Proskauer

Women in Law: Christine Lazatin Q&A

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Christine Lazatin is a partner in Proskauer's Corporate Department and member of the firm's Sports Practice Group. A pioneer in the largely male-dominated field of sports law, Christine has been recognized as an elite lawyer by a variety of sports and legal publications and is a catalyst for progress and advancement. She serves as a partner liaison to the Proskauer Women's Alliance and is an active participant in the firm's Women's Sponsorship Program. In addition, she is committed to individualized mentoring for long term success. Christine acutely understands that to build generations of talent and achievement, we must teach young lawyers not only the technical aspects of the law, but also how to be assertive and authentic to themselves – at the deal table, in the boardroom and every stop in between.

Read below for excerpts transcribed from our in-person interview with Christine Lazatin.

What do you think has enabled you to flourish as a lawyer? Have certain people influenced you?

Christine Lazatin: This may seem counterintuitive to some, but having kids changed the trajectory of my career and propelled my development as a lawyer. Becoming a mom made me realize how important it was to me to raise my kids a world where family and work could truly coexist. I wanted my daughter to value her voice and showcase her strengths. I wanted my son to see women as equals, on the field and in the classroom and in the work force. And I wanted both my kids to take pride in hard work, to be intellectually hungry, to feel loyalty to others and to invest in themselves. To do this, I had to commit 100% to being an example for them and take things to the next level.

Have you ever been given a powerful piece of advice?

Christine Lazatin: The most powerful advice given to me was this: You can learn something from every single person you meet. Yes, networking has some value in and of itself. However, it's not just about meeting people and getting your face out there. It's about embracing those interactions, finding meaningful connections, learning and consuming everything you can from others, and continuously absorbing and refining your views.

How would you encourage younger lawyers, the next generation who are entering Big Law, if they're not sure it's what they want to do? What would you say to them?

Christine Lazatin: I would say that it's natural to be unsure. Coming out of law school, you know that, at bottom, you're expected to do good work, be productive and contribute. However, there is no single path to those goals, and it can take some time to find the route that works best for you. Be a team player, but also be authentic to yourself. Never lose sight of your passions and personal goals. Be proactive; have agency over your own career.

What about the sports industry and sports law has drawn you in?

Christine Lazatin: People, people, people.

The sports business industry can be a small world, so my days are filled with repeat players. Many of my clients were my peers and counterparts way back when; we grew up professionally and moved through the ranks together over the years, so it's a fun dynamic when we get together, partner up and do deals.

The same sentiment holds within the Firm and my practice group. I wanted to learn from the best of the best, and I've been incredibly fortunate in that regard here at Proskauer. It is humbling and energizing to work – day in, day out – with mentors and mentees who are among the sharpest minds in the business, yet always pushing themselves to learn more and dive deep. The industry is experiencing tremendous growth right now, both in terms of values and deal volume, so we have to be constantly on our toes and collaborating with each other to anticipate what's next.

What do you feel hopeful about and inspired by right now?

Christine Lazatin: I find hope, promise and inspiration in today's focus on dialogue. Big Law has historically suffered from an overly pervasive sense of hierarchy, one that tended to put people and relationships in silos. Recently, there's been a shift towards more transparency – and a recognition that there are profound benefits to connecting people across different levels of seniority, across different practices, and across different cultural backgrounds. Dialogue is key to that connectivity. It allows people to be vulnerable, explore different parts of themselves, share their insights, pool their ideas and ultimately effect collective change. Some of our most impactful programs at Proskauer were borne from seedling internal dialogues – for example, our Women's Sponsorship Program and CaRe Program (caregiver return program that eases the transition of lawyers returning from primary caregiver leave) grew out of conversations among Proskauer Women's Alliance (PWA) steering committee members. And we're not done. By inviting and encouraging dialogue, we usher in growth, improvement, innovation, creativity and all of the stuff that keep us growing and evolving as a firm and as individuals.

What would you say to your younger self?

Christine Lazatin: Take more risks and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Raise your hand for everything, even if it's a little bit out of your comfort zone. It's okay to be uncomfortable. It's okay to stretch a little, or even a lot. Believe that you have what it takes to figure out something new and excel.

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