

TOP WOMEN IN THE LAW 2016 AWARDS



Carol Villegas



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A partner in her firm's securities litigation practice, Carol Villegas focuses on securities fraud cases involving institutional investors. She currently is litigating cases against Nimble Storage and Advanced Micro Devices and has helped secure favorable settlements for investors in fashion retailer Aéropostale, the biopharmaceutical company ViroPharma and health care communications provider Vocera. Villegas also has championed the professional development of female attorneys, serving on the executive committee of the state bar's Committee on Women in the Law.

If I weren't a lawyer, I'd be ...

Involved in shaping policy that affects women and girls, from reproductive rights to education, fair pay, parental leave, and domestic violence.

The mentor/lawyer I most admire is ...

Ruth Bader Ginsberg. I have seen her speak several times and am always amazed by her grace and wit. Her legal career as an advocate for the advancement of women's equality and autonomy is truly an inspiration.

What's the best advice anyone has ever given you?

You have the opportunity to make a difference in the world and yourself. Make each day meaningful.

#1 survival tip in a work crisis:

Stay calm and breathe. No one can deal effectively with a crisis in panic mode. When all else fails, use common sense and trust your gut.

Have you ever been treated differently on the job because of your gender?

No one sets out to discriminate against women, but sometimes, unconsciously, it just happens. It's important for decision makers to really empower young women by giving them opportunities to showcase their talent.

What must the legal profession do to improve opportunities for women lawyers?

There needs to be more women in leadership roles throughout the legal profession. It's hard for a young lawyer to see herself at a firm long-term where women aren't a meaningful part of the firm leadership. In turn, women (and men) in leadership need to mentor young women and create opportunities for them to shine.