

Partner Amy Oakley Recognized as a 2024 “Top Women of Law”

Description

Congratulations to Partner [Amy Oakley](#) and all the inspiring honorees of [Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly](#)’s 2024 “Top Women of Law”! We celebrate her exceptional achievements in real estate and finance law as well as her impactful mentorship in the legal community.

We are proud to have Amy on our team and to join in recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of this year’s honorees.

AMY T.M. OAKLEY

Partner, Partridge, Snow & Hahn, Boston
Richardson School of Law

For Amy T.M. Oakley, commercial finance chair at Partridge Snow & Hahn, the most gratifying part of her job is the chance to see something impactful and tangible emerge from a lengthy process.

"Developers take a tremendous risk, it's rewarding to help them mitigate the downside as much as possible," she says.

An interest in politics and policy brought Oakley to the profession. After college, she moved to Hawaii, where her three siblings had relocated, to attend the University of Hawaii Richardson School of Law. Realizing she wanted to practice in Boston, she attended Boston College Law School for her third year.

Oakley has practiced for over 18 years and joined PSH in 2019. Focusing on financial transactions, she has represented more than twenty lenders in over 500 loan transactions with some facilities in excess of \$100 million. On the development side, she has a loyal group of development companies that keep her busy on commercial real estate projects throughout New England often using tax incentives.

Oakley says her career has evolved with a concentration on real estate emerging organically from a more general finance focus.

She attributes her success, in part, to the attention she received at an early



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stage in her career. "I had a terrific mentor who gave me a lot of leeway to build my practice," Oakley says.

Oakley had opportunities early in her career to attend closings of large transactions and sit in on calls, and she believes those were invaluable experiences. "You learn so much at the closing table, but that doesn't happen anymore. Virtually all closings are remote. Everything is over videoconference or email. Newer attorneys may never get asked to 'get on a call' now that many attorneys are working remotely and cannot walk down the hall."

LAUREN F. OLANOFF

Partner, Egan, Flanagan & Cohen, Springfield
Tulane University School of Law

While a solo practitioner, Lauren F. Olanoff recalls taking a hard line on a case that eventually resulted in a settlement. Once it was officially over, opposing counsel was so impressed with her work, they came up with a different kind of offer.

"That's how I got my start at Egan, Flanagan & Cohen," recalls Olanoff, who has spent 11 years with the firm and made partner in 2019.

Last year, Olanoff recovered more than \$5 million for clients in trials and settlements and this year, she was named chief operating officer where she led the firm's transition from its legacy practice management software to a new cloud-based platform. She's also been designing and implementing firm and litigation practice standards and procedures.

Olanoff, who was born and raised in West Springfield, was tapped in 2023 by the Supreme Judicial Court to lead the Clients' Security Board. She also sits on the board of Hampden County Lawyers for Justice. Primarily a defense attorney at one time, she still uses those skills in her corporate litigation role today. She says she's comfortable in the courtroom.

"I like trying cases. I like helping clients from start to finish," she says. "What I say to my partners is that the reason I like my job so much is that every



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Olanoff says trial experience remains vital to her success.

"I'm able to use that every day," she says. "I'm able to give clients advice from the perspective of what a case is going to look like and need at trial. I'm not just looking to settle a case to get it over with. If I really truly think it is a case that ought to go to trial. I'm not afraid of that."

— David Baugher

JENNIFER E. OLLINGTON

Deputy Director, MetroWest Legal Services, Framingham
Southwestern Law School

Jennifer E. Ollington discovered her passion for immigration law while doing legal aid work as a paralegal in Los Angeles.

"I have found providing direct representation to immigrants extremely rewarding and my specialty has always been in representing immigrant survivors of domestic violence and other crimes in their immigration process," she says.

Indeed, when she started at MetroWest in 2007 to do family law work, it didn't yet have an immigration unit. Now, thanks to new funding and Ollington's efforts, five attorneys and three paralegals work on such cases. Eventually, she transitioned to exclusively doing immigration matters and has represented more than 700 clients. She became director of the unit in 2018 and deputy director of the organization five years later. During her time with MetroWest, she has implemented a Juvenile Immigrant Relief Project in Framingham's public schools and managed implementation of the Afghan Immigration Assistance Project.

Ollington fashioned an ongoing training program for the attorneys who worked in the immigration unit at

MSWLS to ensure that they were educated, informed, supported and accountable in their work. Leading by example, she created a successful culture wherein those



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of the unit were close to 100% successful in obtaining legal status for their clients.

Ollington is driven by the courage of the immigrants whose interests she represents.

"They are often separated from their children throughout this process," she says. "I have just gained a lot of inspiration from my clients and their ability to keep with the process so they can build a better life for them and for their children. It does help to put your own life in perspective."

— David Baugher

NICOLE R.G. PAQUIN

Principal, Law Office of Nicole Paquin, Newton
Suffolk University Law School

Nicole R.G. Paquin is dedicated to giving her clients a voice in the court system.

"[These are] regular, everyday people who are just trying to do their best need help," she says. "Whether you are talking about ordinary immigrants or ordinary parents who are just trying to do their best under the circumstances and try to build a better life for their family, I think that is the common theme."

Paquin gets to deal with both in running her own practice, which she founded in 2019. As private counsel for the CPCS Children and Family Law Appellate Panel, she represents children and parents in appeals regarding care and protection matters. The other aspect of her practice sees her helping non-citizens and families in status and naturalization cases.

Paquin has served as chair of the Massachusetts Bar Association's Access to Justice Section Council since 2023. She formerly held positions in the MBA including leadership fellow and director-at-large for the Young Lawyers Division. She has been part of the Women's Bar Association's Amicus Committee since 2020 and is a current member of the Mass. Law Reform Institute's Massachusetts Pro Bono Advisory Committee.

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States in a variety of ways and they want to provide the best possible future for themselves and their family," says Paquin. "I really feel honored to be able to help people realize that dream of being able to come to the United States, be able to stay in the United States or bring their family to the United States so they can work and live here and build a life together."

She also takes great pride in her work with CPCS cases.

"In essence many in layman's terms, a public defender for the child or the parent on the appeal," she says.

— David Baugher

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