

TOP WOMEN OF LAW

JOAN PARSONS

Senior partner

Riemer & Braunstein

Graduated: Tufts University, Boston College
Law School



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Outside/community activities

New England Women in Real Estate, New York Commercial Real Estate Women, National Network of Commercial Real Estate Women, Massachusetts Bar Association, National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, Women’s Bar Association, United Way Women’s Leadership Breakfast, Lincoln Elementary School volunteer, Sachus Youth Baseball and Softball volunteer, Winchester Youth Hockey volunteer

Why do you do what you do?

I love what I do because transactional work is challenging and fast-paced. Each deal is different, with its own nuances and

time sensitivity, which allows me to keep learning and refining my skills in the context of meeting the clients’ objectives. I also value and enjoy the team approach to problem-solving in my department and my firm, as well as sharing my experience with colleagues who are new to commercial real estate.

What is your proudest achievement?

Becoming a senior partner at a national law firm was always a goal of mine. Having achieved that goal at the same time as raising four children is particularly satisfying. I am also proud to be the president of New England Women in Real Estate this year. It is an honor to hold a leadership position in this unique organization and to assist in advancing its mission of encouraging women in the commercial real estate industry to network effectively, to mentor each other, and to develop and utilize their leadership skills.

What is the biggest obstacle you have had to overcome?

Losing my father to Alzheimer’s disease is one of the most difficult experiences I have had to endure. It has made me focus on the urgency of finding a cure for this terrible disease and to help not only those who suffer from it, but also those who are charged with the care of others who are afflicted.

What was your childhood ambition?

I always wanted to be a lawyer. When I was about 12, our neighbor, who was a trial attorney, took me to court with him to observe, and I was hooked. It was not as much the theater of the courtroom as it was the unwavering dedication to the client that resonated with me. Also, I think that zealously advocating for a position came naturally to me, having grown up with two brothers.

Who is your role model and why?

My mom is my role model. I grew up watching her balance her many roles, including mother, wife, high school teacher and civic leader. My mom taught me by example that it was not only possible to be a fully engaged parent and a working professional, but that it could actually be very rewarding to do both rather than choosing one or the other. Although I now realize that balancing these roles is nowhere near as easy as my mom made it seem, she allowed me to see that it is possible to do both. Striving for such balance will likely always be a work in progress, which only energizes me — for my daughters’ sake and my own — to continue to follow my mom’s example.

What is your favorite inspirational quote?

“You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.” Wayne Gretzky