

# BAKER DONELSON

## WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

### STRIVE



Issue 2, 2019

This is an advertisement.

We are pleased to present the second issue of *Strive* for 2019. Our focus in this issue is leadership. Leadership is broadly and commonly conceptualized as the art of motivating a group of individuals towards the achievement of a common goal. Leadership opportunities are countless. They arise in diverse contexts beckoning our talents and urging us to step into roles of greater impact and influence. We embrace leadership roles in our busy professional lives, in our families, and through our social commitments. This issue examines tips, traits, and characteristics that promote effective leadership and also highlights leadership in the specific family context of caring for aging parents. In this issue's "Baker's Dozen", our women attorneys shout out the numerous women leaders, both past and present, who inspire them.

– *Strive* editors



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## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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I believe three fundamental principles about leadership. First, every person is a leader in some capacity, whether in business, family, athletic team, civic organization, church, synagogue, mosque, or book club. I think far too many people fail to see their unique leadership role and miss opportunities to influence others. My second foundational belief is that everyone must continue growing as a leader. Although difficult to devote regular time to leadership growth and learning, it is a discipline that is crucial for long-term success and achievement. Finally, I believe that leadership traits can be learned and nurtured, allowing each of us the opportunity to become a better leader.

When I was named as successor to become Baker Donelson's CEO, I empaneled a Transition Council to assist in five key areas of growth, including leadership development. Among other areas of focus, the Leadership Development Subcommittee outlined the key characteristics and traits of successful leaders. The Subcommittee identified key elements that constitute effective leadership that we each should seek to emulate and improve within Baker Donelson.

### KEY LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Among the most important characteristics that each of us should possess, grow, and improve are the following:

#### 1. Effective Communication

Good communication and leadership is all about connecting with others at various levels. Connecting is the ability to identify with people and relate to them. We become more effective in connecting by (i) finding common ground; (ii) making our communications simple; (iii) capturing people's interest; (iv) inspiring them; and (v) being authentic. An effective communicator exercises transparency and shared decision-making when appropriate, conveys feedback directly, and regularly acknowledges the success of others. In order to become a more successful communicator, we need to be present in the interaction. This includes creating a distraction-free zone (put away those iPhones!), being authentic and owning the message.

#### 2. Trustworthy

In their seminal book, *The Leadership Challenge*, James Kouzes, and Barry Posner state that in "every survey we've conducted, honesty is selected more than any other leadership characteristic." In order for a leader to gain followership by any group of people, small or large, the people first want to be sure that the individual is worthy of their trust. For team members to be fully confident in their leader, they have to believe the leader is a person of integrity and authentic character. Trustworthiness is strongly tied to values and ethics. Members are drawn to leaders who take a stand on important principles. As Kouzes and Posner say, leaders are "only as good as [their] word in the eyes of those [they] aspire to lead."

#### 3. Decisive

A strong leader exercises good judgment, appreciates informed input, and welcomes differing opinions. The best leaders, however, have to remain decisive. Former Porsche CEO Peter Schutz used to say, "make decisions like a democracy, execute like a dictatorship." Deliberate decision-making involves (i) building an accurate, full-spectrum map of all possible outcomes; (ii) predicting where all these paths made lead; and (iii) reaching a decision by weighing various solutions. Leaders often tie themselves up in knots wanting each decision to be perfect, however, the best leaders make decisions they know could be wrong. The real differentiator is deciding with speed and conviction. Above all else, great leaders learn conscientiously from every decision, whether good or bad, in order to better inform subsequent decisions.

#### 4. Independent Thinker

One of a leader's most important traits is the ability to be a good thinker. Leaders must recognize and apply common sense solutions, instead of being married to stale strategy or trendy management concepts. Good thinkers solve problems and never lack for ideas to build their team or their organization. To stimulate fresh and innovative ideas, spend time reading books, listening to podcasts and talking with innovative thinkers. You may only get one or two applicable ideas to your situation from every hour of effort, but that new idea, modified to your

## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, *continued*

team, could be the breakthrough to lasting success. A senior partner in a Texas firm I clerked with during law school taught me the importance of “staring out the window time.” With the hectic pace of practicing law, he encouraged that the best value for our clients (or our teams) must include thinking time. Many successful leaders block off time on their calendar to think through challenges, opportunities, and ideas. Make sure to have pen and paper handy to capture ideas arising during this time.

### 5. Positive

The most effective leaders remain positive and inspiring. People expect their leader to be energized and passionate about the future. They need to inspire team members with enthusiasm and a strong belief in where the organization is heading. There is a 100 percent certainty that obstacles and failures will arise, which cause stress and negativity to settle in. The positive leader has to control their reaction and stress to remain positive in the midst of difficult and stressful times. Leaders have to uplift their members’ spirits and give them hope. They need to see you as a leader convinced “in words, demeanor and actions,” so they also believe the “obstacles will be overcome and dreams fulfilled.” (*The Leadership Challenge*) This in turn leads others to be optimistic and hopeful about the course you are headed, and willing to do what it takes to drive the business forward.

