebrate the best of the best in the three categories.

Please save the date for our next International Women in Law Conference, which will be held from September 12 – 14, 2024. We look forward to welcoming you all to Vienna.

Yours truly,



Dr. Alix Frank-Thomasser
President of Women in Law

Prof. Franz J. Heidinger
Secretary General of the Justitia Award

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The Women in Law Initiative



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"Diversity is a core value to us."



INTRODUCING THE WOMEN IN LAW INITIATIVE

ALIX FRANK-THOMASSER

PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN IN LAW INITIATIVE

Based in Central Europe, *the Women in Law Initiative* (WiL) is organized through the Austrian NPO *Women in Law – Frauen im Recht* (an association under Austrian law). I am Dr. Alix Frank-Thomasser, attorney-at-law and President of WiL, which I founded together with Prof. Franz J. Heidinger and Mag.^a Jasmin Malekpour-Augustin in the Spring of 2018. *Women in Law* strives to connect women (and male allies) in all fields of law and offers them a platform to discuss contemporary issues, learn from each other, and network across industry sectors and borders. We endeavor to open previously closed doors for women, improve women’s situation in the legal professions, and strengthen female leadership. We connect not only practitioners but also researchers and scholars, from law students to retired lawyers. Together with our Academic Advisory Board members, we constantly research how to make the legal professions genuinely diverse. Prof. Franz J. Heidinger and Mag.^a Jasmin Malekpour-Augustin

designed a *Women in Law University Course* which is regularly offered at the *University of Vienna* (Juridicum) and the *Vienna University of Economics and Business* (WU Wien) and previously also at the *University of Graz*. We wish to accelerate women’s legal careers through an outstanding networking platform and by providing tailored education on the relevant issues. The *Women in Law Initiative* has gained wide acceptance and operates under the patronage of UNESCO. We are thankful for the tremendous support of our many *sponsors and partners*.

In September 2022, we hosted our third international conference, which was attended by 200 distinguished participants and speakers from all over the world. It provided female legal professionals with various tools and tips on successfully managing a career in law.

The *Fourth International Women in Law Conference* is in Vienna, Austria, from September 14-16, 2023. With our *Justitia Awards*, we honor outstanding female legal professionals from around the globe.



SELECTING THE LAUREATES

FRANZ J. HEIDINGER

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE JUSTITIA AWARDS AND MALE ALLY

The *Justitia Awards* honor outstanding female laureates from all legal professions in one of three categories:

CATEGORY 1

International Leaders / Lifetime Award

This category celebrates the most talented and impactful women in the legal professions and recognizes their achievements and contributions to society. The nominees should be “the” outstanding woman of the year, demonstrating excellence as the most innovative and groundbreaking lifetime achiever.

CATEGORY 2

Academia

Nominees have made a significant impact, delivered qualitatively and/or quantitatively measurable tangible results relative to the invested resources, and influenced demonstrable changes in attitudes, beliefs and practices towards gender equality in legal professions.

CATEGORY 3

Young Achievers / Game Changers / Pioneers

Nominees are game changers who have had an impact in the promotion of innovative approaches resulting in opportunities for *Women in Law*, or are young legal professional who have shattered the glass ceiling in their field. This includes new ways of working when “business as usual” has failed and innovative “out-of-the-box” solutions have succeeded. They have demonstrated innovation regarding the topics covered, the methodology employed, the channels used to create opportunities and/or other aspects.

The *Justitia Laureates’ Election Committee* has reviewed each nomination for the *Justitia Awards*, short-listed the finalists and selected the laureates of the categories for the *Justitia Awards 2023*. **Meet the Election Committee on the following pages!**

► [You can watch the award ceremony on our YouTube Channel](#)

LAUREATES' ELECTION COMMITTEE

THE JUSTITIA AWARDS ELECTION COMMITTEE HAS REVIEWED EACH NOMINATION FOR THE JUSTITIA AWARDS, SHORTLISTED THE FINALISTS AND SELECTED THE LAUREATES OF THE CATEGORIES FOR THE JUSTITIA AWARDS 2023.

Maria Berger | Maria Berger is a *Justitia Award* laureate, as well as a former member of the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, and the EU Court of Justice.

Dora Bertrandt | Dora Bertrandt, Founder of Paragaphinnen and **Justitia Award** Laureate.

Brigitte Bierlein | Brigitte Bierlein is a *Justitia Award* Laureate, she was the first female President of the Austrian Constitutional Court. In 2019, she was appointed as Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria – the first woman in Austria's history to hold this office.

Christina Blacklaws | As President of The Law Society of England and Wales, Christina developed a lead program for women in leadership positions in the legal field. Today, she runs her own consultancy business and is an award-winning published author. She is also one of our *Justitia Award* Laureates.

Tadala Chinkwezule | Tadala Chinkwezule is a Malawian Lawyer and Notary Public. She holds a Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa, Bachelor of Law Honors Degree (Upper 2nd Class), Diploma in International Arbitration, Certificate in Corporate Governance and Certificate in Entrepreneurship. She is a *Justitia Award* Laureate.

Michaela Clicque | Michaela Clicque is a legal counsel for UEFA's Statutory and Regulatory Unit, where she takes the lead in all regulatory-related matters. Michaela is a *Justitia Award* Laureate. Jointly with FIFA, she provides legal advice on the revision process of the statutes of the national associations affiliated to UEFA.

Jarpa Dawuni | Jarpa Dawuni is a *Justitia Award* Laureate, an internationally renowned scholar, researcher, and qualified Barrister-at-Law. She is the founder and executive director of the "Institute for African Women in Law", and the recipient of the President Obama White House Presidential Award.

Zlata Đurđević | Zlata Đurđević is a tenured professor of criminal procedure, human rights, international and European criminal law at the University of Zagreb. She is a *Justitia Award* Laureate.

Lukas Flener | Lukas Flener is a Partner at Fellner Wratzfeld & Partner Rechtsanwältinnen. He has over 20 years of experience as a lawyer and worked for the Austrian Cartel Court and international law firms in Vienna, Brussels and London.

Alix Frank-Thomasser | Senior Partner of Alix Frank Rechtsanwältinnen GmbH and Founder of the *Women in Law Initiative*, lawyer, author, and co-founder of Euréseu. Member of the Managing Board of the Viennese Bar, Austria, and a member of the Austrian Delegation to the CCBE. Chair of the CCBE CSR Committee. Holds the Golden Honor for services to the Republic of Austria.

Omnia Gadalla | Omnia Gadalla, a *Justitia Award* Laureate founded the "Her Honor Setting The Bar Initiative", which fights gender-based discrimination in the Egyptian legal industry. She has filed suits against the Egyptian President, Minister of Justice and head of the state State Council. She teaches at Al-Azhar University, where she mentors female students.

Elisabeth Holzleithner | Elisabeth Holzleithner is a

Justitia Award Laureate. She is professor of Legal Philosophy & Legal Gender Studies, head of the Department of Legal Philosophy at the University of Vienna School of Law, CFO of Doctoral School ARS Iuris, PI of Research Platform GAIN

Pauline Javani | Pauline Javani is Head of Member Development (APAC) at MSI Global Alliance – a silver sponsor of the *Women in Law Initiative*. She is responsible for growth and member engagement in the APAC region at MSI, a leading global association of independent legal and accounting firms.

