

LAW WEEK COLORADO

TOP WOMEN LAWYERS

These seven Colorado females are on top of their game. Read more about them, and other notable professionals of accomplishment, beginning PAGE 16



Top grouping from left:

Ann Frick of Jacobs Chase Frick Kleinkopf & Kelley; **Liz Starrs** of Starrs Mihm & Pulkrabek; **Denise Maes** of Berenbaum Weinshienk & Eason; **Cynthia Dash** of Matrix Financial Solutions

Bottom grouping, from left:

Stacy Carpenter of Hensley Kim & Holzer; **Pantea Garroussi** of Davis Graham & Stubbs; **Barbara Kelley** of Kamlet Reichert

Women Who Shine

7 Attorneys On Their Game

By Neela Eyunni

Editor's Note: We are thrilled to feature seven women whose careers are marked with success, as well as highlighting another 27 female Colorado attorneys who were nominated for their excellence (see page 20 for the full list). Among our featured top women lawyers this year include Liz Starrs – who didn't bother to break stride early in her career when she was informed that female attorneys were poor hires. Another top lawyer, Denise Maes, is heading to Washington to serve as a general counsel in the White House office of administration. Their profiles – and those of our five other top women – begin below.

Liz Starrs: The Trailblazer

When Liz Starrs sought out her first job as an associate, the firm she was clerking for informed the hopeful young attorney that, “We don't hire women.”



LIZ STARRS

Since then Starrs, 55, has started her own firm, become a dominant trial attorney and served as president of the

Colorado Bar Association.

In 2003 she co-founded the firm Starrs Mihm & Pulkrabek, where she practices business and corporate litigation, legal malpractice and employment litigation.

Starrs is the first Colorado woman to be inducted into the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and the third in the state to become a fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers.

A pioneer in medical malpractice, she was involved in the first defective breast implant trial in Colorado and has tried more medical malpractice cases in the state than any other lawyer.

In 28 years practicing law, Starrs has been an active member of the Colorado Women's Bar Association, where she is currently a foundation board member. This year she received the CWBA's Mary Lathrop Award, given annually to a trailblazing female attorney.

In the mid 1990s Starrs, along with a colleague, created a Women Litigators Support Group to offer women a professional network. The group lasted for several years.

“Just to be able to be out there and to have the people who come after me, particularly young women attorneys, say, ‘I don't need to be a tall man with a booming voice to make a difference’...is very, very important to me,” Starrs said.

From 2006-2007 Starrs was the fourth woman to serve as president of the Colorado Bar Association.

The Michigan native earned her law degree from Suffolk University Law School in Massachusetts.

She has been a “Super Lawyer” every year since the publication began and was recognized this year in Best Lawyers in America.

Pantea Garroussi: Worldly IP Whiz

When it comes to intellectual property law, the Davis Graham & Stubbs partner guides clients through the maze, including advising them with patent licensing, employee IP rights and trademark use.



PANTEA GARROUSSI

While Pantea Garroussi's book smarts may be apparent, colleagues report one of her biggest strengths is her ability to relate to clients.

“She can pick out complicated areas of law and make it sound simple,” said Victoria Johnson, a partner at Davis Graham & Stubbs.

In addition to being one of the few female IP lawyers at the firm, she has a

diverse cultural background. Born in Iran, Garroussi and her family moved to Tokyo, where she attended elementary and high school. She is fluent in both Japanese and Farsi.

Garroussi, 41, has experience in technological IP matters as well, and has worked on everything from Website developments to complying with online commerce regulations.

Her work is often very technical, but her colleagues also highlight Garroussi's sense of humor. "She is an observer of life, so she is quite funny," Johnson said.

A self-proclaimed handbag enthusiast, Garroussi not only collects handbags but is able to authenticate them as well. Through an online network she helps women determine if handbags are the real deal or knock offs before they buy them.

Described by her co-workers as "invaluable," Garroussi joined the firm in 2000. After coming to the U.S. in 1985, she attended Santa Clara University and her law degree and LLM from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law.