### 6. Humility

Exemplary leaders understand that no great achievement can be accomplished alone, but requires the help of others. It is critical for leaders to adopt a servant leadership mindset. This includes a willingness to listen and respond appropriately to feedback and to admit mistakes as appropriate. Humble leaders lack pride and pretense, and instead are interested in diverse views and ideas. They operate with self-effacing humor, give credit to others, and live down-to-earth in their interactions with others. A leader must be prepared to admit, often, that they are incorrect or made a mistake. A humble leader will step up and apologize when appropriate. Everyone is full of flaws and drops the ball, but the most effective leaders remain humble and unassuming; always willing to learn and grow to benefit the organization and its individuals.

### 7. Conflict Resolution

Every office environment and every group will have conflict. As draining and stressful as conflict can be, it is not the actual conflict that is the primary problem. The real issue is how we handle the conflict that matters. An effective leader manages and resolves conflicts to produce positive outcomes. The leader understands and effectively applies the art of diplomacy in the workplace. Conflict is actually a good thing in many contexts. It can help drive positive outcomes arising from creativity, strengthen bonds between colleagues and permit diverse perspectives that benefit the entire group and the decision. Often, a leader should not step into a conflict among co-workers to enable them to work through the disagreement. However, if the conflict begins infringing on the goal you are trying to achieve or the process for how the work gets done, you need to address it, whether indirectly or directly. One tool that I have found effective over the years is to prepare for the hard discussion by (i) considering any false assumptions or conclusions I have reached without all the facts; and (ii) considering the situation from all perspectives, including the counterparty to the discussion. This helps better plan the message and meeting. Conflict can feel less stressful and more manageable with a methodical approach that includes being flexible and adaptable.

### 8. Visionary

Another top leadership trait is the ability to look ahead with a sense of direction and concern for the future of the organization. Strong leaders see beyond the present and plan strategically for the long-term. They engage their team in a forward-looking manner to sell the vision in order to inspire and motivate them. Leaders cannot be content with the status quo; rather they have to focus on how things should be better in the future. An effective leader is one who can clearly outline for the team why staying where they presently are is unacceptable, and cast a vision of the “there” they need to achieve for long term success. The leader must make it so unacceptable to stay put and so appealing to achieve the “there” of the vision that everyone rows in the same direction to get there. Leaders need a destination in mind when asking a team to join them on a journey into an uncertain future.

## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, *continued*

### 9. Team Builder

It is critical for a leader to invest in and empower team members in order to reach full potential. Just because you assemble a talented group of individuals together does not mean you will automatically be a great team. We have all seen examples of this in the sporting events and in business. Rather, great team building begins with building unity, which starts with the leader. To rally a team around a common cause or vision, the leader has to see the vision and constantly keep the team focused on it. When team members share a common goal, they pull together and outshine competitors who are merely a combination of great individuals. When a team is passionate about what they are trying to accomplish, it builds accountability and drives the team. Effective team building includes celebrating wins together, or encouraging them when efforts fail. If you want to win as a leader, embrace the value and importance of building cohesive and unified teams.

### 10. Personable

Building genuine relationships with those you lead is a key to being a successful leader. A leader must remain approachable, accessible, understanding of their employees' needs and committed to building strong relationship. One of the best ways to do this is to be with those you lead. Walk the halls, understand their responsibilities and challenges, and spend time with people you serve. Winston Churchill famously engaged in "dinner table diplomacy" where spending time building relationships helped him achieve great accomplishments. Leadership expert John C. Maxwell advises leaders to "walk slowly through the crowd, remember people's names, smile at everyone, and be quick to offer help." The most effective leaders remain accessible, approachable, and accountable.

### 11. Appreciative

One of the most valuable tools at a leader's disposal is the use of two very powerful words – "thank you." Showing appreciation to your team and staff is foundational to long-term success. Appreciation makes team members feel valued. Eighty-one percent of people say they are willing to work harder if they have an appreciative leader. Your team members need to be noticed, recognized, and appreciated for their efforts. It is always worth the time for a short

discussion, note, or call to thank constituents in your group. Being a leader who regularly expresses appreciation also helps build the additional key leadership traits of humility, optimism, and being personable. Take time today to thank someone on your team, and make it a regular habit.

### 12. Adaptable

A leader displays adaptability by being comfortable with change and growth. There is no doubt that in today's business climate things change rapidly, and the best leaders have to be willing to try new things and be willing to fail in order to grow. As we expand our willingness to try new things, our adaptability muscle expands. A great leader turns the relentless and unending uncertainty that their people face into opportunity and growth. Our followers need to see that we will try new approaches and techniques to meet the demand of a rapidly changing business world. This instills confidence and helps lead a changed culture needed in today's legal environment.

### 13. Encouraging the Heart

The final trait to highlight is encouragement. Driving extraordinary results in business is hard. In order to ensure that everyone on the team is rowing in the same direction, it is critical to regularly encourage and engage your team's hearts and minds. Express pride in their accomplishments. Make a point of regularly thanking them for their hard work and achievement. Celebrate important wins. Create a sense of community and camaraderie by telling stories recognizing individual contributions. Reinforce your team's core values and standards. All of this will pay significant dividends in driving extraordinary results.

