

Alumni Profile: Pat Metzger, Of Counsel, Vacovec, Mayotte & Singer

Meredith Leary, Litigation Member and head of the Women's Initiative Steering Committee, and **Carolina Săve**, Intellectual Property Associate and member of the Women Associates' Subcommittee, recently had the opportunity to speak with Pat Metzger, the first female attorney to join Mintz as well as the first woman to make partner at the firm.



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You have the distinction of being the very first female attorney at Mintz. How did you first come to join the firm?

I joined Mintz in 1966. Before I interviewed at Mintz, I had never been to Boston. Fran Meaney came to my law school (the University of Pennsylvania) and asked if I'd like to interview at the firm. At first I declined and said I wasn't available to do so. A few days after I turned Fran's offer down, I thought, "that was stupid," and changed my mind about the interview. I came up to Boston to interview with everyone — Haskell Cohn, Milton Wasby, Bill Glovsky, and Dick Mintz, among others, were partners back then, and Irwin Heller, Jeff Wiesen, and Tom Murtagh became associates somewhat later — and the rest is history. At my interview, I thought the firm was a family affair, a great place, a home. My impression of the firm has never changed.

Do you have any memories of your early days at the firm that you can share with us?

I remember when Bob Popeo first joined the firm. Bob was just the same then as he is now. He was the firm's first litigator, and that was a big, exciting change.

I remember that we were always working late, and we'd all have a drink and dinner together. Dick Mintz knew all the good restaurants in town — Athens Olympia, the Bunny Club, Rosie's Pizza.

I remember one time Haskell Cohn brought me in to work on a brief that we then argued at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. It was wonderful.

In addition to being the first female attorney to join Mintz, you were the first female attorney to make partner at Mintz. What was that like?

In my law school class at Penn, only nine of us out of two hundred were women. We did not think of ourselves as any different. I went to law school with the goal of going into the Foreign Service. But when I got to law school, I loved tax class and decided to become a tax lawyer.

While I was different because I was a woman at the firm, I was also different in that I was not Jewish and I did not go to Harvard. This was a time of transition, where law firms started hiring more diversely.

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When I joined the firm, people worried that the wives of the attorneys might have trouble with me being there. I dealt with that by being a person. I knew what I wanted and moved ahead, and I never had any trouble or noticed that anything was different simply because I was a woman. I remember one thing that was funny was that the secretaries had to have a meeting to figure out what to call me — was I esquire or an attorney? It was determined that I couldn't be called esquire because I wasn't a man, so they called me an attorney instead. That worked for me.

My philosophy was (and is) that I had to prove to people that I knew what I was doing and that I was a person they wanted to be around. It worked, and I never felt that people saw me as different.

In terms of becoming a partner, I figured everyone could be a partner, and that I would work my way up to become a partner, and I did. I wanted to be a partner, expected to be partner, and became a partner. Mintz understood the different contributions that different people could make to a firm, including me.

Can you tell us a little bit more about your career, and the various twists and turns your career has taken since you first joined Mintz?

When I joined the firm, Fran Meaney trained me to be a generalist. I was hired to take all of the pension plans off of Bill Glovsky's desk, and I became an expert in estate administration. I also did real estate and corporate work and drafted charities. I became a good old-fashioned generalist and loved it, but still wanted to be a tax lawyer and because of this, I left the firm in 1975 to go work for the US Treasury.

Did you end up becoming the full-time tax lawyer you dreamed of becoming?

I did! When I got to the Treasury in 1975, I helped draft tax legislation, worked up on Capitol Hill, and had the opportunity to handle press responsibilities. I even drafted a section of the Internal Revenue Code that is still in the code today. I loved it. It was the most rewarding stage of my career — the people, the sophistication of the work — and it was exhilarating.

Where did your career adventures lead you after the Treasury?

I returned to Boston, and because I wanted to do tax full time, joined Goulston and Storrs (becoming their first female partner). Since returning to Boston from DC, I have remained a tax lawyer, and am now with Vacovec, Mayotte & Singer, LLP. I hope to continue working until I am no longer able to.

What has been most challenging about your legal career?

I am a singer and have studied voice since I was in high school. It is a challenge to have time to practice when law is your profession. I used to sing when I was at Mintz — I bet people would remember that! I still sing and study voice, and am president of the Harvard-Radcliffe Chorus.

What is the most important advice you would give to a young lawyer starting out today?

If you like it and want to do it, you can do it. You'll find a way.



The key given to Pat Metzger when she was elevated to Member. During Pat's tenure, a key to One Center Plaza (then home to Mintz's Boston office) was presented to every attorney who made partner.