Garroussi mentors young female attorneys through the Colorado Women's Bar Association's mentorship program.

Her advice to up-and-coming female lawyers is to keep a positive attitude and "try to outdo everyone around you."

Denise Maes: White House-Bound

The youngest of five, Denise Maes was the first in her family to graduate from college. This month the Berenbaum Weinshienk & Eason partner, whose first language is Spanish, is heading to Washington, D.C., to serve as general counsel for the White House office of administration in the executive office of the president.

She and four other lawyers will be making sure the administration follows regulations regarding purchasing, employment and IT.

Maes, 48, is an experienced environmental attorney and has worked on numerous hazardous waste cases.



DENISE MAES

Actively involved in the firm's real estate practice as well, Maes is an expert both in municipal and administrative law. She helps a wide range of clients including buyers, sellers and developers in land use disputes and zoning matters.

She enjoys the variety of her work and the opportunity to negotiate, she said.

Maes was the Denver Board of Water Commissioners' first female president since its creation more than 60 years ago. She is on both the board of the Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Kroenke Sports' Hispanic Advisory Council, where she works to build the relationship between Kroenke Sports and the Latino community.

"Denise is great partner and has been very active in the community, noted one colleague.

In 1991 Maes and a friend started Café de Grupo, a network for women of color that meets Fridays to talk about various issues.

"I am very in tune to (my) humble beginnings, so that is why to me it is really important to continue to mentor young women and do a lot of community work," she said.

The University of New Mexico Law School graduate worked at Kamlet Reichert before joining Berenbaum Weinshienk in 2003.

In her spare time, Maes enjoys listening to jazz music and spending time with her friends.

Ann Frick: Glue Of The Firm

After a summer clerkship assignment to write a brief and accompany lawyers to court, Ann Frick said she "was hooked to be a trial lawyer."



ANN FRICK

In 1995 Frick co-founded the firm Jacobs Chase Frick Kleinkopf & Kelley, where she practices business litigation including employment termination, breach of contract and discrimination claims and non-competes.

Co-workers described her as the "glue of this law firm."

In the past year she has served as lead attorney on several multi million-dollar cases for the business entities that developed, operated and owned one of the largest golf course second home communities in Colorado. Frick mostly handled the cases alone, whereas opposing counsel had up to four lawyers.

Frick, 58, is a fellow in the American College

of Trial Lawyers, which is comprised of the top 5 percent of litigators in the country. She is also the vice chair of the American College Task Force on Discovery, which has done research and made suggestions revising pretrial procedures to increase access to the court systems.

As chair of the firm's litigation department she manages a team of 12 attorneys, two contract attorneys, two paralegals, four legal secretaries and a document clerk.

"She is highly respected by the attorneys, as well as the staff of the firm and treats all of them with respect and concern," according to her letter of nomination "She is one of the standout leaders of our law firm." Apart from her litigation skills, Frick also does arbitration and mediation work and has served as an expert witness.

She said that women have certain characteristics that can be beneficial in law.

"I think that they are very perceptive of people and their concerns."

In her free time she is an avid cyclist and a five-time finisher of Ride the Rockies.

Barbara Kelley: The Deal Maker

For many transactional attorneys, a recession can spell doom. Barbara Kelley isn't most attorneys.



BARBARA KELLEY

At Kamlet Reichert, Kelley, 59, heads the firm's secured transactions practice and has extensive experience representing foreign and domestic banks, borrowers and owner-developers.

"I love structuring deals, putting the pieces together and seeing how they work," she said.

Before settling on transactions, Kelley practiced litigation at Sherman & Howard and served as general counsel for Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Federal Action Agency, which at the time oversaw federal volunteer programs including the Peace Corps. She was also a partner at Morrison & Foerster and practiced in the firm's Los Angeles, Denver and Hong Kong offices.

Despite the economic downturn Kelley has been assisting clients in the analysis, negotiation and assessment of numerous restructuring deals. This year she took a lead role in structuring a potential construction project in Dubai.