Susanne Kalss | Susanne Kalss is a professor of business law at the University of Economics and Business in Vienna. The founder of the “Austrian Supervisory Board Day” (Aufsichtsratstag) and the “Austrian Family Business Day” (Familienunternehmertag) is also a *Justitia Award* Laureate.

Elisabeth Zoi Lendway | Elisabeth Zoi Lendway is a contracts manager at Airbus Defense and Space GmbH in Germany and a *Justitia Award* Laureate. She is a mentor to young professionals and also takes care of and advocates for children on the Autism-Spectrum.

Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal | Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal is an accomplished researcher and beloved respected lecturer at the Department for Legal and Constitutional History at the University of Vienna School of Law. As Vice-Chair of the Senate of the University of Vienna, she holds one of the highest positions at the university and is a *Justitia Award* Laureate as well.

Carmen Thornton | Carmen Thornton founded her own law firm as a young mother. She was one of the first lawyers in Austria to extensively use social media for marketing, acquisition, and PR, gaining over 17,000 followers on Instagram. She is a prolific columnist and speaker. Carmen is also one of our *Justitia Award* Laureates.

Nida Usman Chaudhary | Nida Usman Chaudhary writes for national and international publications, advises on gender and children’s rights, and teaches corporate law from a business and human rights perspective. The *Justitia Award* Laureate also founded the Women in Law Initiative in Pakistan.

Armenak Utudjian | Armenak Utudjian is a recognized expert in private foundation law and President of the Austrian Bar Association (ÖRAK).



ELISA SAMUEL BOEREKAMP

PIONEERING JUDGE AND ADVOCATE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

Judge Elisa Boerekamp is a respected figure in the field of law with 16 years of professional experience. She is a powerful advocate for equal rights and opportunities for women judges, both in Mozambique and beyond. Currently serving as a High Court Judge and General Director of the Centre for Judicial and Legal Training of Mozambique (Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária), Boerekamp has achieved remarkable milestones.

As a member of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, Boerekamp played a crucial role in adapting regulations governing the deployment and transfer of judges, ensuring a gender perspective, and addressing challenges women judges may face in specific regions.

In 2021 Boerekamp was a Member and Rapporteur of the Inquiry Commission for the Investigation of acts of sexual exploitation of inmates in the Ndavela Women's Penitentiary of Maputo, where she was called to investigate the real situation of inmates in the Ndavela Women's Penitentiary.

Boerekamp's dedication to strengthening the rule of law is evident in her work of training

future judges. By enhancing the knowledge and skills of legal professionals, she has made significant contributions to the justice system, thus fostering a more just and effective judicial process.

Another of Boerekamp's accomplishments are her efforts to increase the number of women judges. By adopting a gender perspective in the recruitment and selection process, she actively works toward achieving a more balanced representation on the bench, promoting diversity and broader perspectives within the judiciary.

Beyond her judicial roles, Boerekamp holds positions of influence and responsibility. She is a member of the Consultative Council and the Technical Council of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, respectively. Her involvement extends to global initiatives, including the Global Judicial Institute on Environmental Law (GJIE) and the International Association for Court Administration (IACA).

As a founding member of the forum of women judges dealing with domestic violence in the Mozambican judiciary and a former member of the steering committee of



“Fighting for equal opportunities promotes fairness and justice in the legal profession so that women judges can ensure that issues such as gender stereotypes and sexual harassment at the workplace come to an end. It also creates diversity in the court which can help improve the access to justice for more women.”

the Institute for African Women in Law, she actively fights for the empowerment of women in law.

When Elisa Boerekamp thinks about her younger self, she wishes for her to be better educated about gender and women's professional needs and challenges. If she could travel back in time, she would therefore tell her younger self how important it is to never give up on her dreams and that she should always know that she deserves a place to use her skills and opportunities to change people's lives for the better.



ELISABETH LOVREK

SHATTERING BARRIERS: A TRAILBLAZING JOURNEY IN AUSTRIAN LAW

Elisabeth Lovrek, the second woman to hold the position of President of the Supreme Court of Austria, has made significant contributions to the field of law. In 2003, Lovrek was appointed to the Supreme Court, where she has since left a permanent mark. Her dedication to her craft is evident in her numerous publications on civil and civil procedure law. Her authoritative contributions have solidified her reputation as a legal scholar, earning her recognition as a co-editor of a prominent legal journal. One of Lovrek's proudest accomplishments is her role in inspiring a talented young female colleague to apply to the Supreme Court. With her convincing advocacy, she paved the way for more diverse voices within the institution. Lovrek's belief in empowerment led her to take action, making the Supreme Court a more inclusive and constructive workplace environment.

A recent achievement of hers is that it has finally been possible to convince politicians that the appointment of the highest judges in the judiciary requires full transparency in order to make the inde-

pendence of the judiciary visible to the outside world.

Lovrek's expertise extends beyond her judicial role. As the Presiding Judge of the Court's Insolvency Law Chamber, she showcases her knowledge in this complex area of law in addition to her administrative duties as President of the Supreme Court. In addition to her academic and professional accomplishments, Lovrek is an active member of several Austrian law societies. Through her involvement, she actively contributes to the advancement of the legal field in her country, fostering collaboration and sharing her expertise with fellow legal professionals.

Lovrek's dedication to academia is also evident in her teaching career. She returned to her alma mater as a lecturer on civil procedure law at the University of Vienna until her appointment as Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board of the university in March 2023.

Elisabeth Lovrek's transformative journey and unwavering dedication to justice make her an exemplary figure in the legal community. From her groundbreaking role as the second woman to become President of the Supreme Court to

"Equal opportunities for women in legal professions should be a matter of course today. This not only benefits the woman concerned, but also the company or organization and, of course, its clients. The Women in Law Initiative helps with this goal and gives women the opportunity to network as men have always done."

her influential publications and active involvement in legal societies, Lovrek has made significant contributions to the field of law.

If Elisabeth Lovrek could travel back in time, she would try to make her younger self understand that working abroad is an interesting experience - an experience she unfortunately missed. Because she thinks especially women tend to value their qualifications less than they are, she would have liked to have known or been told that (almost) no one knows everything.



NAMIRA NEGM

BREAKING BARRIERS, EMPOWERING WOMEN, AND ADVOCATING FOR JUSTICE

Namira Negm, the first Director of the African Migration Observatory and the first female Legal Counsel of the African Union (AU), has made significant contributions to the field while tirelessly advocating for women's rights throughout her career. As a seasoned diplomat, professor, and international lawyer, she has been a trailblazer in breaking down barriers and fostering gender equality in the legal profession.

Negm's positions of influence have allowed her to support and accelerate the careers of female lawyers within her office, creating an environment that promotes gender parity and equal opportunities. Guided by her belief in the abilities and dedication of women, she leads by example, inspiring more women to enter the legal profession and dismantle existing obstacles. Among her achievements, Negm proudly holds the distinction of being the first African woman to serve as Legal Counsel of the African Union. Moreover, she has made history as the first Egyptian female lawyer to stand before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC). In addition, she serves as the Vice President of

the Assembly of States Parties of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).

