

ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE

Q&A with Adria Perez, 2018 Women Who Mean Business honoree



Q: You've been named one of Atlanta Business Chronicle's

Women Who Mean Business 2018. How can other women leaders win similar accolades for their achievements?

A: Women, including myself, have to acknowledge what we do to create change is worth the recognition.

I am lucky and blessed that I work with colleagues, who think I am worth recognizing. Without them, I am not so sure I would have this recognition.

Q: What does leadership mean to you?

A: Leadership is about making sustainable change even when it is risky or unpopular.

Q: Please give some details about one of your top accomplishments of the past year that you are most proud of.

A: I am fortunate to mentor several lawyers outside my firm and law students. I have been blown away by their accomplishments. One of them is a lawyer working in-house at a well-known company, and is a key member of her team. Another is a lawyer working at a company, where her legal insights help her protect her company in many ways. I have an Emory law student mentee, who will soon be starting his professional career. When I meet, talk and text with them, I always feel optimistic and hopeful about our profession and community as well as thankful for the mentors who have helped me along the way.

Q: What past challenge has most shaped your current thinking?

A: It is not a challenge (in a negative way), but being a parent has shaped my thinking of what is important and where I should spend my time and energy. I do not "sweat



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the small stuff" anymore. I am focused on making an impact.

Q: Who is a favorite leader you admire, and why?

A: I recently finished reading "Scalia Speaks." I appreciate Justice Scalia's untenable faith as well as his love for his family and U.S. history. Above that, I respect how he stuck to his beliefs even when they were unpopular. Although he may not have had the same opinions as his U.S. Supreme Court colleagues, he still had strong bonds with them.

Q: Please explain how you and your organization make tough decisions.

A: A strong partnership is based on a sustainable culture where partners can express diverse views with the firm's best interest in mind. Our firm relies on our culture to guide us in putting the firm first.

Q: How do you motivate and inspire teams to achieve big goals?

A: By example is the best way. Last summer, I planned a boot camp for my team. We not only focused on substantive topics related to white-collar criminal defense, but I asked the professionals at our firm in our business development, marketing, public relations, diversity and community service departments to speak on various topics. The point was I wanted my junior colleagues to know that we do not want a team made up of robots. We want to help them build the career that they want, and that our firm has the resources to make them impactful, well-rounded attorneys.

Q: Where do you find inspiration?

A: My family – from my husband and two children (ages six and four) to my grandparents. Now, more than ever, I understand the sacrifices that were and are being made for me, so that I can build a career and community of which we are all proud.