

CORPORATE COUNSEL AWARDS



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



As a noun “counsel” often refers to a lawyer who gives legal advice and represents clients in court. Our honorees do both, and by all accounts do it remarkably well.

The Daily Record and the Rochester Business Journal launched the Corporate Counsel Awards in 2018 to honor lawyers who play a critical role in making their companies successful.

On the other pages of this issue, we are pleased to recognize 11 impressive honorees. Before 2018, we honored corporate counsel with the Top Counsel award at the Attorneys of the Year event each November. But we decided that these dedicated attorneys deserve their own event.

Nominated by their peers, the honorees come from a variety of industries and each faces unique challenges. They use their legal skills to navigate complicated contract negotiations, defend their companies in high-stakes litigation and protect their organization’s most important assets. As these essays show, they also often serve as ethical guides, and can help employees and their bosses navigate often-complex situations.

In addition to the work they do for their companies, they make an impact in the Rochester area through community involvement and mentoring. They volunteer their time and energy to serve organizations like the Susan B. Anthony House, Pittsford Mustangs Soccer Club, United Way, Verona Street Animal Society, Lifespan, Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester and the Monroe Community College Foundation, to name just a few.

We are proud to recognize these 11 Corporate Counsel Award winners. They work tirelessly to make their companies and their community better. On behalf of The Daily Record and the Rochester Business Journal, I want to congratulate them on this honor and thank them for their commitment to excellence.

-Ben Jacobs
Editor

A banner image featuring a blurred background of hands clapping. Overlaid on the left is the word "Congratulations" in a large, white, cursive script. On the right, in white sans-serif font, is "TO THE 2020 CORPORATE COUNSEL AWARD HONOREES". Below this, on a dark blue background, is the "WARDGREENBERG" logo in white serif font. To the right of the logo, in yellow and white text, is "Thoughtful Strategists. Skilled Litigators." followed by the website "www.WardGreenberg.com" and phone number "585.454.0700".

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Congratulations!

We congratulate all of the 2020 Corporate Counsel honorees being recognized for their talent, dedication, and contribution to our community and the legal profession.



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SAMUEL J. BURRUANO, JR.

FIVE STAR BANK



Five Star Bank General Counsel Samuel J. Burruano, Jr. says his career in law is just an extension of the values he was taught by his parents.

“My parents understood the import of education and encouraged me to excel academically. Success in school coupled with a passion to problem solve propelled me to law school,” he says.

After earning his law degree at Cleveland Marshall College of Law, Burruano joined the Hiscock and Barclay law firm (now known as Barclay Damon LLP) and stayed put for almost 20 years before joining First Niagara Bank in 2011. The change in workplace presented Burruano with a new challenge—assuming the role of a bank’s in-house attorney.

“I felt that this role would provide a more fulfilling prism to see the byproduct of my legal advice and strategic guidance advance the goals and objectives of a company over time, while also enabling me to collectively grow with the organization,” he explains.

He joined Five Star Bank in 2016 and assumed

the role of general counsel and corporate secretary this past December.

“Five Star Bank presented the ideal opportunity to work with highly collaborative and innovative leaders, and an institution committed to doing the right thing for all of its constituents,” says Burruano. “It has been exciting to be a part of a company that is genuinely committed to the success of the communities it operates in.”

Burruano credits the Corporate Counsel Award to his co-workers and the external attorneys he and his team work with to tackle legal issues confronting his company.

“This award is largely attributable to the exceptional and proactive legal advice provided by our very talented internal team of attorneys and outside law firms that help address specialized legal issues and serve as our team’s ‘bench’.”

—Jim Barg

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Five Star Bank proudly recognizes General Counsel and Corporate Secretary Sam Burruano for being a 2020 Corporate Counsel honoree.



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DEIRDRE M. FLYNN

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER



University of Rochester senior counsel Deirdre M. Flynn started getting serious about a career in law while in college. She puts that down to watching courtroom TV dramas, especially the lawyers on '80s favorite

L.A. Law.

