

By Paula Cohen

## The Women of Snell & Wilmer

**F**lexible and part-time schedules, telecommuting opportunities, formal networking groups and gender-focused business development training are often touted as tools that enhance the likelihood for the success of women in law firms. Snell & Wilmer partner Terry Roman, however, insists that there is something much more basic than policies and programs behind the achievements of the women she works with every day. “There is no question that mutual respect and personal relationships make it possible, and enjoyable, for women in this firm to reach their potential as lawyers, community advocates

and/or parents,” says Roman, who has been with Snell & Wilmer since 1982. And as evidenced by the number of women partners residing at Snell & Wilmer, as well as their tenures with the firm, her belief appears to be accurate.

This month, *Attorney at Law Magazine* is proud to share a quick snapshot highlighting ten of Snell & Wilmer’s female partners. As more than one of them said, just like their male counterparts, their successful careers would not have been possible without the support of their spouses or significant others, as well as a work environment that encourages and supports an active family life.



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**Sheila Carmody**

**S**heila Carmody is listed in several of the most credible legal directories as one of the top class action defense litigators and insurance lawyers in the country. She has obtained numerous significant rulings, including a U.S. Supreme Court decision denying Plaintiffs' Petition Certiorari on a California class action case that she recently won at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In addition, she is actively involved in an effort to have the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals overturn a 90-million-member class. She won a national class action for a client in the Northern District of Illinois, a case that is pending in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Carmody, who graduated from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University in 1981, indicates that she has built her practice by consistently obtaining good results for her clients and says she is honored to have learned how to practice law with some of the finest practitioners in the country. While maintaining a full trial schedule, she always manages to attend hundreds of football and basketball games to support her three sons.

**B**arb Dawson has been with Snell & Wilmer for 20 years. Her practice is concentrated on complex commercial litigation and internal investigations. Her specific areas of focus include financial institution matters, tax disputes, class actions and alternative dispute resolution. She is the current Chair of Lex Mundi, the world's leading association of independent law firms with 160 member firms and more than 21,000 lawyers worldwide. With her election, Dawson becomes only the second woman to serve as Chair. She was also recently recognized by the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce as the 2009 ATHENA Businesswoman of the Year in the Private Sector. The prestigious award is named after the Greek goddess of courage and wisdom, and is a program of ATHENA International, a foundation dedicated to creating leadership opportunities for women. Dawson attributes her success in the workplace and community, as well as at home, in part, to her ability to stay focused and live in the moment. Thus, when with her daughter Nicole and husband Sam, she is with them and not at work.



**Barb Dawson**



**Jody Pokorski**

**O**ver the last 20 years, Jody Pokorski has been involved in virtually every notable real estate transaction in the Valley involving either finance or regulatory matters. She obtained her law degree from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University in 1984, and her significant accomplishments include being named to The Best Lawyers in America® for 17 years and serving as Chair for the Real Property Section of the State Bar of Arizona. Currently, she represents numerous landowners in regards to the disposition of large land holdings. As with many of the Firm's female attorneys, she looks to Sandra Day O'Connor for inspiration. "In terms of actual mentoring, my first mentor was real estate attorney Mary Leader, the first female partner at Snell & Wilmer. She taught me how to act professionally at work and in interactions with others." In addition to her success in the law, Pokorski has served as Board Chair to Homeward Bound, on the Board of Directors of the Desert Mission and has volunteered for numerous other community organizations.



**P**atricia Lee Refo's practice is concentrated in complex commercial litigation, with experience in financial institutions litigation, professional malpractice defense, class actions, trade secret litigation and commercial and business torts. After practicing for 13 years in Chicago, she moved to Arizona in 1996 because her husband was in Phoenix. "Starting over again was a challenge and I worked hard to meet prospective clients by getting involved in a variety of civic matters," says Refo. A frequent speaker at various legal conferences, Refo has been recognized as one of The 50 Most Influential Women Lawyers in America by the *National Law Journal* and with the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. She was also the recipient of the 2009 American Bar Association (ABA) Jury System Impact Award for her leadership in the American Jury Project that drafted the ABA Principles for Juries and Jury Trials. "It was because of Ms. Refo's leadership that the American Jury System resulted in the ABA House of Delegates passing the Nineteen Jury Principles," said former ABA President Robert J. Grey, Jr. "Because of her dedication, we have a better justice system in America."



**Patricia Lee Refo**



**Terry Roman**

**A**die-hard University of Arizona Wildcat, Terry Roman received both her undergraduate (1979) and her law degree (1982) from UA. Since joining Snell & Wilmer right out of law school, Roman has developed a reputation as one of the region's finest business lawyers with a focus on both health care and insurance.

Examples of her successes include having completed a public offering of an HMO and closing an international transaction encompassing 20 countries, a monumental task that required finding counsel in locations across the globe, including war-torn nations. Roman has been named to The Best Lawyers in America® every year since 1997 and the *Phoenix Business Journal* once named her 'Best of the Bar'. In addition, for the past 10 years, she has been named as one of the Top 100 Who's Who Women in Business by *Arizona Woman* magazine, possibly because she started the Fresh Start Women's Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to helping women help themselves. How has she built her thriving practice? "It's simple: by doing good work, being responsive to my clients and being active in the community."

**B**orn in Tehran, Iran, Bahar Schippel is a partner in Snell & Wilmer's Tax, Employee Benefits & Estate Planning group and is a Certified Specialist in Tax Law with the Arizona Board of Legal Specialization. With the Firm since 2000, Schippel prides herself on being "the practical tax lawyer" and strives to devise tax strategies that effectively address client business objectives.