Leadership is not about titles, position, or power. Every person has the ability and potential to lead others to great achievement. Leadership is a defining imperative for the best run businesses. Effective leadership makes a difference in people's lives and is a differentiator in a competitive market place. And, it is everyone's business. The good news is that each of us can become a better leader no matter where you are starting. Great leadership can be learned, but importantly, successful and inspiring leadership takes hard work and effort.

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### ADVICE FOR WOMEN MAKING DECISIONS FOR AGING PARENTS: Q&A WITH CINDY BAIER, PRESIDENT AND CEO, BROOKDALE SENIOR LIVING

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**I understand that 65 percent of Brookdale residents, 75 percent of Brookdale's workforce, and 80 percent of key health care decision makers are women. Why do you think that is the case?**

Well, because women live longer than men do generally, it's more likely that they will reach the stage of life where senior living becomes an important way for them to receive the care and support they need to live their best life possible. For much of our history, women have been viewed as the traditional caregivers for families. As a result, women generally have had more of an impact on health care decision-making and have traditionally turned those nurturing roles into career choices. That's what we've seen. Of course, we know traditions change and the types of individuals now in caregiver roles may shift the demographics for caregivers or those who take on health care decisions in the future. Senior living is a relationship business; I believe that at Brookdale, we make a difference one relationship at a time. These personal connections between our associates and residents are one of the main things that make Brookdale an attractive employer for women, who often place a very high value on relationships and connecting with other people. For our associates, it really is a calling, not just a job. It's heartwarming to see the genuine bonds that form. I experienced this again recently when I joined in on a Mother's Day tea at our Brookdale Vernon Hills community in Illinois. I was filled with delight and so proud of our associates who made this very special day possible for our residents and their families. I know the success of the event was because of the genuine connections among our residents, their family members, and our associates.

**Many of us, as health care decision makers for loved ones, need to discuss senior living options with them. How do we know when the time is right to broach this discussion?**

Everyone wants what is best for the older people in their lives, and yet there's a natural reluctance to talk about the future when it involves difficult topics such as moving from their home or getting more help. Even though many older parents know they need help, they don't want to ask for it because they're afraid of losing their independence or they don't want to be a burden to their children. Instead, they suffer silently, often in isolation. The Health Resources and Services Administration found that loneliness and social isolation can be as damaging to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. While many older adults dig their heels in to staying in their home alone, it's so sad to know that more than 43 percent of seniors feel lonely on a regular basis. Even introverts need regular social engagement in order to age more successfully! My advice is to have the conversation sooner than later. Having thoughtful discussions before a health crisis can save you from being forced to have crucial discussions without adequate time. From my experience, a vast majority of our residents and families report that they wish they had had the conversation sooner.

## Q&A WITH CINDY BAIER, *continued*

### **How do we begin those conversations with our loved ones?**

A good place to start is by asking questions such as, “What do you want out of life? What is most important to you? Do you need help?” Make sure your loved ones have an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings and are truly heard, and then talk about senior living as an option that could help them have what they want, and make it easier to focus on what’s really important to them. Many of our residents are delighted to be relieved of the burdens of shopping, meal preparation and housekeeping or home maintenance, and appreciate being around other people. So many times, we hear from new residents and their family members that they wish they had made the move to senior living sooner.

### **What options should we consider when it comes to senior living?**

Choosing the right senior living community is such a personal thing. There’s no one-size-fits-all approach. You’ll need to determine how much care your loved one needs and where you’d like them to be. Make sure that activities they enjoy are offered at the communities you’re considering. Price plays a large role in determining the right community for your family. Be sure to consider that the total cost of living in a community includes many things you would pay for separately living in your single-family home, including food, utilities, home maintenance, property taxes, insurance, travel, entertainment, and health care.

### **How do most people pay for senior living?**

Again, there’s no one-size-fits-all when it comes to senior living. Depending on their financial situation, residents typically tap into a variety of payment sources, including investments, the sale of a home and savings. Our sales counselors work with each prospective resident to determine the best payment options and often help uncover hidden financial resources such as available programs and third-party vendors.

### **It is a powerful thing when your leadership reflects your workforce and the audience you are trying to reach. When you took over as CEO, one of eight Brookdale board members was a woman. Under your leadership, 50 percent of your board members are women. Why did you think that was important and how did you achieve it?**

Gender diversity is important to Brookdale because, as you pointed out, many of our residents and associates are women and we need our leadership to reflect that. Studies have shown that gender diverse teams outperform those that are not diverse. To achieve this diversity, I provided the Board with a list of candidates to consider as they identified potential nominees to refresh the board. This list addressed both gender and racial diversity. It also addressed expertise and experience, because our board needed more representation within health care. I’m pleased that we have a more diverse board than we have had in the past. I’m also pleased that Brookdale recently received a certificate of achievement from “2020 Women on Boards” for having at least 20 percent women directors, and was recognized in 2018 by CABLE, a leadership organization for women’s professional advancement, as a Board Walk of Fame honoree for having two or more female directors.