"I always wanted to be a litigator, advocating in a courtroom," Flynn says.

When it came time to go to law school, the native Rochesterian decided to eschew the West Coast for New York City, getting her degree at Columbia Law.

She then returned to Rochester, gaining litigation experience in law firms and later as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office.

In 2003, she decided to join the in-house counsel team at the University of Rochester. Flynn's long history with the university factored into her decision.

Not only had she participated in childhood summer sports camps, she took a calculus course during her high school days at East High, and her mother worked until retirement as a dental hygienist at Strong Memorial Hospital.

"When the opportunity came along to join the

in-house counsel team at the university, I could not pass it up as I knew the missions of the university and its hospitals," she explains.

"The opportunity to work with dedicated health care professionals—like my mother—would be both a challenge and rewarding."

Flynn likes the fact that something new happens every day.

"Every day presents a new issue, fact pattern, or challenge not yet heard or faced. It is what makes the role both challenging and fascinating; the reason I love coming to work each day and will never, ever be bored."

She likes to act as a calming influence during a stressful time.

"I often tell my clients as we end a phone call to let me handle the legal issue; please don't think about it anymore for now and go back to doing the excellent work you do for your patients."

—Jim Barg

JULIE M. LEWIS

CARESTREAM HEALTH



Carestream Health General Counsel Julie M. Lewis didn't start out with the intention of getting into law.

Lewis planned on going into broadcast journalism with her bachelor's degree from Ohio State.

"After doing some internships, I just did not see (broadcast journalism) as something I wanted to do," Lewis says. "There was a little too much news reporting intensity instead of helping people, so I pivoted and decided to go to law school."

After graduating from Capital University, she had stints with the Monroe County District Attorney's Office and Harris Beach before joining Carestream Health in 2007. She was promoted to general counsel and corporate secretary at the end of 2018, after being deputy general counsel and chief privacy officer.

Most of her work involves keeping up with the rapid evolution in medical technology and the corresponding regulations.

"The technology changes just like it does in iPhones," she explains. "As soon as you buy (the latest model), it's obsolete and there's something new coming the very next day."

Lewis' career has taken her all over the world, and although it can be stressful, she wouldn't

trade it for anything.

"While it's challenging, it's also invigorating," Lewis notes. "You're always learning something new, and there's never a dull moment."

Outside the office, Lewis is an active volunteer in many causes; none as personally important as autism since her son is on the spectrum.

She and her husband decided to use their legal background as advocates to help special needs families navigate through the inevitable challenges that rise up.

"Being able to comprehend the system can be challenging, and there is a lot of complexity to navigate," she says.

"When I retire—and I don't think that's any time soon—I would like to focus my energies on helping those families facing similar challenges so that they can take advantage of their options going forward."

—Jim Barg

BRIAN P. MADRAZO

PAYCHEX, INC.



As Brian P. Madrazo, a director in the Paychex Legal Department puts it, there was never a “flash of lightning”—a moment when he decided on law as a career.

“There was a labor law course at LeMoyne I really enjoyed,” he says. “But once I got to graduation, I didn’t think I would go (to law school) right away.”

Ending up with a degree in industrial labor relations, Madrazo worked in the state Legislature for a year before moving on to the University at Buffalo’s law school, turning that into a three-year stint in the U.S. Army as a judge advocate general.

He went on to have jobs with the Rochester public defender’s office and Nixon Peabody before joining Paychex in 2003 as the company’s fourth attorney, assuming his current role in 2015.

“I’ve been (at Paychex) 17 years and have probably had three or four separate careers within Paychex in terms of where my focus has been,” Madrazo says. “I am fortunate to have joined Pay-

chex and I really enjoy what I am doing here.”

Apart from the office, Madrazo is a veteran of United Way campaigns and is a trustee of the Pittsford Community Church, working with a team that keeps the church building up to date.

Despite being honored for his work, Madrazo is adamant that his success is due to the people who have supported him throughout the years.

