

Resnick Urges Mentoring for Women

By Julia Swain

“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE, BUT together we can do so much,” Stephanie Resnick told Bar Association colleagues and friends as she accepted the Sandra Day O’Connor Award at the June 28 Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon.

Resnick is chair of the Litigation Department at Fox Rothschild, where she has practiced in the area of commercial litigation for nearly 24 years. Resnick’s selection for receipt of the award was unanimous by the Women in the Profession Committee. In addition to Resnick’s outstanding legal talent and professional achievements, her strong leadership and commitment to mentoring women attorneys made her a standout amongst the nominees. The award was presented to Resnick by Committee Co-Chairs Kimberly Ruch-Alegant and Nikki Johnson-Huston.

In accepting the award, Resnick expressed her deep honor in joining such an illustrious group of prior award recipients including U.S. District Court Senior Judge Norma L. Shapiro, the first-ever award winner; U.S. District Court Judge Anita B. Brody; U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Dolores K. Sloviter; U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Marjorie O. Rendell; retired Pennsylvania Superior Court Judge Phyllis W. Beck; Temple University Beasley School of Law Dean JoAnne Epps, along with close friends Roberta D. Liebenberg, past Chancellor Audrey C. Talley and Roberta D. Pichini, who



Photo by Jeff Lyons

Stephanie Resnick meets with past Chancellor Abraham C. Reich, co-chair of Fox Rothschild LLP, who provided her with valuable advice as a young attorney.

nominated her. Resnick recognized the passion for excellence and commitment to the highest level of the legal profession exemplified by this group of women, which has conferred honor upon the Philadelphia Bar Association. Resnick expressed gratitude for the support of her family, friends and her Fox Rothschild colleagues, including her legal assistant of 21 years, Gigi Thornton.

Resnick has displayed a strong commitment to advancing women in the legal

profession. From leading Fox Rothschild to become one of the first firms to publicly endorse the Bar Association’s statement of goals for the promotion and advancement of women in the profession to implementing women-friendly firm policies for part-time and maternity leave, Resnick has long been at the forefront of the legal profession in recognizing the challenges uniquely faced by woman and addressing those challenges head on. Resnick strongly endorsed the importance of mentoring relationships as the tool for developing and retaining talent that is necessary to sustain the profession.

Working together and creating opportunities for others are the two touchstones Resnick imparted in her acceptance speech. Reconciling these ideals with the demanding practices of the legal profession, she noted that she has relied upon advice she received 24 years ago from Abraham C. Reich, co-chair of Fox Rothschild and a past Chancellor of the Bar Association. This advice defined legal success as being an excellent lawyer, being visible in the profession and the community, giving back to the community, mentoring, having integrity and bestowing kindness. In her two decades in the profession, Resnick has achieved these standards.

“As attorneys, we have been blessed with unique opportunities. There is a tremendous need in our profession and

in our community for us to stand up as mentors and give back to the community. We need to be visible and accessible to those who are just now walking through the doors that we have pushed and held open; to serve as advocates and allies to those who have no one who will stand up and support them. When we commit to doing these things, we begin to realize the vision of success articulated by Justice O’Connor,” Resnick said.

She said mentoring relationships, whether they are formal or informal, may be the most important tool we have for developing and retaining the new talent that’s so necessary to sustaining our profession. “Mentorship doesn’t have to be difficult – it is essentially sharing what you’ve learned with someone who’s eager to learn from you. And the reverse is true.”

Resnick said a recent study on mentoring concluded that women often have decreased access to potential mentors, are less successful in finding mentors willing to invest in their career development, and/or receive fewer benefits from mentoring relationships than men do. “As a result, we lose the opportunity to connect with talented, intelligent lawyers; they see a door closed that they could have helped open further, if given the chance; and our profession is diminished as so many lawyers of promise slip away to pursue other opportunities.”

“So I invite you today to look around – share your talents, experience, observations, abilities and insights. Reach out to that younger colleague who isn’t yet ‘connected’; you will be personally satisfied and your firm or employer will thank you for it down the line.”

“And to those of you who need a nudge or some thoughtful advice: Speak up and don’t be afraid to ask for help. I did. Others have faced the same challenges and have persevered and succeeded. Now they want you to succeed too. They’re ready to help,” Resnick said.

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