### **How do companies find qualified female candidates for their boards and senior leadership positions?**

Boards have two main methods: they engage the expertise of executive search firms to source qualified candidates, and they look to their own professional networks. Brookdale has followed both paths, depending upon a variety of factors. In 2018, we decided to mine our own networks and reached out to programs that develop women for board positions. We looked for people, not just women, who had expertise in real estate and health care. From there we identified the best candidates. Four out of five candidates for one seat were women while all five for the other seat were women. The most important thing is to make sure you are considering qualified candidates, regardless of gender.

## Q&A WITH CINDY BAIER, *continued*

### How has the dynamic changed at Brookdale now that you serve as the CEO and your board has complete gender parity?

I think we have more collaborative discussions and decision-making with a free flow of information. This is because we have more perspectives gathered around the table.

### What do you see as the attributes of a great leader?

I believe that a great leader has to work harder than everyone else, and make sure that the credit for success is given to the people who made it happen. Leadership is a privilege and I also believe in servant leadership. Those are the two

most important tenets. Throughout Brookdale's 41 years, the company has always had a model of servant leadership, which is so appropriate for our industry. As one rises through the ranks of a company, expectations increase. The higher you advance, the more people expect of you as a leader. I take this very seriously and I think about the constituencies who are important to Brookdale in all my decision-making. I always remember that I am ultimately responsible for the 80,000 residents we serve, the 65,000 associates who make Brookdale their home, and the shareholders who have trusted us enough to invest so that we can continue our mission. Our mission is so important; we must succeed for all of them.

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## TIPS FOR LEADING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

Jennifer G. Cooper, 404.223.2201, [jcooper@bakerdonelson.com](mailto:jcooper@bakerdonelson.com)



All successful teams have three things in common: 1. a well-defined purpose, 2. people who are committed to that purpose, and 3. a culture that nurtures and supports the purpose and the people.

As a leader, you define the purpose and you choose the people. Then it is your responsibility to foster a culture that will allow your team to succeed.

### 1. The Well Defined Purpose

Why are we a team? A team needs a clearly defined purpose in order to be successful. Goals and purpose are not the same thing. You can only determine what your goals are after you define your team's purpose. For instance, you may decide that you need to have a team whose purpose is to develop a strategic plan for the future success of your office. You then determine what goals need to be set in order to fulfill that purpose. Those goals may include recruiting new talent, marketing to new clients, etc. Once the goals are determined, then you develop a plan to achieve those goals.

### 2. The People with "The Right Stuff"

Since it is the anniversary of the moon walk (and I am old enough to remember watching it), I have thought a lot about

how the space program fulfilled its purpose of putting a man on the moon. First, it set goals – and very ambitious ones at that. They had to determine how to orbit the earth and get the spacecraft back to earth safely, and how to get an astronaut out of the spacecraft while it was orbiting, and so on, until they finally were able to put a man on the moon. Tom Wolfe's wonderful book, *The Right Stuff*, focuses on the team members who were astronauts. In selecting the astronauts, NASA had to determine who had the commitment, confidence and skill set to "be willing to sit up on top of an enormous Roman candle, such as a Redstone, Atlas, Titan or Saturn rocket, and wait for someone to light the fuse." You may not need team members who are as exceptional as the astronauts are, but you do need to spend some time reflecting on whether or not a particular person has the commitment and skill set to promote the purpose of your team.

Sometimes you will be asked to lead a team that is already in place. While you may not have the luxury of hand picking your team members, you do have the ability to determine who has "the right stuff" and who doesn't. While it may often be a fool's errand, you should never stop trying to engage those who may not be a good fit for the team's purpose. Try to find a way

## LEADING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS, *continued*

to convey to that person (or people) that even if they are not willing to embrace the team's purpose or the strategy to achieve it, the team needs and values their input. Everyone wants to be valued. Your goal should always be to never have someone on your team say that you did not listen or that their input did not matter. Every time you are asked to lead, you are developing your reputation as a leader. Demonstrating that you can manage challenges such as difficult team members, increases the confidence others have in you as a leader.

### 3. The Culture Club

I always thought this was a silly name for a band. But, what is a club other than a group of people with a shared culture – even if it is silly songs and bad hair? Once you clearly define your team's purpose and find the people with “the right stuff,” you need to develop a culture that will fulfill your purpose successfully. In my experience, you cannot “impose” a culture on a group. To have a winning culture you need to play to similarities among your group that will foster a desire to win. Determine what makes them feel validated and rewarded, how they like to

interact with and support one another, and, most importantly, what motivates them to succeed. Your job is to make your team want to fulfill its purpose and you do that by understanding what makes them feel good about what they are doing so that they stay engaged in fulfilling the purpose.

There are dozens of books about team building and leadership, and I am pretty sure [Tim Lupinacci](#) has read all of them! There's no question that regardless of how many books he has read, Tim is devoted heart and soul to being an extraordinary leader. You won't get that from reading a book or reading this article. I believe that many of the greatest leaders are in fact “born” that way. However, an awful lot of them never realized they had it in them to lead until circumstances forced it upon them. I would encourage you to always be willing to move out of your comfort zone and trust your instincts when you are called upon to lead. People draw confidence and encouragement from those who do not shy away from a challenge. If you want your team to achieve great things, then you must lead by example.