Schippel serves on the governing board of the American Bar Association's Tax Section, the nation's largest association of tax lawyers, and she is also the Chair of the Tax Advisory Commission of the Arizona State Bar. In 2009, she was selected as one of the Forty-Under-40 recipients by the *Phoenix Business Journal*, an honor recognizing the Valley's most accomplished and outstanding young professionals.

As a child, Schippel lived in a boarding school for seven years without ever seeing her parents. "This was because of political turmoil in my home country," she recalls. "Letters from my parents helped me maintain my sanity; they raised me long distance through the power of their pen. My mother constantly reminded me that high heat is applied to iron or steel in order to forge it into strong and beautiful metal. I am grateful to reap the benefits of the inner strength forged during this trying time."



**Bahar Schippel**



**S**pecializing in Insurance Coverage, Insurance Bad Faith and Product Liability Litigation, Amy M. Samberg practices in Snell & Wilmer's Tucson office. Sporting both maroon and gold as a 1988 Arizona State University graduate and the blue and red of a University of Arizona Wildcat where she earned her law degree in 1991, Samberg advises people entering the legal field to "find their niche, be persistent but patient and don't take things personally." She also likes to pass on advice that she says a "wise old lawyer" once told her. "He said that the key to being a good litigator is knowing when to speak – and knowing when to stop speaking. I think about that every time I set foot in a courtroom." She must have taken the advice to heart, as Samberg has won quite a few trials in her life. Committed to the Humane Society of Southern Arizona as a member (and having served as a Board member), Samberg is mom to two very spoiled rescued Dobermans.



**Amy M. Samberg**



**Heidi McNeil  
Staudenmaier**

**N**amed as one of the 'Top Ten Great Women of Gaming,' Staudenmaier specializes in Native American Law, Gaming Law and Business Litigation. Growing up on a farm outside of the tiny town of Preston, Iowa, Staudenmaier has lived in Arizona since graduating from the University of Iowa Law School in 1985. "I decided to come to work for Snell because in my view, it was the best Firm in Arizona and it also had a lot of Iowa natives, including our Chairman, John Bouma."

Staudenmaier has built her practice in Native American Gaming Law through untold hours of research, as well as writing articles for various publications and seeking out numerous speaking engagements. "I had to aggressively market my expertise," she says. "It took many years to build my practice." Named to The Best Lawyers in America® for Native American Law and Gaming (2005-2010), and a recipient of the First American Leadership Award from the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, Staudenmaier is also a Founding Member, Past President and only woman General Member of the International Masters of Gaming Law.



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**W**ith an extensive Employment Law and Immigration practice, Rebecca Winterscheidt enjoys an enviable record, having tried numerous employment cases to juries and to judges – without ever sustaining a loss. She gives a lot of credit for her success to her mother and grandmother, who have always been an inspiration to her. “They remind me to never forget the ‘mid-western’ work ethic,” she says.

After receiving her undergraduate degree from Emporia State University in 1980, Winterscheidt attended the University of Kansas Law School. “While I was there, Mary Leader, who was Snell’s first female partner, came to recruit; this was very unusual at the time. I ended up clerking for the Firm and started working here after graduation in 1983.”

Winterscheidt’s accomplishments include successfully handling what was, at the time, the largest sexual harassment class action case in Arizona. She frequently speaks on employment law and immigration topics and has been consistently recognized in Best Lawyers in America®. She is especially proud of having helped numerous foreign nationals achieve their dream of becoming U.S. citizens.



**Rebecca Winterscheidt**

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**Joyce K. Wright**

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**J**oyce Wright is currently the practice leader of Snell & Wilmer’s Real Estate, Environmental, Energy and Commercial Finance Practice Group, and she was one of the Firm’s first women partners. She has successfully negotiated numerous significant transactions, including representing ITT Sheraton Corporation when it purchased the Phoenician Resort and Sheraton Crescent Hotel. “At the time, this was the largest real estate transaction in Arizona, measured in financial terms,” notes Wright. “The transaction involved issues in almost every legal field from real estate to intellectual property law.”

Wright graduated from the University of Arizona in 1977, moving up north to attend the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. The year after her 1981 graduation, she joined Snell & Wilmer. “I will forever be grateful for the support I received from Frank Snell who did not think I should have to put my family plans on hold to pursue my legal career.” Wright continues, “It also helps that my husband and I have always been committed to making our family life, which entails raising our four children and two careers work.”



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## Organizations with which the women at Snell & Wilmer are involved

- American Red Cross Southern Arizona Chapter
- American Cancer Society
- Angel Charity for Children, Inc.
- Arizona Academic Decathlon Association
- Arizona Celtic Bar Association
- Arizona Chamber of Commerce
- Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation
- Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Arizona Women Lawyers Honoring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor
- Arizona Opera Board of Trustees
- Arizona State University Sun Angel Advisory Committee
- CASA Support Council for Pima County
- Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.
- Childsplay
- Community Health Charities of Arizona
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Domestic Violence Legal Clinic
- Fresh Start Women's Foundation
- Friends of the Phoenix Public Library
- Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce
- Indian Museum
- Herberger Theater Center
- Homeward Bound
- Humane Society of Southern Arizona
- Junior Achievement
- Junior League of Phoenix
- National Charity League
- Phoenix Art Museum
- Phoenix Public Defender Review Board
- Phoenix Women's Sports Association
- Pima Council on Aging
- Planned Parenthood, Board
- Smithsonian American Art Museum (Arizona Representative)
- Tu Nidito
- University of Arizona Law College Association
- Valley Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Valley Leadership
- Valley Youth Theatre
- Volunteer Lawyers Program
- Women's Metropolitan Art