Negm's academic credentials are equally impressive, as she holds a PhD in international public law from the University of London. She actively shares her knowledge and expertise as a visiting lecturer at the Summer School of International Law, University of Geneva, since 2018 and by publishing numerous papers throughout the years. From 2014 to 2017, Negm represented Egypt as Ambassador to Rwanda, contributing to diplomatic relations and fostering international cooperation.

Namira Negm's remarkable career is a testament to her unwavering commitment to breaking barriers, empowering women, and advocating for justice. Her accomplishments have not only propelled the legal profession forward, but have also served as an inspiration for women to pursue their dreams and pursue a legal profession. If Namira Negm could go back in time, she would tell her younger self: "The road to success is not easy, so don't be easily discouraged. Stay resilient. You decided to join a culturally male dominated career, be it diplomacy or international law, which will make



"Law is crucial for women to comprehend their rights, as well as their obligations, in order to break stereotypes and gender inequalities. To be heard and empowered, women need to pursue law, which assists us to formulate well-structured arguments to present our needs in negotiations in parliaments, associations, governments, as well as on the international level. Better representation of women lawyers will be a winning lottery ticket for all of us to reach new heights and gain more rights."

your life even harder. So what? Success won't come served on a platter. Keep your dedication to your goals before your eyes all the time. When you fall or meet with injustice, make sure you pick up yourself and stand tall. Keep going, keep fighting and you will eventually succeed beyond your dreams."

LULU NG'WANAKILALA

CHAMPIONING ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Lulu Ng'wanakilala, the CEO of the Legal Services Facility, is a dedicated advocate for ensuring access to justice for all, with a particular focus on women and girls. She holds positions on various governance boards in the public, private, and social sectors. Ng'wanakilala is a passionate champion for women's rights, gender equality, human rights, and women in leadership.

Among her notable achievements, Ng'wanakilala takes pride in her role as the Chairperson of the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association, where she has made significant contributions to advancing women's rights and empowerment. Additionally, she has successfully managed a basket fund of over \$24 million for the Access to Justice Program for Women, thus enabling greater access to legal services for women in need. Her dedication and efforts have been recognized through the various Women in Leadership Awards she has received. With over 22 years of work experience, including more than 17 years in senior management and leadership positions, Ng'wanakilala has demonstrated exceptional skills in managing and leading institutions to achieve their mission and vision. She possesses a strong ability to develop organizational systems,

implement strategies, and effectively address challenges through change management and organizational development. Her expertise extends to advocacy, policy analysis, and review.

As CEO of the Legal Services Facility (LSF), Ng'wanakilala plays a pivotal role in managing the non-profit organization. The LSF, established in 2011, focuses on providing legal aid and paralegal services in Tanzania. Under Ng'wanakilala's leadership, the LSF has effectively managed a significant basket fund, contributing to increased accessibility of legal aid services across mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. Prior to this, she was the executive director of the Family Planning Association of Tanzania, an NGO that provides information and education on sexual health and reproductive health and rights.

Lulu Ng'wanakilala's career path exemplifies her commitment to championing access to justice, women's rights, and empowerment. Ng'wanakilala's dedication to advancing justice and equality serves as an inspiration to others, making a lasting impact on the legal landscape and society.

If she could go back in time, Lulu Ng'wanakilala would tell her younger self: "Anything is possible, you can achieve anything you set your heart and mind to do. Not even



"Studies show that in Africa more females graduate from law universities and more females enter the job market up to middle management. Very few women make it to become the top tier partners of law firms and senior roles in leadership. We have not yet broken the glass ceiling. Organizations such as the Women in Law Initiative are important to highlight the achievements of women in law, provide a platform to showcase successes, and encourage more women in law to take on leadership roles."

the sky is the limit. If your dreams don't scare you, they are not big enough. Failure is a learning curve; it is important to fail to succeed. Follow your heart and passion; if you love what you do, it will show. 3 important traits: integrity, humility, and compassion. Above all, don't forget to live, enjoy each and every moment, learn from everyone and every experience.

CHRISTIANE WENDEHORST

EMPOWERING WOMEN, ADVANCING LEGAL FRONTIERS AND SHAPING THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

Christiane Wendehorst, a distinguished professor of law at the University of Vienna, has made remarkable contributions to the legal field while fighting for the acceptance of women navigating extensive family commitments alongside an international career.

One of her proudest achievements is co-founding the European Law Institute (ELI), which promotes excellence in European law and serves as a platform for legal experts to collaborate. The ELI fosters harmonization of laws across European jurisdictions, thus creating a unified legal landscape. She currently serves as its Scientific Director. Recognizing the challenges of the digital age, Wendehorst works continuously on improving consumer rights. Her efforts aim to ensure adequate legal protection for consumers in the ever-evolving digital realm, thereby creating a fairer and more secure environment.

Wendehorst's influence extends to shaping global thinking about data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI). Her involvement in the transatlantic project "Principles for a Data Economy" highlights her commitment to shaping the future of

technology and its legal implications. In addition to her academic and research endeavors, Wendehorst holds leadership positions in various prestigious institutions. She serves as the President of the Humanities and Social Sciences Division of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), where she is currently responsible for improving the situation of women* in Austria's largest non-university research institution. Additionally, she is the Vice-President of the Austrian Jurists' Association (ÖJT), and is a member of the Bioethics Commission at the Austrian Federal Chancellery. With a diverse portfolio of accomplishments, Christiane Wendehorst continues to contribute to the field of law, particularly in the realm of digitalization. Through her dedication, expertise, and leadership, she has made significant strides in establishing the ELI, improving consumer rights, and shaping global discussions on data, IoT, and AI. Her tireless efforts have not only broken glass ceilings but have also paved the way for a more equitable and progressive society.

If Christiane Wendehorst could travel back in time, she would tell her younger self that she does not need to apologize all day for being a woman or feel guilty about



"When I joined a prestigious German law faculty as the first female full professor almost 25 years ago, it was considered a scandal. Younger colleagues often think I am making things up because they cannot believe what it was like for women back then. I don't blame them - so much has changed since then, and we should be grateful for that. But we should not take anything for granted, and in many ways, we are not there yet. This is why initiatives like Women in Law are so important!"

wanting to have both career and family. And that she does not have to bend over backwards and give 150% just to have the right to exist in a male-dominated environment. Maybe it is the environment that needs to change, not her.

TASNEEM KAUSAR

CHAMPIONING EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN LAW EDUCATION

Tasneem Kausar, an esteemed professor of law and jurisprudence, has made a lasting impact on academia and the legal profession. As the Principal of the Pakistan College of Law, she has utilized her expertise to steer the trajectory of the country's leading law school, thereby fostering an inclusive and empowering atmosphere for female law students.

As a female leader at a prominent law school, Kausar's role as Principal is a remarkable achievement. She has successfully guided the institution, ensuring it provides equal opportunities for both male and female students.