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## UPDATE: EVEN EASIER WAYS TO TRACK AND ORGANIZE KEY HEALTH INFORMATION!

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In the previous issue of *Strive*, we addressed simple steps that you can take to put your health-related affairs in order (see [Easy Ways to Track and](#)

[Organize Key Health Information – From Your Smartphone!](#)).

Since then, the American Bar Association (ABA) created a new app, [Mind Your Loved Ones](#), that helps families access advanced directives and other medical information. This new

app allows individuals to store key health-related documents and information about themselves and their loved ones that can be easily accessed and shared.

To read more about the app, check out <http://mindyourlovedones.com/> or <http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/app-advance-directives-medical-information>.

## BAKER'S DOZEN: WOMEN LEADERS WE ADMIRE

In this issue of the Baker's Dozen we asked the members of our Women's Initiative to tell us a woman leader (public person) they admire and why. There were so many wonderful responses that ranged from scientists to athletes, politicians to activists, corporate giants to judges. This group of leaders is so diverse but one common theme with all of these women is that they pushed the boundaries of what was expected of them and took risks to achieve remarkable, often groundbreaking, results. This group of women leaders is truly inspiring...as are the women who nominated them.

**1. Ruth Bader Ginsburg.** "The Notorious RBG!" She is an inspiration to all women, and an amazing lesson in the power of persistence in the face of continuous opposition. Her efforts as a litigator before the Supreme Court in the 1970s, and her long tenure on the Supreme Court, have made a greater



positive difference in the everyday lives of more American women than anyone else in modern history.

- [Anne Marie Kempf](#), Shareholder, Nashville

**2. Megan Rapinoe.** She and her team are leading the charge on winning the cup, equal pay, and facilities for women soccer players! Plus they are amazing to watch!



- [Cynthia Blake Sanders](#), Of Counsel, Baltimore

**3. Rosa Parks.** Often we think that to make a difference or to inspire others, we have to take bold, big steps. Therefore, the enormity of taking that big step, of leading, of doing important things often holds us back. Ms. Parks proved that one simple act - saying no - could inspire action. Her simple "No" led to a year-long strike on the Montgomery buses. Her "No" helped inspire an entire generation of both blacks and



whites to join in on a chorus of no's to bring down Jim Crow. She proved that we all have it in us to make a difference.

- [Jan M. Hayden](#), Shareholder, New Orleans

**4. Sara Blakely.** As the creator of Spanx, she's a self-made entrepreneurial success who still owns 100 percent of her company, is a mother of four, and the first female billionaire to sign Warren Buffet's Giving Pledge. She's an inspiration!



- [Blythe K. Lollar](#), Attorney, Jackson

**5. Ursula Burns.** The first African American female CEO of a Fortune 500 company who has served as a member of the



boards of directors for American Express, Uber, National Academy Foundation, MIT, and the US Olympic Committee. She's amazing.

- [Melissa Goldman](#), Associate, Fort Lauderdale

**6. Jacinda Ardern.** the current Prime Minister of New Zealand, who became the world's youngest female head of government at age 37, had a child soon after taking in office, has led her country with poise in its response in recent



tragedy, and has made headway in promoting her agenda (a feat in this day in age regardless whether you agree with her causes).

- [Marisa Rosen Dorough](#), Associate, Orlando

**7. Malala Yousafzai.** A Pakistani advocate for girls' education who became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize after surviving an assassination attempt by the Taliban.



- [Lacy Rochester](#), Associate, New Orleans and

[Kimberly A. Chojnacki](#), Associate, Houston

**8. Harriet Tubman.** American abolitionist who, as a slave, made 13 missions to free other slaves on foot by following the stars.



- [Cynthia Blake Sanders](#), Of Counsel, Baltimore and

[Suzanne Lewis](#), Associate, Atlanta

**9. Mother Teresa.** She devoted her life to helping society's forgotten ones. She was a role model for all of humanity.



- [Nancy Scott Degan](#), Shareholder, New Orleans

**10. Marie Curie.** French-Polish physicist who conducted pioneering research on radioactivity. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, the first person and only woman to win the Nobel Prize twice, and the only person to win the Nobel Prize in two different scientific fields.



- [Karen Blake](#), Attorney, Nashville

## BAKER'S DOZEN, *continued*

**11. [Sally Kristen Ride](#).** American astronaut, physicist, and engineer. Born in Los Angeles, she joined NASA in 1978 and became the first American woman in space in 1983. Pioneers like Marie Curie and Sally Ride inspire leaders to achieve the seemingly unachievable.

– [Karen Blake](#), Attorney, Nashville

**12. [Margaret Thatcher](#).** She was the first female prime minister of Britain, did her homework, and sought the opinions of others before she came to a conclusion. She was



willing to stand up for the people and principles that she believed in, whether or not it was popular, and she thought “outside the box.”