“I’ve been really fortunate to work with (great people) in all the jobs that I’ve had,” including the support of Paychex’s chief legal officer Stephanie Schaeffer, his wife Kathy and daughter Emily.

“I’m very cognizant of the chances people have given me and the support I’ve been given. Without that strong support structure at work and at home, I couldn’t have achieved any success.”

—Jim Barg

Paychex congratulates its own *Director of Legal, Brian Madrazo*, on being named a **2020 Corporate Counsel Award** recipient. Thank you for your leadership and unfailing integrity.

Congratulations to all of this year’s outstanding honorees.

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Xerox congratulates Heidi Martinez, 2020 Corporate Counsel honoree.

Exceptional character is the cornerstone of success. Xerox is proud to have Heidi at the helm of our IP legal team. Her unquestionable integrity and fearless leadership are key to the success of our company and our community. Thank you, Heidi, for your tireless commitment.

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HEIDI MARTINEZ

XEROX CORPORATION



If you'd have asked Xerox Corp. Chief IP Counsel Heidi Martinez in college where her post-graduation future was, she wouldn't have been able to give you an answer.

Sure, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Rochester, but it wasn't until her father suggested law school that she found a career path.

"I took a position as a litigation paralegal at Nixon Hargrave (now Nixon Peabody)," Martinez explains. "I worked on an arbitration and a trial in federal court during the year I was there, and it didn't take long for me to realize that law would be a good fit."

During her time with Kodak, Martinez helped the company with a patent lawsuit against Sony, and she realized that she enjoyed intellectual property work.

"I really enjoy learning about technology, and the ever-changing patent landscape offers plenty of strategic challenges," she says. "So intellectual property law turned out to be the perfect fit (for me)."

She would end up spending eight years at Eastman Kodak Co. before a five-year stint with Ward Greenberg Heller & Reidy, moving on to become one of Xerox's IP counsels in 2013 and assuming the role of chief IP counsel in 2018.

"I think my broad-based experience in many other areas of the law helps me to think creatively about how to ensure that Xerox has the IP rights it needs to win in the marketplace," Martinez says.

She wants to make sure that the people behind her get the credit she believes they deserve, from her husband Raul juggling his own legal career with the demands of parenthood to various mentors over the years.

"It's really the people around you who make you what you are, so this award is as much a reflection of their talents as it is of my work," exclaims Martinez.

—Jim Barg

ELLEN O'NEILL

ALSTOM TRANSPORTATION, INC.



Alstom Transportation Senior Counsel Ellen O'Neill's career in law wasn't something she had planned on throughout her schooling.

"I majored in Spanish and Latin American studies," O'Neill recounts. "I was thinking of a

career in languages, actually. But law kept calling me."

It all started impulsively with a bold move from Rochester to Boston with a friend in the wake of Watergate. O'Neill ended up getting her law degree from Suffolk University's law school and ultimately found herself working in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, prosecutor's office.

She went on to have stints with Nixon Hargrave and General Electric, before joining Alstom Transportation in 1998.

O'Neill credits her time at GE in helping her transition from criminal and civil litigation to corporate practice.

"It was terrific training for my (current) position. I got familiar with business issues and business concerns, and that was a good foundation for the position I have (now)."

O'Neill notes that she's been very lucky to be fluent in Spanish, having used that ability in a range of matters over the course of her legal career.

"(Language) keeps coming back into my life. I like that."

The greatest challenge she faces with her work these days is just finding the "time and bandwidth" to get her daily work done, noting that Alstom has six attorneys across the country.

"The challenge of the job is also its reward," O'Neill explains. "It's fast-paced, interesting and never dull."

Outside of the office, she's on the board of St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center in the South Wedge. The nonprofit agency specializes in making sure the uninsured and underinsured get comprehensive medical care.

"It's been a good opportunity to contribute my legal and analytical skills," she says. "You actually get more out of it than you give. Working with the Neighborhood Center is just a privilege. It reminds me that we have great gifts as lawyers, and it's good to give back."