Beyond her role as Principal, Kausar serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the prestigious Pakistan Law Review, further promoting dialogue on critical legal issues. Through this platform, she has contributed to enriching the legal discourse in the country. One of Kausar's greatest achievements is her pioneering effort to address the gender imbalance in the lower judiciary. In 2006, she designed a program at the Pakistan College of Law that prepared a group of 35 females to take judicial exams. A remarkable 22 of them successfully passed the exams, marking the largest induction of women into the lower judiciary. The impact of these

female judicial officers has been profound, thus ushering in a new era of female presence within the judiciary.

Tasneem Kausar's academic qualifications, including a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School, underscore her competence. Her extensive teaching experience, focusing on constitutional law, jurisprudence, and gender and law, further enriches her contributions to the legal field. Her dedication to legal education extends beyond the classroom, as she has led a legal education support program and is presently working on her book "Criminal Laws of Pakistan."

Tasneem Kausar's exceptional achievements, from leading the Pakistan College of Law to her influential role as Editor-in-Chief of the Pakistan Law Review, demonstrate her commitment to empowering women and advancing the legal profession in Pakistan. By fostering an inclusive environment, Kausar has opened doors for aspiring female lawyers, empowering them to pursue their legal careers with confidence.

If Tasneem Kausar could travel back in time, she would tell her younger self to prioritize her well-being. The legal profession can be demanding and stressful, and it's



"Equal opportunities for women in legal professions are essential for achieving a just and equitable society. Women bring diverse perspectives, experiences, and skills to the legal profession, which enhances the quality of legal services and decision-making. By promoting and supporting women in law, organizations like The Women in Law Initiative can ensure that our legal system reflects and serves the needs of all members of society."

important to take care of oneself both physically and mentally. Also, she would tell her to not be afraid of taking risks and to go for opportunities, even if they feel intimidating or outside of one's comfort zone. And finally, she would remind her that she has valuable skills and perspectives to offer as a woman in law, and shouldn't let anyone tell her otherwise.

EMMA LANTSCHNER

A CHAMPION FOR MINORITY RIGHTS AND EQUALITY IN LAW

Emma Lantschner, an associate professor at University of Graz, has dedicated her career to the rights of national minorities and individuals facing discrimination based on various grounds such as gender, racial origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Her academic work is complemented by her extensive experience as an expert for prominent organizations like the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission.

Lantschner's academic achievements include her habilitation in EU non-discrimination law and a doctoral thesis on minority rights. Lantschner's numerous publications cover the topics of minority rights, non-discrimination law, and the role of expert bodies in the development of human rights.

As an associate professor and deputy director at the University of Graz's Center for Southeast European Studies, she shares her expertise through teaching courses on human rights, minority protection and conflict management, as well as constitutional law. One of Lantschner's proudest achievements is her active promotion and support of female students in their early careers, thereby fostering gender equality in academic

and professional spheres.

As the first Vice-President of the Advisory Committee on the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Lantschner plays a pivotal role in shaping policies that safeguard the rights of marginalized communities. Apart from that she was involved in the drafting of two sets of Recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities. But her international engagement goes beyond that. She also served as an expert on minority protection in Kosovo for the Council of Europe and in Serbia for the European Commission.

Additionally, she has co-edited a commentary on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and has been involved in research projects funded by reputable institutions.

Through her multifaceted career, Elisabeth Lantschner has proven to be a dedicated scholar and advocate for minority rights. Her achievements in promoting female students, her role as First Vice-President of the Advisory Committee, and her expertise in EU non-discrimination rights have made a lasting impact in foster-



“Diversity in the legal profession, in terms of sex and gender, as well as race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, is indicative of a democratic and equitable legal system in which all segments of society are heard. Too often, stereotypical role perceptions hinder women’s career progression. Our power and performance, not only in the legal but also in other professions, needs the attention it deserves.”

ring inclusivity and shaping legal frameworks for a more equitable society.

If she could go back in time, she would give her younger self the following advice: “Have confidence in your own abilities and don’t let setbacks make you doubt them. Surround yourself with empowering people and be bold to create the job of your dreams.”

SATANG NABANEH

CHAMPIONING MINORITY RIGHTS AND EQUALITY: A TRAILBLAZER IN LAW AND ADVOCACY



Satang Nabaneh, a renowned legal scholar, has dedicated her career to advancing women's rights and promoting gender equality. At the moment she serves as a research professor at the University of Dayton, Ohio.

Nabaneh's research and teaching focus on critical topics such as African human rights, qualitative research, feminist perspectives on international human rights law, and the right of conscience in sexual and reproductive health. Through her numerous publications, including her solo-authored book on conscientious objection in abortion care, she sheds light on pressing issues and contributes to the global debate surrounding women's reproductive rights. Prior to her position at Dayton, she was the Manager of the Academic Program in Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Africa at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria. Nabaneh played a vital role in designing and developing a master's program that equipped over 300 graduate students with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively engage with sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. Her efforts in managing the program, securing funding, and fostering collaborations with partner organizations have contributed to its success. In her role as Project Officer for Wo-

men's Rights, Nabaneh played a crucial part in strengthening the African human rights system to be more gender sensitive. She provided technical guidance and developed reporting guidelines for the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, advocating for women's rights and generating evidence to inform decision-making. Additionally, she raised awareness on women's rights issues through social media platforms, amplifying the voices of marginalized women and girls. One of Satang Nabaneh's proudest achievements is mentoring younger female lawyers and serving marginalized communities through pro bono asylum cases. Her commitment to promoting women's rights, empowering marginalized communities, and addressing gender inequality is commendable. Her contributions to legal research, program development, and advocacy have had a significant impact on advancing gender equality in Africa and beyond. Through her expertise, mentorship, and dedication, Nabaneh continues to be a driving force in the fight for women's rights, leaving a lasting legacy in the field of law.

If Satang Nabaneh could travel back in time and give her younger self some advice, she would tell her that "choosing a career path in legal academia, to educate and produce

"As a Gambian woman, I've experienced the gender challenges, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination faced by many African women. Despite traditional attitudes, I've always challenged ideas like "a woman's place is the home." As an African feminist scholar and activist in law, I work to improve the situation for women in law and challenge gender inequality. That's why the Women in Law Initiative is a much-needed platform for connecting female legal professionals."

scholarship that drives change, was the right decision". She would also stress the importance of seeking out mentors and supporters, particularly as a (younger) woman in a field where there may be fewer women doing legal scholarship. Despite the inevitable challenges that may arise, she would encourage herself to remain resilient and persevere, knowing that she can make a positive impact no matter what space she finds herself in.

LIZZETTE ROBLETO DE HOWARTH

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY: THE IMPACT OF A DEDICATED LEGAL PROFESSIONAL

Lizzette Robleto de Howarth, a passionate lawyer and academic, is an advocate for advancing gender equality, upholding the rule of law, and safeguarding human rights. Her remarkable career and academic journey exemplify her commitment to improving the status of women in the legal profession and beyond. Through her global research initiatives, she has successfully placed gender equality at the heart of the legal profession.