– [Lauren W. Anderson](#), Of Counsel, Nashville

**13. [Theresa May](#).** I admire her tenacity and willingness to persevere under enormous adversity. She was given an impossible task and did her best to achieve it with dignity and intelligence. Watching her respond to grilling and derision in Parliament was a lesson in character.



– [Martha A. Hartley](#), Shareholder, Orlando



## 20 QUESTIONS WITH TRACY WEIR

[Tracy E. Weir](#), 202.508.3481, [tweir@bakerdonelson.com](mailto:tweir@bakerdonelson.com)

Tracy Weir, a shareholder in our Health Law Group and the Women’s Initiative D.C. Office Leader, inspires us to make time to laugh with old friends at that great bistro around the corner.

### 1. If you weren’t a lawyer, what would you be?

Own a bistro with excellent teas and coffee, wine, cheese and fresh baked breads; local art on the walls; and an open mic for book and poetry readings, singing, etc.

### 2. What are the three qualities that got you where you are today?

Persistence, a commitment to working hard and learning, and treating others with respect.

### 3. What was the moment you felt you made it?

I haven’t had that moment; don’t know that I will ever feel that I have “made it.”

### 4. What change would you like to see in the legal industry?

I’d like to see the legal industry seriously address the issue of “burn out.” As technology and workforce policies shift towards increased flexibility, which is a terrific thing overall, there needs to be an acceptable and

accepted approach to establishing reasonable boundaries for weekends, vacations and in general. There is a real tension between flexibility and boundaries. This is a recruitment, retention, and mental health issue.

### 5. How did you make your first dollar?

Telemarketing. How, at the age of 13, I ever convinced anyone to buy tickets to a circus over the phone, I’ll never know.

### 6. What was the last thing you binge-watched?

*The Tudors*.

### 7. What book left a lasting impression on you?

*The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway.

### 8. What movie has the greatest ending?

It has to be *The Usual Suspects*, but since that has already been cited numerous times, I’ll say *When Harry Met Sally* – the interviews at the very end.

*continued*

# STRIVE

Issue 2, 2019

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## 20 QUESTIONS, *continued*

- 9. What food are you not ashamed to admit you love?** SpaghettiOs, with meatballs, thank you very much.
- 10. If you could live abroad, where would it be?** Having lived abroad for many years of my childhood, I would be willing to give just about anywhere a try. If forced to choose, let's go with Scotland, a country of heritage for my family.
- 11. What is one thing you're exceptionally good at?** Making chili.
- 12. What is one thing you're epically bad at?** Leaving the office on time.
- 13. What superhero power would you want to have?** Tele-transportation.
- 14. What is something that's better in theory than in practice?** New Year's resolutions.
- 15. What store can you not leave without buying something?** Costco, apparently.
- 16. How do you clear your mind after a bad day?** Read entertainment news.
- 17. If you could compete in an Olympic sport, what would it be?** Rowing.
- 18. What are three qualities you thought you wanted in a partner?** Kindness, sense of humor, loyalty.
- 19. What are three qualities you now know matter?** Kindness, sense of humor, loyalty.
- 20. What relationship advice would you give to your younger self?** Be picky.



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## OFFICE UPDATES



In case you missed it, Baker Donelson’s summer associates took charge of our [Women’s Initiative Instagram](#) account for the #BDSummerTakeover. Check out all the fun they had on our Instagram page: [bakerdonelsonwomen](#).

Our New Orleans attorneys and summer associates enjoyed learning tactics to help them achieve their goals during a seminar led by Wayfinders’ Chief People Officer and former Baker Donelson attorney [Sarah-Nell Walsh](#). Summer associate Addie Guida shared that “the seminar allowed me to learn more about how to structure my daily routine in a way that promotes my life goals!”



The women in our Nashville office hosted our summer associates and clients for a cooking demonstration led by well-known pastry chef [Miriam Schine Lee](#). We hear everyone loved her recipe for Buttermilk Panna Cotta!

### BUTTERMILK PANNA COTTA

Cream 830g  
Granulated sugar 400g

Silver Leaf Gelatin\* 9 sheets  
(bloomed)

Buttermilk 1,800g  
(a little under 2 quarts)

- I. First ‘bloom’ gelatin sheets: fill a shallow dish with a small amount of ice and cold water, and submerge each leaf one by one and let sit for 5 minutes approximately until soft.
- II. Bring cream and sugar to a simmer over medium high heat – until bubbles start forming on the edges of the pan.
- III. Remove from heat.
- IV. Squeeze out as much water as you reasonably can

from the bloomed gelatin sheets and add them to the hot cream – stir to melt and incorporate.

- V. Measure buttermilk into a large bowl or pitcher with plenty of room remaining and whisk in hot cream/gelatin mixture.
- VI. Pour into vessels of your choosing and chill for at least 2 hours or until set. This may take more or less time depending on your fridge.

