

New York Law Journal

2020

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Noreen Quirk

PARTNER AT FRAGOMEN, DEL REY, BERNSEN & LOEWY

A pivotal member of the Fragomen team since the firm's early days, Noreen Quirk has led a fascinating career in immigration law, paving the way for female attorneys and partners at the firm and forging client relationships that have spanned decades.

BY KARIN LESTELLE

I met Noreen on my first day with the firm in the early 1980s. She was a young associate, but clearly a rising star. Noreen was called upon to work directly with Austin Fragomen, the firm's current chairman, on the most complex and demanding cases, including federal litigation, renunciation of citizenship and matters involving celebrities.

After serving as an associate for only five years, Noreen was elected as Fragomen's first female partner in 1984. Recognizing Noreen's natural talent for leadership and commitment to client service, the firm's founders asked her to manage the Stamford, CT, office in 1986, shortly after she had given birth to her first child.

I have worked with Noreen on a daily basis beginning in Stamford and later in Fragomen's New York office. Noreen took me under her wing and taught me nearly everything I know about immigration law. I saw firsthand how she successfully managed and grew a branch office, while creating a congenial work environment for her employees. I am happy to say that nearly 40 years later, we are still working together and she remains one of my best friends.

I have always been impressed by Noreen's top-notch legal skills, strong work ethic, sense of justice and poise in challenging situations. Throughout her career, Noreen has guided clients through a rapidly changing and increasingly complex immigration environment. She counsels employers on the complete range of business visa applications, in-house immigration program development and immigration compliance. Noreen's clients appreciate her passion and commitment to their cases and remain dedicated to her.

To this day, Noreen is most respected among her partners and peers in the immigration field for her breadth of knowledge, passion for immigration

law and intellectual rigor. I am thankful to work with Noreen for those reasons, but perhaps more importantly because of her kindness, empathy and sense of justice.

Noreen takes a relationship-based approach to her work, and clients view her as a trusted advisor. For this reason, Noreen's relationships with her clients often span generations, including children of clients she supported more than 20 years ago.

Noreen seamlessly weaves pro bono work into her corporate practice and regularly represented clients on a pro bono basis long before law firms actively encouraged their lawyers to do so. I remember the phone ringing constantly in the Stamford office with requests for Noreen to provide pro bono support on behalf of various organizations. I don't think she ever said, "No."

I consider myself so fortunate to have started my career with Noreen as my mentor. She is still my mentor today, and I know I am not the only one who has benefited tremendously from her thoughtful guidance, astute legal expertise and empathy.

I speak on behalf of clients, colleagues and peers throughout the legal community in sharing my gratitude for the lessons that Noreen has taught me.

Karin Lestelle is a partner at Fragomen.