As the author of the first global gender equality report titled “Advocating for Change: Transforming the Future of the Legal Profession through Greater Gender Equality,” published by the Law Society in June 2019, she has been instrumental in shedding light on the importance of gender equality in shaping the legal landscape. Her leadership in spearheading country-specific research projects on gender equality in the legal profession has resulted in the publication of the first-ever comprehensive reports of their kind. Notably, her collaboration with the British Embassy in Guatemala, UN Women Guatemala, and local firms, as well as the Women’s Division of the Barcelona Bar Association, has yielded valuable insights into promoting gender equality. A pivotal achievement of Lizzette Robleto de Howarth is her

successful advocacy for a European Parliament Resolution on “the murder of women (femicide) in Mexico and Central America and the role of the EU in fighting that phenomenon.” By raising awareness and championing the cause of women’s rights, she has played an integral role in combating violence against women in these regions.

With over 24 years of experience in the legal sector, academia, and international development, Lizzette Robleto de Howarth is an innovative, creative, and strategic leader. She has been actively involved in policy research and analysis, thereby contributing to policy changes globally and strengthening the rule of law, environmental protection, human rights, and gender equality. Currently serving as a Teaching Associate at University College London (UCL), Lizzette Robleto de Howarth imparts her knowledge and expertise in law to future managers. Lizzette Robleto de Howarth’s contributions to gender equality, human rights, and legal discourse have left an indelible mark. Through her leadership, research, and advocacy, she continues to shape a more inclusive and equitable legal profession and society at large.

If she could go back in time, Lizzette Robleto de Howarth would



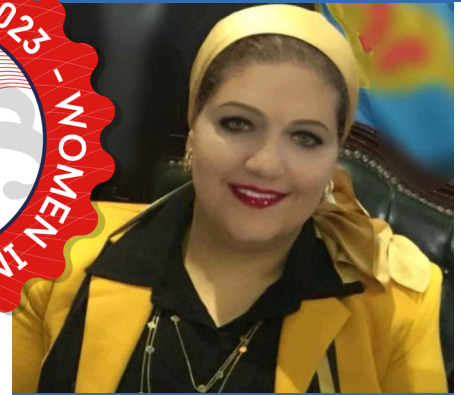
“By putting obstacles in the way of achieving gender equality, we are missing out on the great talent, knowledge and expertise brought by half of the population – the women. At this stage, where the world is in serious crisis, more than ever, we need to come together with innovative solutions.

Consequently, it is not only morally wrong, but also, we cannot afford to continue perpetuating this inequality for the few at the expense of the many.”

tell her younger self the following: “In your journey, you will be plagued with self-doubt and your instinct will tell you to continue working harder. While this might be a good approach, you will also find that there are obstacles that are not of your own doing. So, put things into perspective and stop beating yourself. Look around, find what those obstacles are and work hard to resolve them; but if you can’t, move on without feeling guilty. Life is short so choose your battles wisely.”

RASHA TAKIELDIN

PIONEERING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND SHATTERING LEGAL BARRIERS



Rasha Takieldin is a remarkable figure in the realm of law, and recognized as a Professor of Private International Law. With an impressive career spanning 25 years, she has made significant contributions to the legal field and shattered glass ceilings along the way. Takieldin's dedication and expertise have propelled her to influential positions, allowing her to shape legal frameworks and advocate for gender equality. As the first ever woman, Takieldin was awarded the prestigious Abdel Hamid Shoman Award for Young Arab Researchers in the field of legal and Sharia studies in 2009.

In addition to her academic accomplishments, Takieldin has played a pivotal role in the Egyptian Parliament, serving as an advisor and as a member of the Legislative Committee of the National Council for Egyptian Women. Her appointment as the first woman to work as a legal advisor in the Committee on Agriculture, Food Security, and Fisheries in the Egyptian House of Representatives is a testament to her resilience and commitment to challenging traditional gender roles in the legal sphere. Takieldin's pursuit of knowledge and academic excellence is evident in her achievements within the academic realm. At the young age of 27, she obtained her PhD from the Faculty of Law at Mansoura University, be-

coming the youngest PhD holder in the faculty. Her feat continued as she became the first female law professor at Mansoura University's Faculty of Law, eventually rising to the position of Vice-Dean. Furthermore, Takieldin became the first female head of a scientific department at the same esteemed faculty, solidifying her status as a trailblazer. Beyond her academic endeavors, Takieldin has been an active member of numerous institutions. She served on the Scientific Committee of the Judicial Training Center of the Egyptian Administrative Prosecution Authority, showcasing her commitment to advancing legal education and professional development. Furthermore, her involvement as a member of the advisory boards and editorial boards of various legal journals demonstrates her dedication to promoting research and knowledge exchange. Rasha Takieldin's journey is a testament to her determination and unwavering pursuit of excellence. As a pioneering figure in the legal field, she has broken barriers and paved the way for aspiring women in law. Through her accomplishments and advocacy, Takieldin continues to inspire and empower others, leaving an indelible mark on the legal profession.

If she could travel back in time, Rasha Takieldin would tell her younger self: "You are a strong woman

"Egypt faces challenges in promoting gender equality in the legal field, with only two female deans in the history of law schools and a low percentage of women in judicial positions, particularly in the ordinary judiciary. Law professors play a crucial role in supporting and encouraging women students to pursue careers in law, and organizations like Women in Law highlight successful models for advancing women's representation in the field."

working in a predominantly male legal academic community, and you have to prove that you are capable of shouldering responsibilities. There is no such thing as impossible, as every person is capable of success regardless of their gender. The support of my parents has been instrumental in my continued success. Studying law is a wonderful and inspiring way for me to solve problems for many individuals and protect the rights of women and children."

NATALIE HARSDORF-BORSCH

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND REFORMING THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

Natalie Harsdorf-Borsch has made significant strides in promoting gender equality and reshaping the landscape of leadership. Since December 2021, she has served as the acting director general of the BWB (Austrian Federal Competition Authority), a position she has earned through her dedication and determination.

Breaking barriers and defying norms, Harsdorf-Borsch became the first woman in a leadership role at the BWB. She was a driving force behind building up the institution, showcasing her leadership skills and expertise. Her achievements include promoting women to leadership positions within the agency, increasing their representation from one to four in just a year. Her commitment to gender parity and inclusivity has transformed the agency's dynamics and set an example for other organizations.

Harsdorf-Borsch's influence extends beyond the BWB. She is the first elected female coordinator for the OECD Competition Bureau vis-à-vis UNCTAD, playing a pivotal role in shaping competition policies on a global scale. Recognizing the importance of representation, she founded the Women in Competition Law Network Austria (WCNA), a platform dedicated to increasing the visibility of women in her field. Through the WCNA, she has empowered countless women, thus

providing them with a platform to showcase their talents and expertise. As an accomplished academic, Natalie Harsdorf-Borsch teaches and has published extensively on competition matters, including a particular focus on the gender lens. Her active involvement in discussions at the OECD has contributed to the creation of a dedicated workstream, further cementing the importance of gender equality in competition policies. With an impressive educational background, including a doctorate in law from the University of Vienna, Natalie Harsdorf-Borsch has continually honed her expertise. She has lectured at esteemed institutions such as the University of Vienna and MCI, Innsbruck, and has served as a speaker at conferences organized by ICN, OECD, and UNCTAD. Natalie Harsdorf-Borsch's commitment to gender equality and her achievements have developed the legal landscape. Through her leadership, she has shattered glass ceilings, empowered women, and paved the way for a more inclusive future. Her journey serves as an inspiration to aspiring legal professionals, reminding us all of the power of dedication, perseverance, and a gender-inclusive mindset.