\* Leaf gelatin comes in bronze, silver, and gold, and has to do with setting strength. Silver is the most common, and is what most recipes are based on. If you cannot find silver leaf gelatin, you can use 22 grams of powdered gelatin bloomed in 2 cups of the buttermilk. Add it to the hot cream and whisk until it is **completely** dissolved (you may need to put the cream back on the heat, but be sure to whisk it the entire time!) and continue the recipe as normal.

## OFFICE UPDATES, *continued*

Our New Orleans attorneys [Lacey Rochester](#) and [Jan Hayden](#) recently hosted the 2019 International Women’s Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation (IWIRC) Leadership Conference, a networking organization committed to the connection, promotion, and success of women in the insolvency and restructuring professions worldwide. Nearly 100 women from all 50 states and more than five countries attended the largest IWIRC Leadership Conference in the organization’s history. Spanning over three days, attendees participated in several “New Orleanian” festivities, including an overwhelmingly successful fascinador making workshop, second line to Galatoire’s (complete with a brass band and Baker Donelson handkerchiefs), and singing around the piano at Pat O’Brien’s. Laissez les bon temps rouler!



## NEW FEMALE FACES

Baker Donelson is proud to announce the addition of the women attorneys featured below to our team.

### ATLANTA

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[Ciera N. Locklair](#)  
*Business Litigation*



[Susan A. Russell](#)  
*Intellectual Property*



[Jennifer L. Anderson](#)  
*Labor & Employment*

### BIRMINGHAM

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[Jessica B. Spade](#)  
*Labor & Employment*



[Ashley B. Gibson](#)  
*Business Litigation*



[Alexandria N. Murphy](#)  
*Health Law*

### NEW ORLEANS

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[Christine M. White](#)  
*Labor & Employment*



[Avery Smith](#)  
*Real Estate and Finance*



[Deborah S. Samenow](#)  
*Health Law*

### CHATTANOOGA

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### NASHVILLE

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### ORLANDO

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### WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## EXCITING RECOGNITIONS OF OUR WOMEN'S INITIATIVE AND ATTORNEYS

### LeAnn Mynatt Receives Baker Donelson's 2019 Work-Life Warrior Award



Baker Donelson has recognized [LeAnn Mynatt](#) with the Firm's 2019 Work-Life Warrior Award. Ms. Mynatt, who was a shareholder in the Firm's Knoxville office, passed away on October 3, 2018, after a five-year battle with ovarian cancer.

"Throughout her career, LeAnn balanced work, life and the many causes that were important to her with incredible grace and a ceaselessly positive attitude," said [Christy Tosh Crider](#), chair of Baker Donelson's [Women's Initiative](#). "She faced her fight with ovarian cancer with that same spirit. We're proud to honor her memory and her tremendous contributions to our Firm and to her community."

In addition to her busy legal practice, Ms. Mynatt was actively involved in the legal community, serving for many years as the co-chair of the Knoxville Bar Association Environmental Section, and was a past chair of the Tennessee Bar Association Environmental Law section. She also contributed her energy and leadership to Baker Donelson in numerous capacities, serving as the mentor coordinator for the Firm's Women's Initiative and the recruiting chair of the Knoxville office, as well as helping to inspire the Firm's wellness initiative, BakerFit.

She also founded and served as chair of the Firm's BakerGreen committee, and in 2013 was recognized with Baker Donelson's BakerGreen Award.

After being diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2013, Ms. Mynatt focused on helping to raise awareness and educate women about the disease. She frequently shared the story of her own illness, using it as a platform to generate support for other women battling ovarian cancer. She was instrumental in spearheading the now annual Comedy for a Cause event, which raises money for the University of Tennessee Medical Center's Gynecologic Cancers Education and Research Fund.

Baker Donelson established the Work-Life Warrior Award to honor an attorney in the Firm who demonstrates an ongoing commitment to excellence in maintaining a healthy work-life balance or has advocated on behalf of work-life balance issues for the benefit of others.

Join us for an evening of laughter and fellowship at the [6th Annual Comedy for a Cause](#) event on Thursday, September 5 at The Press Room in Knoxville, Tennessee.

### Working Mother Magazine "Best Law Firms for Women"

Baker Donelson was named today by *Working Mother* to its 12th annual "Best Law Firms for Women" list. This is the third consecutive year the Firm has been included in this prominent list, which recognizes firms that utilize best practices in recruiting, retaining, promoting, and developing women lawyers.

The [2019 Working Mother "Best Law Firms for Women"](#) list highlights law firms that averaged 37 percent women among new equity partners, compared with only 27 percent five years ago. The percentage of women lawyers in the ranks of the Best Law Firms' most highly compensated partners also jumped

from 11 percent to 15 percent in five years. These firms additionally offer more extended parental leave benefits and encourage more lawyers to work remotely and use flexible hours.

Through its [Women's Initiative](#), Baker Donelson has implemented numerous key initiatives designed to create an environment where female attorneys thrive, including an industry-leading parental leave policy, a firm-wide mentoring program for women, a program that awards business development grants to women attorneys, and a training program designed to help women attorneys achieve equity shareholder status.