—Jim Barg

JEFFREY P. STONE

STANTEC



Stantec Vice President and Associate General Counsel Jeffrey P. Stone downplays the story of how he ended up going into law, calling it “no great motivational tale.”

“I wasn’t very good at math and liked to debate

about everything when I was a teenager, so maybe I was destined to be a lawyer,” Stone explains. “After college graduation, I worked selling insurance and after a few years of that thought law school was the best route to a more rewarding career.”

So, after getting his degree from Rutgers University’s law program, he spent nine years with Harter Secrest and then became the first general counsel for The Sear-Brown Group before joining Stantec in 2004 as part of the firm’s first northeast U.S. acquisition deal.

Over the course of the last 16 years, Stone has helped grow the company from its Western Canadian roots into a top worldwide architecture and design firm. His latest role is as the firm’s associate general counsel, having been promoted to that job in 2017.

“I cannot imagine a different legal career that would have been as diverse, interesting and re-

warding than as in-house counsel for Stantec,” he says. “Going in-house was the best career move I ever made.”

Stone’s work has taken him all across North America as the company grew, including a two-year stay in Colorado.

“The construction business is a very confrontational and litigious one, so there is always intellectually challenging, interesting work available to a lawyer working in a design firm,” he notes.

That work has ranged from aiding managers on various projects when construction and design issues pop up, insurance and employment problems for over 22,000 employees or keeping up to date on benefit compliance.

“There is a constant flow of widely different legal work that keeps one thinking and challenged every day,” says Stone.

—Jim Barg



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Joe Turri, Esq

AND ALL 2020 CORPORATE COUNSEL AWARD HONOREES

SARAH TURNER

MANNING & NAPIER



Some people have an inkling early on in their lives that a career in law is for them. Manning & Napier General Counsel Sarah Turner readily admits that wasn't the case for her.

"In college, I needed to find a minor, and I

thought I would give political science a try," Turner explains. "When I took my first constitutional law course, I quickly decided I want to make this my major."

"Eventually, my professor called me into his office and said you should really think about law school."

She would end up moving to New York City and getting her degree from Fordham Law.

"I had no idea what I was getting myself into," Turner says with a laugh. "If you'd told me that I'd end up being a corporate lawyer, I'd have called you a liar. Funny how things work out."

Turner is in the middle of her second stint with Manning & Napier, having briefly worked for Harter Secrest before returning to the firm in May 2018 as its general counsel.

"It was a quick boomerang, and a big change," she says, noting that she was only gone for a few months.

"But being a good general counsel is all about developing the trust of your management team. It's more important to demonstrate sound judgment and know what you don't know than to have every single legal answer."

She admits she doesn't have any use for what she calls the adversarial aspects of the practice of law.

"I never really wanted to be a litigator. I've enjoyed that the vast majority of my career has been working with people towards a common objective and just trying to get deals done, and being a problem solver."

—Jim Barg

JOSEPH TURRI

O'CONNELL ELECTRIC COMPANY, INC.



O'Connell Electric General Counsel Joseph Turri has been in the law game for decades, and he credits his interest in the profession to his upbringing in Seneca Falls.

"The attorneys were always active in the com-

munity, highly visible and very respected professionals," Turri explains.

"I didn't know then if I wanted to be a lawyer, (but) I knew that was the kind of person I wanted to be. The law has given me that opportunity."

Turri spent time working with AT&T in New York City and then decided to get his law degree at Cornell. After law school, he began working for Harris Beach LLC, a career that spanned over 40 years.

One of his earliest cases involved the construction of Xerox Square downtown, and Turri's work has continued to mostly involve the construction industry in some way.

"The case changed my career forever," he says.

Often, his path and O'Connell Electric's crossed. "You might say that O'Connell and I grew up together in this industry," he says, noting the company's growth from a business valued at \$5 million to the third-largest electric construction

company in the Northeast with a value over \$250 million.