If Natalie Harsdorf-Borsch could go back in time to meet her younger self, she would tell her that creating alliances among women,



"I myself have had to show resilience in my career and it has been my motto to pave the way for other women so that they have an easier track to success. Having been trained to comprehend the rule of law and human rights, it is completely unacceptable to me that within that knowledgeable legal community equality is still a dream. The legal profession should be at the forefront of equality and not behind. Single efforts can only achieve that much, organized support can do so much more."

including with initiatives like this one are incredibly important. Establishing strong networks is generally important, but particularly for women. Therefore, her advice would probably be to invest more time in this area early on. In addition, in general she would have liked to have had more awareness of the realities of inequality to be better prepared for the challenges of the working world. Other than that, she would tell her to "always give it your all, it pays off in the end."

SANDRA KONSTATZKY

CHAMPIONING EQUALITY AND COMBATING DISCRIMINATION

Sandra Konstatzky is the head of the Ombud for Equal Treatment, a key institution in the fight against discrimination. With her specialization in gender equality law, particularly in the field of equal pay, she has made significant contributions to shaping the landscape of equal treatment.

One of Konstatzky's noteworthy achievements is her instrumental role in the first legal initiative on pay transparency in Austria in 2011. Drawing on her expertise, she played a pivotal part in spreading awareness and action on equal pay, a crucial aspect of gender equality.

In 2018, Sandra Konstatzky's expertise and dedication were recognized through her appointment as head of the Ombud for Equal Treatment. In this position, she leads the national equality body, which focuses on six grounds of discrimination: gender, ethnicity, religion and belief, age, and sexual orientation. Through the Ombud, she provides independent advice, support, and information, working tirelessly to combat discrimination and ensure equal access to goods and services for all individuals. Her leadership skills were further acknowledged when she received the Management Award for Steering and Leadership in 2021. This

prestigious recognition highlights her ability to guide and inspire her team, thereby fostering a positive work environment that advances the cause of equality. Konstatzky's commitment to equality extends beyond her role as the head of the Ombud. She is an active member of the European network of equality bodies, known as EQUINET, and is actively involved in the female legal association "Die Juristinnen". Her involvement in these organizations demonstrates her dedication to collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective efforts towards achieving a more equitable society. With a wealth of professional experience in the field, Konstatzky has established herself as an expert in equal pay and gender equality. Her work extends to providing training on the topic of Anti-Discrimination law at the European Law Academy and delivering lectures at the University of Vienna.

Her commitment to equality, her contributions to the field of gender equality law, and her leadership at the Ombud for Equal Treatment exemplify her dedication to combatting discrimination. Her achievements highlight the importance of addressing pay disparities, shaping policies, and fostering collaboration in the pursuit of a fair society. Konstatzky's work continues to

make a lasting impact on the lives of individuals.

Sandra Konstatzky was lucky enough to know very early where she wanted to go. She always wanted to work at the Ombud for Equal Treatment. And now she is head of the Ombud. If she could travel back in time, she would tell her younger self: "Don't worry so much, you will achieve your dreams!"



"It has always been my wish to combine law and justice. In my work at the Ombud for Equal Treatment, I have been able to encourage women to fight discrimination against them. This has always fulfilled me. Mutual female support is essential to have success in doing so and to move forward. The Women in Law initiative makes women in this field visible and gives confidence to be on the right track."

NADJA LORENZ

A TRAILBLAZING JOURNEY IN ASYLUM LAW AND GENDER EQUALITY

Nadja Lorenz is an attorney-at-law and a dedicated human rights activist based in Vienna. With a specialization in Asylum Law, she has not only found a niche but has also been a keen advocate for addressing issues within the asylum system. Her journey in law and activism has left a profound impact on the lives of many, particularly those whose voices often go unheard in society.

Having been the head of the Austrian NGO SOS Mitmensch from 2003 to 2013, Nadja Lorenz has been at the forefront of providing a platform for marginalized individuals to express their concerns and seek justice. Through this organization, she has empowered countless people and championed their rights, ensuring that their struggles receive the attention they deserve.

Nadja Lorenz's dedication to making a difference was recognized with the prestigious Bruno Kreisky Award in 2005 for her exceptional contributions to promoting human rights. Throughout her career, Nadja Lorenz has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to gender equality. She challenged the male-dominated legal landscape by pushing for gender-sensitive approaches in Asylum Law. Additionally, her advocacy efforts extended to her personal expe-

riences. Early in her career, Lorenz went all the way to the Constitutional Court after completing her law degree to fight for diplomas to be issued with female titles as well. The decision was lost at first, but then the law was changed.

As a legal professional, Nadja Lorenz has proven her expertise in Asylum and Criminal Law. Her involvement as a member of the International Human Rights Tribunal and her contributions to various legal publications are testaments to her knowledge and dedication.

Lorenz's impact on human rights extends beyond her legal practice. She is actively involved in public speaking engagements to shed light on pressing issues related to Asylum Law, protection of fundamental rights, and criminal justice. Her influence on the legal community is further evident through her role as a member of multiple prestigious organizations, including the Austrian Jurists' Commission and being part of the Network of Asylum Lawyers.

Her advocacy for refugees and vulnerable individuals has also received international recognition. Amnesty International identified her as politically persecuted due to her unwavering commitment to supporting refugees' rights and the reaction of the Minister of the Interior to it.

Nadja Lorenz is an inspiration in



"In the profession of lawyers, women have been underrepresented, they were when I started my career over two decades ago and they are still underrepresented today. Women represent more than 50 percent of the population, so they have to have a say in all fields of society. Law is part of our democracy's structure; it works the best when women are actively represented and have sufficient influence to shape it."

the legal and human rights landscape. Her passion for social justice, gender equality, and empowering marginalized individuals continues to shine brightly, making her a force to be reckoned with in her pursuit of a more just and inclusive world. Even if Nadja Lorenz could travel back in time, there is nothing that she would do differently today, except she would have wished for more patience.

JALILA HAIDER

A CHAMPION OF JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUALITY



As the first female lawyer from the Hazara community, Haider's journey has been remarkable. In her legal practice, she focuses on defending women, children, and minorities who cannot afford representation. She stands as a voice against discrimination, including enforced disappearances, custodial torture, and gender-based violence, not only within her profession but also in public spaces.

Haider's achievements have earned her international recognition. In 2019, she was named in the prestigious BBC 100 Women list, celebrating influential and inspiring women from across the globe. The following year, she received the US State Department's International Women of Courage Award, acknowledging her fearless dedication to promoting justice and human rights. In 2022, she was honored with Pakistan's First Peace Award by the Pakistan Institute of Peace for her efforts in fostering tolerance and sustainable peace in the country. Throughout her career, Haider has gathered diverse professional experience. Presently, she is working as a researcher at the Institute of Development-Gender Studies at the University of Sussex, and simultaneously undertakes the role of Country Representative for

iProbono, managing organizational programs in Pakistan and ensuring the quality of activities while building relationships with donors and government bodies.

