

**Women General Counsel, Is There Justice?**

*By: Karen Anderson*

Let's go ahead and get something out of the way here: Nothing, and I mean nothing, gets my heart racing faster than injustice. My tolerance level for injustice does not exist. Not only am I intolerant to injustice, I am quick to judge the person or persons inflicting the injustice. No matter how hard I try, I can't seem to ignore injustice. It often finds me in the strangest places.

Let's take today for example. I decided, in my spare time, to read an article about women who are general counsels at Fortune 500 companies. I THOUGHT I was going to be pleasantly surprised by what I was about to read and instead found myself facing yet another injustice. Did you know that in 2004 there were only 75 women in general counsel positions at Fortune 500 companies and in 2014 there are a whopping 106 women in general counsel positions at Fortune 500 companies. The article actually said that the number of women in 2004 "swelled" in 2014. Swelled? Really?

Now let's compare what you just read to this: half of all law school graduates are women. OK, so why aren't half the General Counsel positions going to women? I could really get myself revved up here, so let's look at this article from a rational approach.

The current trends as general counsel in corporations suggest several things. First, the practice is diverse giving an in-house lawyer a wide range of experiences. Second, and perhaps the most telling, is that general counsels are often called upon to advise the CEO, CFO, etc. Men typically do advising for upper management. While I am certainly NOT opposed to a qualified male attorney giving counsel to the upper management of a Fortune 500 company, I am shocked that we don't have as many qualified females advising upper level management.

Somewhere in the recesses of my mind pops this thought: Just like the suffragettes who forged a way so that women could vote, some modern day suffragette is going to have to forge their way into the Fortune 500 companies. This means that some of you qualified, motivated, brilliant female lawyers are going to have to work a whole lot harder than the rest of us to get all of us recognized. There has to be a few of you "suffragettes" who break the proverbial glass ceiling for the benefit of many.

So I have to ask myself, am I willing to work harder than most women so that some day other women will be noticed and placed in general counsel positions that I deserve? The answer is emphatically, YES! I also have to recognize that this recognition may not be directly mine. It might belong to the women who come looking for those in-house positions behind me.