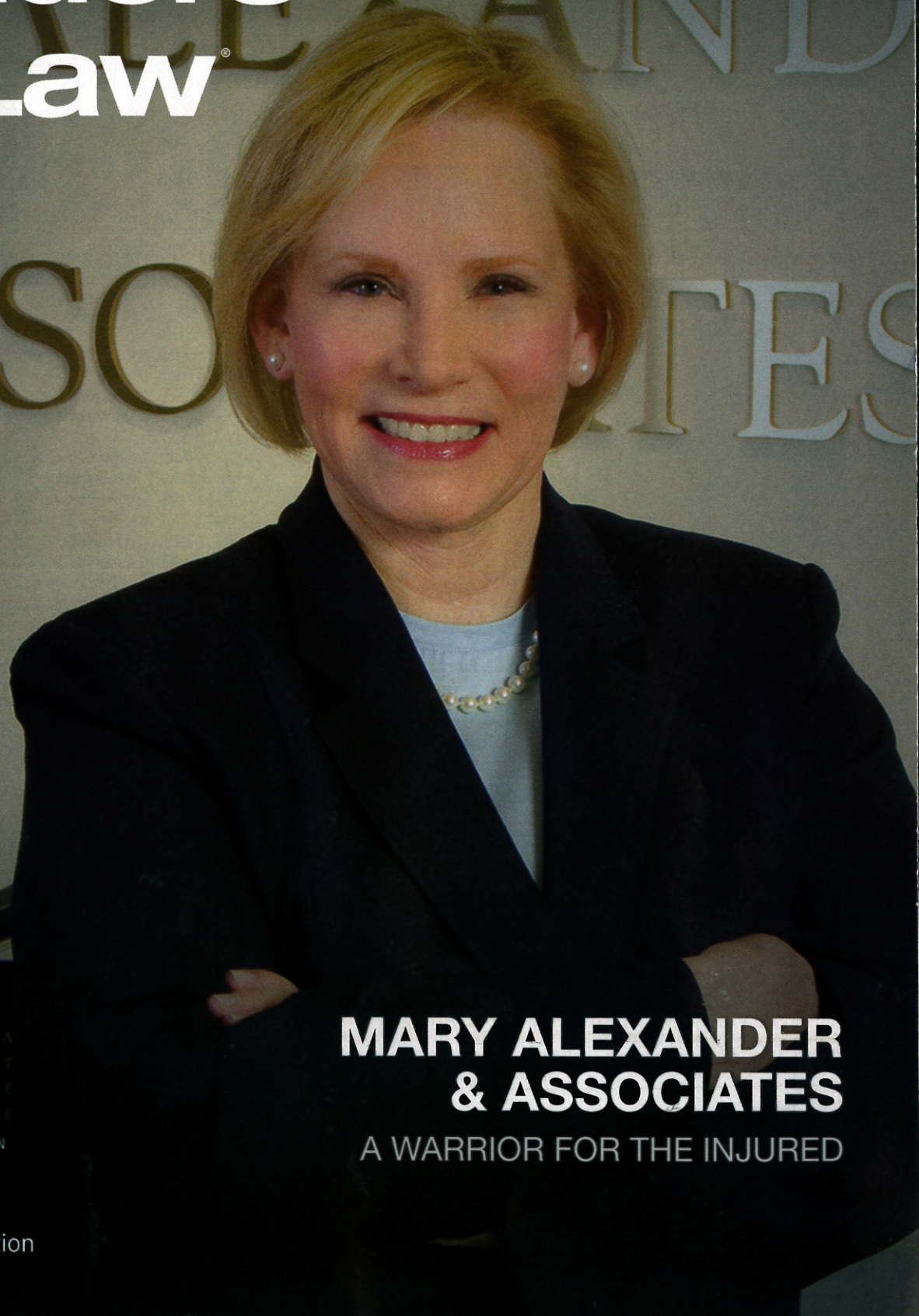
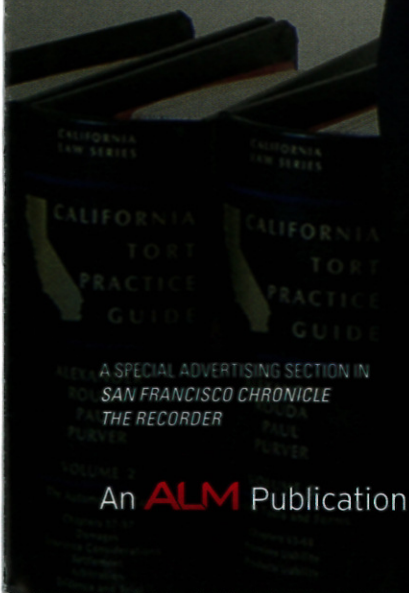