Prior to that, Haider practised civil, criminal, and constitutional law, handling over 60 cases annually and representing over 100 clients. She offered pro bono legal aid services to vulnerable individuals, particularly women, children, and transgender individuals living in poverty. Notably, Jalila served as a Legal Advisor for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Quetta, where she assisted Afghan refugees with legal matters and advocated for proper interpretation of law and protection standards. Apart from her legal endeavors, Haider is also a political activist. She has been a vocal advocate for the rights of marginalized communities, particularly the Hazaras and Pashtuns, condemning enforced disappearances and ethnic cleansing. She has led protests and hunger strikes to demand justice. Through her legal practice, activism, and unwavering commitment, Jalila Haider continues to be a guiding force for positive change in Pakistan and beyond. Her legacy will undoubtedly inspire future generations to fight for the inherent rights of all individuals.

If Jalila Haider could travel back

"Women play a vital role in the legal profession; if given equal chance, they will achieve the primary goal of advancing gender equality and creating a fair system. Being the first female lawyer in my community, facing multi-layered challenges in patriarchal settings, I want to inspire female lawyers to enter the field, reclaim their spaces, and fight the male-dominated bar. Platforms like Women in Law Initiatives are vital for building solidarity and addressing the issues faced by female lawyers."

in time, she would tell her younger self to "not to be frightened; patriarchy would discourage you, but there are many individuals who need your legal support due to their economic and social status. When I started my career, I was told that females from respectable backgrounds don't enter the profession. I wondered, if this is such a bad profession, why do men from respectable families join it?"

LEAH MOLATSELI

EMPOWERING THE AFRICAN LEGAL TECH ECOSYSTEM

Leah Molatseli is a lawyer, speaker, and published legal tech author, whose passion lies at the intersection of law and technology. As the head of business development at Legal Interact, she utilizes her diverse knowledge and wealth of experience to empower the African legal tech ecosystem. Through her work, she has facilitated impactful conversations about legal tech on the continent, thus driving progress and innovation in the legal industry.

She was the first African lawyer to be recognized by the American Bar Association as a Women of Legal Tech Honoree. This recognition highlights her pioneering efforts and contributions to the field of legal technology. Additionally, she has been honored as the Most Influential Women of Legal Tech by the International Legal Tech Association, further solidifying her influence on the global legal tech community. Notably, Molatseli was also awarded the prestigious ISF Schmidt Futures Fellowship in 2023, joining a network of rising leaders focused on tackling strategic global challenges. Her expertise lies in legal operations, legal technology, and innovation for law firms and in-house legal teams. Through strategic advice, innovative solutions, and training programs, she empowers organiza-

tions to embrace technology and drive the legal industry forward. As a published author, Molatseli has written extensively on legal technology and innovation, offering thought-provoking insights into the evolving landscape of the legal profession. Her book titled “Legal Tech Startups and Innovation” showcases her expertise.

Beyond her professional achievements, she is actively involved in various initiatives and organizations. She is a Council Member at the University of the Free State and contributes to the Young African Leaders Initiative and the South African Women in Tech Advisory Board. Molatseli’s expertise has taken her to international conferences and events, where she has shared her knowledge of legal tech and innovation. Her dedication to advocating for women in technology earned her recognition as a Digital Female Leader Award Winner in the legal category.

Her journey is one of breaking barriers and inspiring change. Her pursuit of empowering the African legal tech ecosystem has left a lasting impact on the legal profession, paving the way for innovation and progress in the industry. As she continues to share her expertise, insights, and passion, she undoubtedly plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of law and technology in Africa and beyond.



“Think of it this way, we all feel entitled to wear shoes, but equal opportunity means wearing shoes that fit you. There’s no point sitting at the table cringing because they are too tight. It’s about creating an enabling environment. I am committed to improvement because it matters to me because our voices matter, and diversity is key for equality to allow innovation and a more inclusive environment. Women in Law Initiatives matter because the road to equal opportunity is not a solo journey.”

If she could go back in time, Leah Molatseli would tell her younger self to: “never give up on her dreams, and that they will constantly change too. That it’s okay for dreams to change as we evolve and grow. I would tell her to trust her instincts, that she is strong even when the environment doesn’t allow, that she is capable and competent.”

MEHWISH MUHIB KAKAKHEL

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND FIGHTING CYBER CRIMES

Mehwish Muhib Kakakhel has achieved remarkable milestones in her career, leaving a permanent mark on Pakistan's legal landscape. As partner at Kakakhel Law Associates, she holds the distinction of being the first-ever female partner in any law firm in the country.

Kakakhel's dedication to uplifting women in the legal profession is truly commendable. She serves as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Lead for the Women in Law Network, where she actively develops a strong referral system for women lawyers across Pakistan to handle pro bono cases for gender-based violence survivors and victims. Additionally, she conducts legal sessions to empower young women lawyers and foster their growth in the legal field. Recognizing the urgency to address sexual violence and advocate for survivors, Kakakhel is also a member of the Special Committee constituted under the Anti-Rape Act in 2021. Through this role, she works tirelessly to strengthen legal provisions and support measures for victims of sexual assault, aiming to create a safer and more just society. In her role as a Partner at Kakakhel Law Associates, Kakakhel handles a diverse range of cases, including cybercrimes, civil, corporate, criminal, banking, custom, income tax, service, and

constitutional law. She exhibits a particular focus on cases involving gender-based violence survivors, irrespective of gender, making her an advocate for social justice and women's rights. Her contributions have led to landmark decisions, such as the appointment of an Ombudsman for the Protection of Women against Harassment at Workplace Act, thereby ensuring a safer work environment for women.

But her impact is not limited to the courtroom; she actively participates in societal initiatives. As the KP Chapter Lead for Lawyers Initiative for Prisoners Support, she has established a referral system for pro bono legal assistance to prisoners on trial across Pakistan, thus contributing to a fairer justice system. Kakakhel's journey exemplifies perseverance, advocacy, and empowerment. Her accomplishments as the first female partner in a law firm, her role in the Women in Law Network, and her efforts to combat cybercrimes and support survivors of gender-based violence make her a beacon of hope for aspiring legal professionals and a driving force for positive change in Pakistan's legal system.

If she could travel back in time, Mehwish Muhib Kakakhel would tell her younger self "You are strong. Senior lawyers who discourage you from becoming a litigator



"Women in the legal profession can do miracles if given the right opportunity at the right time. My women in law network KP has witnessed this in our Mentor-Mentee program- joineries of women lawyers from nobody to successful litigators. All that we need is confidence, encouragement and a few cases to start our career. Women in Law networks are a gateway to our success as we refer cases, opportunities to one another from different districts. I call it women supporting women network in the legal profession."

see you as a threat in the legal profession. Read new acts passed and judgments in order to win arguments and cases from your senior counterparts. This will make you stronger legally and professionally."