## EXCITING RECOGNITIONS, *continued*

### WILEF 2019 Gold Standard Certification

For the fifth consecutive year, Baker Donelson has been certified by the [Women in Law Empowerment Forum](#) (WILEF) as a Gold Standard Firm. WILEF grants Gold Standard status to firms that meet objective criteria concerning the number of women among equity partners, in firm leadership positions, and in the ranks of their most highly compensated partners. Baker Donelson was among 45 U.S. law firms to earn this certification.

Criteria that are considered for WILEF Gold Standard Certification include the number of women attorneys who are equity partners; who serve as heads of the firm, its offices and practice groups or departments; who serve on the firm's primary governance committee; and who serve on the firm's compensation committee. To earn certification, firms must meet both a mandatory criterion regarding the percentage of women equity partners and at least three of five additional criteria related to women in various areas of leadership, compensation, and minority/LGBT representation. Baker Donelson was among only 14 firms to meet all six criteria.

### Kristine Roberts Receives Baker Donelson's 2019 Susan E. Rich Award



Baker Donelson has recognized [Kristine L. Roberts](#) with the Firm's 2019 Susan E. Rich Award for excellence in the promotion of and commitment to women in the legal profession. Ms. Roberts, a shareholder in Baker Donelson's

Memphis office, is chair of the Firm's Financial Services Department and a member of the Board of Directors.

Ms. Roberts has served as Baker Donelson's Women's Initiative Mentoring Committee co-chair since 2014. As a result of her leadership, the Women's Initiative now offers a menu of options and opportunities for the Firm's women attorneys and advisors to develop meaningful mentoring relationships, including individual mentors, topic mentors, mentoring circles, and random lunch groupings.

[Christy Tosh Crider](#), chair of Baker Donelson's [Women's Initiative](#), said, "Kristine is a tireless advocate for women in the Firm and in our profession. Her efforts as a leader within our Women's Initiative have had a significant impact on improving

mentoring opportunities for our female attorneys and advisors. As she has risen to numerous leadership roles within the Firm, she has continued to invest in those around her, striving to connect with and motivate each person. Kristine is a role model and a credit to our profession."

Ms. Roberts has defended banking and financial institutions in numerous trial and appellate cases in federal and state courts, as well as in private arbitrations. She has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 2014, and since 2013 has been recognized by *Mid-South Super Lawyers*, which has also named her among the top 50 female attorneys in the Mid-South, among the top 50 Memphis attorneys, and among the top 100 Tennessee attorneys. She is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America, and has served as a president of the board of directors of Memphis Area Legal Services. Ms. Roberts is a graduate of Harvard Law School, where she served as executive editor on the *Harvard Law Review*, and Princeton University.

Baker Donelson established the Susan E. Rich award in honor of Susan Elliot Rich, a shareholder in the Firm's Chattanooga, Tennessee office, who was the Firm's first woman shareholder, the first woman to be appointed an office managing shareholder, and the first woman appointed to the Firm's board of directors. This award is given annually to a recipient who exemplifies ongoing commitment and effort to strengthen the role of women attorneys at the Firm.

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## BAKER DONELSON WOMEN IN THE NEWS



[Law360](#) highlights the addition of [Jennifer L. Anderson](#) and [Christine M. White](#) to the Labor & Employment Group.



[Jennifer L. Curry](#) quoted in [Healthcare Risk Management](#) on federal wage and hour labor laws issues facing health care providers.



[Jamie Ballinger](#) profile in [KnoxTnToday.com](#), “Ballinger believes in ‘walking the walk’ for the right reasons.”



[Wendy Huff Ellard](#) featured in [ALM](#) “How I Made Partner.”



[Jenna M. Bedsole](#) highlighted among [Birmingham Business Journal](#) 2019 “Best of the Bar Honorees,” and discusses policies and strategies for handling workplace bullies on the [HR Risk Podcast](#).



[Melissa Goldman](#) comments in [Part B News](#) on CMS allowing Medicare Advantage Plans to add telehealth services to basic benefit offerings.



[Martha L. Boyd](#) quoted in [Society for Human Resource Management](#) article on safeguarding employees from workplace violence, and featured among [Nashville Business Journal](#) 2019 “Best of the Bar Honorees.”



[Leslie D. Goldsmith](#) discusses CMS launch of enhanced oversight initiative for new home health agencies in [Home Health Care News](#).



[Emily T. Brackstone](#) featured in [Forbes](#) article, “Why Capital Should Come To The Majority-Minority City Building Inclusive Innovation” discussing the Memphis startup scene.



[Tonya Mitchem Grindon](#) discusses clawback clauses for chief executives in [Korn Ferry Institute’s](#) briefings for the boardroom.



[Barbara J. Comstock](#) quoted in [Foreign Policy](#) on efforts to build all-American rocket for military launches.



[Colleen C. Jarrott](#) profiled among [CityBusiness Leadership in Law](#) 2019 Honorees.



[Christy Tosh Crider](#) discusses parental leave policies with the [Tennessean](#).



[Amanda Spain Wells](#) discusses effects of new property tax law in [American Press](#), and quoted by [KPLC News](#) on new law that helps get blighted properties back into commerce.

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