SAN FRANCISCO'S
**Women
Leaders**
in the **Law**
2015



**MARY ALEXANDER
& ASSOCIATES**

A WARRIOR FOR THE INJURED



An **ALM** Publication

SAN FRANCISCO'S WOMEN LEADERS IN THE LAW 2015

ELIMINATING A VERTICAL LIMIT

Many legal professionals in the Bay Area and Northern California view 2015 as an actionable year for gender equality in law firms and departments, particularly in the way of retaining and promoting female attorneys.

"One problem facing women lawyers is that they're not equally represented at the management level. That's been stagnant for decades despite the fact that law school admissions are almost equal," says Wendy Behan, President of California Women Lawyers, and a partner at Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield LLP. "Some of that may be blamed on attrition. Women balancing work and a family may get burnt out on the practice of law. I think it's more of a generational issue."

Only in the first quarter of her term as President of the Queen's Bench Bar Association of the San Francisco Bay area, Jamie Touchstone is reviewing legislation she plans to have the 94-year-old organization support regarding gender bias and discrimination. The goal of her year-long presidency, she says, is to further the dialogue about inequality in specific areas and sectors.

"Right now in Northern California, there is a debate about whether the male-dominated Silicon Valley is hostile to women. Women attorneys are in-house at Silicon Valley firms and are also representing its female employees and are therefore a driving force behind this debate," says Ms. Touchstone, who is also an associate at Futterman Dupree Dodd Croley Maier LLP. "Queen's Bench encourages its members to take part in the debate, and also work to draw female and male colleagues into the dialogue in an effort to narrow the gender gap between women and men, not only in terms of equal pay, but also in terms of leadership roles."

The aforementioned concerns are not new, which is why Yolanda Jackson has her work cut out for her this year. Her appointment as Executive Director and General Counsel of the San Francisco Bar Association in January is significant not just because of her status in the newly-combined position, but also because she will be gathering data from law firms as part of the Bar's No Glass Ceiling Initiative. In 2010, the Bar's Task Force issued commitment forms that were accepted by at least 35 area firms and corporate law departments (see sidebar for the Task Force's

goals), with the purpose of increasing the pipeline of women attorneys in key leadership positions by 2015.

Ms. Jackson says the Initiative's results will be made public in 2016, but plans to challenge and improve upon them regardless of the outcome.

"We'll call and interview employers and ask how they were successful or not, and distribute the information to other firms. We like to give the diagnosis for the numbers we're reporting as well," she says.

Ms. Touchstone says she's also raising awareness in the hopes of seeing more women leaders beyond the legal industry.

"We're lacking in female legislators at the local level," she says. "I am encouraging women and men to push their female colleagues to request seats at various boards of directors and to run for office."

BY J. SMULISON

The No Glass Ceiling Initiative asked law firms to take concrete action to achieve the following goals by 2015:

- 30% women attorneys at the partnership level;
- 5% women of color attorneys at the partnership level; and
- 30% women attorneys on each of the following committees: Executive or Management committee, Partner Compensation Committee, and Partnership Evaluation /Promotion Committee.

For corporate legal departments, the goals are

- 30% women attorneys in the legal department,
- 5% women attorneys of color in the legal department, and
- 30% women attorneys of those attorneys managing one or more persons.

From The San Francisco Bar Association's Justice & Diversity Center