"Barbara utilized her skills resulting from practicing in many foreign jurisdictions over the years," said Raymond L. Friedlob, counsel at Kamlet Reichert.

Abroad she has served as lead counsel for the developer of the Vancouver Hotel and Convention Center and as an adviser to the owner group of a proposed multi-use development in Rwanda.

Kelley is on the board of the Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation, which works to advance civic leadership and connect private, public and nonprofit entities. She is the immediate past chairwoman of the Denver Planning Board having been appointed by Mayor Wellington Webb in 2002 and reappointed by Mayor John Hickenlooper in 2004.

"Through this participation, she has helped ensure an inventory of affordable housing in city projects; affordable second mortgage programs; and has provided encouragement and support for minority

and woman-owned businesses," according to her nomination.

Cynthia Dash: Designing the Matrix

In the midst of an economic recession, Matrix Financial Solutions corporate counsel Cynthia Dash has come out on top.



CYNTHIA DASH

While big name financial servicing firms, such as Lehman Brothers and Bear Stearns, have recently plummeted, Dash's company has grown 200 percent in the last few years under her legal leadership.

"Because of Ms. Dash's diligence, Matrix Financial Solutions is positioned for continued growth and success over the next 12 months – and beyond," according to her letter of nomination.

Dash was able to successfully rework a rule dealing with redemption fees for redeemable securities (Rule 22c-2), which permitted the company to enter shareholder information agreements for its customer.

"This amendment to the rule made the transition to comply with Rule 22c-2 more manageable and efficient for all involved and saved the industry thousands of hours of paperwork," wrote one of her colleagues. "This rule was so widely embraced that it has since become known as the "Matrix rule."

LAW WEEK

COLORADO

Dash, who joined the firm 10 years ago, also serves as the vice president.

She juggles work with raising her 5-year-old daughter Sarah.

Having a child has made her a better corporate counsel, she said, because it keeps things in perspective and has made her more patient.

She would like to see more firms be supportive of women attorneys who want a balanced work and home life, like hers has been, she said, adding that both employees and employers would benefit.

“If they (women) are happier in that balance then I think they can contribute to the workplace in a way that is not even being tapped into,” she said.

Dash, 40, is in the tennis hall of fame at her alma mater William Smith College and continues to play the game. She also enjoys running and has completed the Denver and Chicago marathons as well as numerous half marathons.

Stacy Carpenter: Wheeling for Justice

This top attorney is described as “the model citizen lawyer.”



STACY CARPENTER

After joining Hensley Kim & Holzer two

months ago Carpenter, 37, has been named a partner and heads the litigation group, where a co-worker said she has already “mentored peers, established litigation protocols and garnered the respect of an all male senior litigation team.”

This past year she successfully litigated a long pending case involving unsettled legal questions about the relationship between children insured by their parents’ policy and insurance producers.

The Colorado native sits on the Colorado Bar Association’s legislative policy committee, where she reviews, drafts and negotiates bills dealing with employment issues. Following the steps of her father, Willis – who served as president of the Denver Bar Association – Carpenter is president elect.

“Ultimately, I think part of the reason I enjoy practicing law so much is that I get to know what is going on in my community and I get to know the other lawyers in my community, and for me it makes it a lot more fun,” she said.

Prior to joining the firm Carpenter was a partner at Baldwin & Carpenter.

She retained all of her clients when she switched firms.

During the Obama campaign she served as co-chair for a District 7 grassroots organization and grew her volunteer team, which knocked on 500,00 doors, from 10 to 400.

Carpenter has been a leader in Wheels of Justice, a cycling team that has raised more than \$750,000 for Children’s Hospital since its inception four years ago.

In the pro bono world, she recently represented a client who needed assistance with a disability insurance appeal and also works with Planned Parenthood.

“She steps to the task without reservation and gives to the community, to her clients, to her firm, to her peers and her family with

the same high energy and focus,” according to her nomination letter.