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EVENT

Distinguished Leader: Karen R. King

Partner, Morvillo Abramowitz Grand Iason & Anello

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Awards

By NYLJ Staff | October 03, 2022 at 10:08 AM

What are some of your proudest recent achievements? I am particularly proud of my recent work with the Asian American Bar Association of New York to combat anti-Asian hate and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. We issued two reports—one in 2021 and the other in 2022—chronicling the rise of hate during the pandemic, educating the public on Asian-American history and the cycle of violence that repeats in times of stress, raising awareness and pressure among law enforcement and politicians, and proposing solutions. These efforts have led to active engagement and dialogue across the country, and I have been honored to speak about these issues with students, bar associations, law enforcement, corporate groups, victims and community members.

I am also exceptionally proud to have represented a victim of domestic violence for the last four years, culminating in oral argument before the U.S. Supreme Court this term. While a decision has not yet been issued, I am proud to have been lead counsel on the case, advocating for recognition of the dangers and complexity of domestic violence, its detrimental impact on children both physically and psychologically, and the inadequacy of protective orders and undertakings from abusers to ensure the safety of victims.

Name a lawyer or mentor whose leadership inspired you. I am constantly inspired by those lawyers who have dedicated their careers to serving the disadvantaged and the neediest segments of our society. The clients can be challenging, the work is endless, and the effort is often thankless. My work on pro bono matters has introduced me to many amazing lawyers in the field, and my efforts on these matters pales in comparison to the sacrifice and commitment of lawyers on the front lines of public interest jobs. It is an honor to work with and learn from these lawyers who lead by example.

How are the business and profession of law changing, and how should lawyers adapt for the future? Over the course of my career, I have seen the legal profession become more commercial and profit focused, with rapidly rising hourly rates at the bigger law firms. It also leads to more restrictions from clients on the categories of billable work. These developments often negatively impact training and opportunities for young lawyers. As a legal community, we should engage in countervailing efforts to ensure that new lawyers are well-rounded in their experiences and develop the judgment and expertise that comes with first-hand experience. Many judges have created individual rules to encourage courtroom time for young lawyers. Clients and firms have started developing programs to enhance the experience of young lawyers. Lawyers too need to be vigilant about seeking opportunities and taking control of their own career development.

What is the best advice for someone considering a career in law, or someone already in the profession who is seeking to make a greater impact? Just because you are good at a job does not mean it is the right job for you. Set goals for yourself and consider what you want out of the job you have, and whether the job is delivering on your needs and expectations. The legal profession is vast and varied. Explore, discover, and create.

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