Knowing that history, Turri was asked if he wanted to be the first in-house attorney in company history two years ago. He leapt at the chance.

"I love the work I do. No day is the same as the one before, and each day poses new challenges and opportunities," Turri says. "I am thrilled that even after nearly 50 years in private practice, I have been given the opportunity to reinvent myself as corporate counsel in a fine and community-minded company."

He wants to make sure that his wife, Kate, gets her share of the credit.

"I (want to) thank (her) for indulging my unwillingness to 'retire' and instead to follow my heart into the ongoing fray the law provides," says Turri.

—Jim Barg

AMY S. WARNER

ROCHESTER RHIO



Rochester RHIO General Counsel Amy S. Warner feels her professional path was set for her at a young age. Not specifically her law career, mind you, but the desire to help others.

“My grandmother raised me, and she raised me to be a caretaker,” Warner explains. “So I had an interest in the law at a young age, and had an interest in helping people.”

“Through a legal avenue, I was able to use my skills to help people.”

Warner went on to get her law degree from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale and spent time working as an attorney in Broward County, Florida, and in Monroe County before joining Rochester RHIO.

Her work for Rochester RHIO (Regional Health Information Organization) mainly deals with a rapidly changing regulatory landscape. In this case, it’s ensuring that health records for patients have more information.

“The more information providers have, they can use and provide access to other providers offering treatment,” Warner says. “You don’t have to get

multiple X-rays for the same issue, for example.”

This also requires that certifications are up to date and meet a national standard.

“We go through a lot of audits to ensure our policies are up to date,” she adds.

Apart from the office, she’s an active advocate for organizations like Lifespan, along with putting together mock trial teams for local high schools.

That advocacy is something she’s passing down to her daughter, Madison.

Warner’s grandmother liked to volunteer at nursing homes, and now the younger Warners carry on her legacy, in a manner of speaking.

“We go and serve as an advocate on behalf of the residents of these places,” she explains. “If they have a concern and are afraid to raise it, they can come to you with an issue and you can resolve it.”

—Jim Barg

JENNIFER N. WEIDNER

CANANDAIGUA NATIONAL CORPORATION



Canandaigua National Bank and Trust General Counsel Jennifer N. Weidner had a little help being pushed toward a law career.

“When I was in high school, I took law as an

elective. Eliot Vorce was a magnificent and inspiring educator,” she explains.

“Though I had forgotten I really had an interest in law as far back as high school, I was reminded when looking through my yearbook and found Mr. Vorce’s autograph with ‘Good luck in law school!’”

After getting her law degree at the University at Buffalo, Weidner spent time with Harter Secrest and Boylan Code.

She joined Canandaigua Bank in 2014, and it’s part of a long personal history in the banking industry, as she explains.

“My first several years of employment after college was in banking, and I was inspired to go back to school through my work as a compliance officer for a fairly recently chartered trust company,” Weidner says.

She juggles diverse and varied subjects in her

role as general counsel, a promotion she earned in 2017. It’s that challenge she loves the most about her job.

“Any given day can encompass a number of these issues at the same time,” Weidner says.

“I joke that it’s like playing tennis in a round tennis court with the balls coming at you from all angles. You learn all sorts of strokes to keep the ball where it belongs.”

Weidner doesn’t want to forget her co-workers, who make her job enjoyable.

“I work with terrific people. Our leadership is exemplary!” she says.

“The enjoyment I get from my work is directly related to the relationships I have with my co-workers. They are an appreciative group and that appreciation just pays forward for the team effort.”

—Jim Barg

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Well-deserved recognition for all that you have achieved.

Congratulations to **Jennifer N. Weidner** for being recognized as an honoree for the 2020 Rochester Business Journal's Corporate Counsel Awards. Your exceptional character, integrity, and ethics have made a positive impact on others and has contributed to the success of our organization. Your Canandaigua National Bank & Trust family applauds the success you've attained and looks forward to your future achievements.

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