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# Women Lawyers: Perspectives on Success

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# Books for Lawyers

## For the Practitioner

### Women Lawyers: Perspectives on Success.

Edited by Emily Couric.  
Law & Business, Inc./Harcourt Brace  
Jovanovich; New York City.  
\$35.00. 257 pages.

"No one can be a truly competent lawyer unless he is a cultivated man," admonished Justice Felix Frankfurter in 1954. Over half a century earlier Justice Holmes had insisted that "happiness, I am sure from having known many successful men, cannot be won simply by being counsel for great corporations and having an income of fifty thousand dollars." I like to think that Frankfurter and Holmes would now want to include the female gender. I also like to think that both justices would find much to agree with in Emily Couric's *Women Lawyers: Perspectives on Success*. This collection of essays by Couric, who is a journalist, and 14 women lawyers, thoughtfully explores what it means to be successful in various aspects of the legal profession in the closing decades of the 20th century.

The October 1983 *ABA Journal* noted in an extensive feature on "Women in the Law" that there are now more than 94,000 women lawyers comprising just over 15 percent of the legal profession in the United States. With law schools now graduating classes that average more than one-third women, the percentage of women lawyers is bound to increase rapidly in the near future. But numbers tell only part of the story.

*Women Lawyers* adds to existing literature about women in the law a collection

of first-hand accounts written by successful women lawyers who candidly describe their own experiences as well as their views about success in the legal profession. Unlike earlier books and articles that describe women lawyers, this new book is distinctively a primary source written by women lawyers sharing perceptions of themselves and their profession.

Each chapter offers a highly individualized, first-person perspective. Some of the chapters contain valuable "how-to" advice on matters such as positioning oneself for corporate advancement or dealing with personal rumors or sexual innuendo. Other chapters center around religious views or philosophies of legal education. Each describes a singular individual's unique experience in her chosen profession. And yet, each of these experiences is somehow archetypal, not only of women lawyers, but of the legal profession itself.

The design of *Women Lawyers* is simple. After Couric's general introduction come 14 personal and professional self-presentations: first a photograph, next a résumé, then a first-person autobiographical essay about success in the legal profession. Each of these chapters focuses on a part of the legal profession,

such as law firm practice, law school, politics, criminal prosecution, legal services and business. The resulting aggregate of views projects an interesting double image: On the one side is a close look at some examples of successful women lawyers who serve in such prominent roles as bar association presidents, judges, law professors, prosecutors and general counsels to public agencies and major corporations. On the other side is a glimpse of the legal profession's changing concepts of what constitutes success.

It is clear that these changes involve more than simply the inclusion of women lawyers. To cite an example from one of the book's most engaging chapters, the Bar Association of the District of Columbia chose Marna Tucker as its president in part because of her emphasis on cultivating her family as well as her law practice.

Couric's introduction ascribes to *Women Lawyers* a modest purpose: "to offer a sampling of the different avenues women lawyers can follow today," by providing examples and role models for "young women" to follow. In my view, people of varying ages, men as well as women, who are interested in legal careers will find the book both interesting and helpful. In addition, two other groups should be particularly interested in *Women Lawyers*—first, those who want to understand better the growing numbers of women lawyers with whom they live and work and, second, those who seek greater insight into the many

ways in which the legal profession itself is changing.

Although some of the book's anecdotes fit the genre of classic "war stories," the good humor and realistic



**Books for Lawyers**

optimism of the essays sets them apart from the professional-perils, school-of-hard-knocks, legal-education-as-a-cold-shower approach that has tended to characterize many past descriptions of success in the profession. These women at the top of the legal profession do admit to facing adversity, criticism, even losing cases and elections. But they never seem to have lost their sense of their own humanity and that of the people and problems with which they deal. Often humorous, the essays are sprinkled with wit and a variety of funny stories, like that told by the bar association president who described her self-satisfaction as she sat down at a White House meeting, only to notice the small grape-jelly hand print on her lap. This ability to smile, to laugh with ourselves and others seems to be particularly characteristic of successful women lawyers' perspectives on success.

*Reviewed by Dorothy Glancy, professor at the University of Santa Clara School of Law, formerly assistant general counsel, U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

**Automated Law Office Systems: A Survey of Today's Tools and Techniques.**

**By Sidney W. Frost and James C. Dunlop.**

**West Publishing Co.; St. Paul, Minnesota.**

**\$20.00 (\$17.50 until June 5). 422 pages.**

The American Bar Association has estimated that lawyers will spend \$500 million for office automation products per year during the next five years; therefore, the survey of tools and techniques in *Automated Law Office Systems* is a useful compendium for the lawyer who knows little or nothing about computers. Bewitched by the dazzling array of computer products, a mesmerized lawyer needs to dispel the mystical aura of computers before investing.

The first chapters of this guidebook hold the key to a basic understanding of data processing by breaking through the language barrier and translating computer terms such as CPU, COBOL and ASCII into clear English. The authors, Dunlop (a lawyer and computer specialist for Justice Information Management—JIM/LAW) and Frost (a consultant for the same company with an M.S. in computer science), examine the need for lawyers to increase productivity by use of automation in the areas of calen-

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