IFEYINWA NASIAH OKOYE

PIONEERING MAGISTRATE: BREAKING DISABILITY BARRIERS

Ifeyinwa Nasiah Okoye is a Senior Magistrate with the Anambra State Judiciary who has made history as the first person with a physical disability to be sworn into this esteemed position. With 20 years of experience and a passion for justice, she has become an inspiration for female professionals, encouraging them to embrace their worth and potential despite societal and institutional challenges.

One of Okoye's top achievements is breaking down barriers and achieving a significant milestone in the legal profession. Her appointment as a Senior Magistrate in the Anambra State Judiciary stands as a testament to her determination and resilience, paving the way for others with disabilities to follow in her footsteps. In 2020, her accomplishments were recognized by a letter of commendation by the Anambra state judicial service commission on excellent performance.

Another significant achievement in Okoye's career was establishing her own Chambers in Awka, Anambra State, in 2008. As one of the few women lawyers running their own legal practices, she has proven herself as a successful and independent legal practitioner. Her entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to her profession have earned her respect in the legal community.

Furthermore, Okoye's skills in the courtroom are evidenced by her victory in her first Court of Appeal case as "junior" counsel against a Senior Advocate of Nigeria in 2010. This proud accomplishment demonstrates her ability to hold her ground against more seasoned legal practitioners.

In addition to her professional achievements, Okoye is deeply committed to empowering young women professionals. Through her work with the Institute of African Women in Law (IAWL) and other associations, she advocates for gender equality and encourages women to discover their worth. Being a role model despite physical challenges and advancing the quality of life of others have earned her recognition from various organizations, including the Christabel Otueroro Foundation and Origo International Canada.

As a panelist at numerous conferences and seminars, Okoye shares her knowledge and experiences, inspiring others to overcome challenges and pursue their aspirations. Her dedication to continuous learning and her contributions to legal discussions have enriched the legal community.

Ifeyinwa Nasiah Okoye's career is a testament to her unwavering dedication to the legal profession. Her achievements as a pioneering



„Equal opportunities for women in the legal profession allows for a balanced approach to the dispensation of justice across various climes. I am deeply committed to the idea of improving set skills of women in law because it improves the quality of justice delivery over time and I believe that the Women in Law initiative provides that platform.“

woman in law, her successful legal practice, and her commitment to empowering young women are truly commendable. Okoye's impact on the legal community and her devotion to justice serve as an inspiration and as a reminder that barriers can be broken, and dreams can be achieved with perseverance and passion.

If she could go back in time, Ifeyinwa Nasiah Okoye would tell her younger self "You can achieve all you set out to. Stay focused, stay true. You are enough."

JOYCE WILLIAMS

EMPOWERING WOMEN GLOBALLY

Joyce Williams is a trailblazing advocate for women's rights and a catalyst for change. As the founder of Armooh-Williams, PLLC, Hazina Equity Partners, iSoka, LLC, and the Armooh-Williams Foundation, she has dedicated her career to promoting opportunities for women to thrive in all aspects of life.

With a journey marked by numerous achievements, Williams has been recognized for her outstanding contributions to the legal field and humanitarian endeavors. She received the American Bar Association, Section of International Law: Diversity Leadership Fellowship Award, acknowledging her commitment to promoting diversity and inclusivity in the legal field. Additionally, the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services recognized her as an Outstanding Partner in the Statewide Youth Mock Trial Program, reflecting her dedication to nurturing future legal talent. But Williams' impact extends further: she has been named among prominent global personalities in humanitarian and development efforts by Hoinser Magazine. Having been admitted to the United States Supreme Court, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, United States District Court, District of Arizona, and The State of Arizona, Supreme Court, Williams has de-

monstrated her legal know-how and commitment to upholding justice. As a Managing Attorney at Armooh-Williams, PLLC, based in Alexandria, Virginia, she has played a pivotal role in establishing a global law firm. Her expertise in international trade, project finance, immigration, and corporate law has helped numerous clients navigate complex legal landscapes successfully. Beyond her legal practice, Williams is deeply involved in various professional affiliations. Her role as a Presidential Appointee and Special Adviser for the Rule of Law-Africa Council showcases her commitment to advancing the rule of law on the African continent. As Editor in Chief of the Africa Law Today Journal, she has played an instrumental role in spreading legal knowledge and promoting collaboration within the international legal community. Her dedication to giving back is evident through her involvement in volunteer activities. As Co-Chair of the African Globalized Investment Forum and Advisor for the Tropics Investment Summit, she actively contributes to economic development initiatives across Africa. Joyce Williams stands as a beacon of hope for women worldwide, advocating for gender equality, empowerment, and change. Her legacy as a formidable legal professional and humanitarian continues to inspire and uplift countless lives. Through her unwavering dedica-



“Equal opportunities for women in the legal profession are essential for ensuring justice and equity, advancing gender equality, and achieving better outcomes for society. Women in Law Initiatives are crucial because they provide support, raise awareness, foster networking and collaboration, challenge biases and stereotypes, and encourage the next generation of women lawyers.”

tion, she has proven that women possess the power to create lasting change and make the world a better place for all.

If Joyce Williams could go back in time to meet her younger self, she would tell her: “Do not lose your sense of wonder.” She would have loved to know that doing everything on the proverbial checklist was insufficient to guarantee a career. Lingering questions, curiosity, and her wanderlust spirit led her to a career in international law that has been more rewarding than anything she could have wished for or imagined.

SAVE THE DATE - WOMEN IN LAW 2024

THE WOMEN IN LAW CONFERENCE 2024

September 12-14, 2024

University of Vienna, Austria

► www.womeninlawconference.at

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Justitia Awards Ceremony: September 13, 2024

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SUSANNE STEIN-PRESSL

"DIVERSITY IS A CORE VALUE TO US."

The difference lies in the mix - that's the conviction of the managing partner of MANZ, Susanne Stein-Pressl. Measures for promoting women and implementing generational management ensure diversity within the company.

Companies that embrace diversity are more resilient," says publishing executive Susanne Stein-Pressl. "Creativity will flourish only where diversity prevails, which is essential to break new ground in times of change."

With a quota of 60%, female employees account for the majority among the workforce at the Austrian market leader for legal information. However, that does not represent the status in the legal industry at large, as it is still mainly male dominated. "Therefore, we support the initiative 'Women in Law - Frauen im Recht' and the 'Justitia Awards'." Additionally, MANZ is a partner company of the association 'Paragraphinnen', which connects young female jurists across Austria in various online and offline events, enabling them to benefit from a network of experienced and successful women in the legal industry. Overall, diversity management is a key matter at all organizational levels within MANZ. This also includes various measures in the field of generational management, special leadership training being one of them. "One of our key questions was how members of different generations can benefit from each other by taking into account their differences in attitude and upbringing in a socio-historical context."

"Embracing diversity ensures a plurality of opinions – which is essential for a publishing house that emerged during the time of the 1848 revolution."

New employees are supported through a buddy program. The "buddies" are employees with longer company tenure who work at the same hierarchical

level but in different departments. Internal measures for health promotion benefit all generations. A health day offers the opportunity for comprehensive check-ups, from nutritional advice to vision tests. Massages, Tai Chi, or Yoga are also regularly offered.



Photo: Severin Wurnig

