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KILPATRICK TOWNSEND

6 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Building Your Credentials

On October 2, Mary Craig Calkins, Nancy Stagg, and Ty Lord led an inspirational **First Chairs Club** meeting on **Building Your Credentials**. The First Chairs Club is Kilpatrick Townsend's affinity group of current and future women lead litigators interested in pooling their resources to (1) increase and share opportunities; (2) provide coaching, training, and support; (3) change the misperception that men are better litigators than women; and (4) develop a robust pipeline of well-qualified women litigators to meet client and judicial demand for more women in first chair roles.

Below find some of the meeting's top-level takeaways:

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Build Your Own Brand:

- In firm: Do great work and be responsive. Seek out challenging assignments.
- Externally: Showcase your expertise by writing articles and speaking. Join outside organizations aligned with your interests and potential sources of new business. Then climb the ladder to leadership in those organizations.
- Perfect your elevator speech so you can communicate your unique value in a couple of sentences.
- Tell a story through your bio. Look at other people's effective bios for inspiration.
- Be helpful where you can. "Freebies" can lead to new client relationships and internal referrals.

Seek Out Opportunities: Where do you want to go? Reach out to people who can help you reach your goals. Let others know what kind of work, opportunities or introductions you want. For example:

- Ask attorneys with whom you work to help you connect the dots if you are interested in joining other groups.
- Seek out firm leadership positions to boost your internal visibility.
- Identify and join organizations that will enhance your "trial attorney" identity.

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You Can't Just Show Up For A Meeting: Raise your hand, get involved, assume a leadership position.

- Among the outside organizations useful for enhancing your reputation are Inns of Court, bar associations, non-profit or community boards, and practice area or industry groups.
- Sustained participation is the key to increasing your comfort level and obtaining the maximum benefits of membership.
- Challenge yourself to meet five new people at each event. Follow up with them individually.
- Track the source of your new business to see which of your business development

individually.

- Track the source of your new business to see which of your business development efforts pay the most dividends.

Invest In Your Own Career: You are the engineer driving this train.

- There are fewer trial opportunities than in the past, but you can gain valuable experience through pro bono cases and Inns of Court.
- You may sometimes have to pay your own way (e.g., hiring a coach, joining an organization and traveling to meetings), but you are worth the investment.

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Promote Yourself and Other Women:

- Report speaking engagements, board and bar appointments to firm Communications Specialists, who can turn them into press releases.
- Write up wins for internal firm communications.
- Ask the people you work with to spread the word about your great work.
- Look for opportunities where you can pitch yourself or pitch your firm colleagues.

If You Don't Ask, You Don't Get.

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