

Support from Outside Mentors and Inside the Firm

Have you had any female mentors or role models who influenced your career?

Jennifer Jean-Gilles: The very first was when I was still in law school. As some may know, I was a prosecutor before I came into private practice and in law school. I was trying to get this internship at the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. I was ultimately assigned to a few attorneys in the homicide division. And I remember sitting in one of the attorney's offices, she was one of the number one prosecutors in Philadelphia in homicide. And she had all over her walls drawings from her kids. And I remember seeing all those drawings and sitting in her office and she's talking to me about cases and what she does and what I'll be doing when I'm working with her. And I just remember thinking it is possible to like be a mom, add a family and be fantastic at your job. And she was like the premier prosecutor. And at that time, that's what I wanted. And so it clicked to me that I could do that job and had everything that I wanted in my personal life as well. She was the first mentor in my legal career and I will never, ever forget her.

Candace Dellacona: I've been lucky enough to have two really amazing women, both of whom were lawyers that I worked with and the course of my career. And the second person was actually someone I worked at a large firm by the name of Kirsten Rutnick, who's now Kirsten Gillibrand. I worked with her on a very large tobacco case. And I'll never forget sitting in a conference room with all of the local council of pretty much every state in the country, because all of the attorneys general had sued Big Tobacco company that we were representing. And Kirsten was teaching a sea of men, these male attorneys, how to defend our client and giving them the tutorial and providing the infrastructure of what the lawsuit should look like in every state. And I don't think she was a day over 35. And I remember being completely in awe of her.

How has Offit Kurman supported your legal career?

Jennifer Jean-Gilles: I think the first way is really just by the people that they have it. The firm, my colleagues have been a huge support. When I first started, I came from government and I had absolutely no idea about private practice or civil work. And my colleagues in the Landlord of Plantation group supported me and poured into me through training, through just random questions that I had. And so I think the staff that we have here at the firm and the attorneys that we have here at the firm that the first level of support for my legal career. And then I really appreciate how Asik Kerman poured into its attorneys were all many entrepreneurs here with various books of business and Asik wants to make sure that they are supporting their attorneys. So origination culture with Mary Ann Lee has been fantastic. The leadership training program just shows that it's not just about the numbers, it's not just about the day in and day out crying of it all, but really about making sure that each attorney is able to have their own professional growth because when we do better, the firm as a whole does better.