

Profiles in Diversity Journal®

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10TH ANNUAL
Women Worth Watching®

Andrea M. Farley

Troutman Sanders LLP

TITLE:
Partner and Business Law
section chief

EDUCATION:
BA, University of Florida;
JD, Vanderbilt University

FIRST JOB:
Professional tennis player

WHAT I'M READING:
Open, by Andre Agassi

MY PHILOSOPHY:
There is a time for everything,
it just may not all be today.

FAMILY: Husband Paul Carriere;
son Grant; daughter Margot

INTERESTS: Tennis, wine

FAVORITE CHARITY:
American Cancer Society

COMPANY:
Troutman Sanders LLP

HEADQUARTERS:
Atlanta, Georgia

WEBSITE:
www.troutmansanders.com

BUSINESS: Law firm

REVENUES: \$363.5 million

EMPLOYEES: 650 lawyers

I wish I had the magical answer to the work-life balance dilemma that faces so many women in the legal profession. Although there are (and have been for over two decades) an equal percentage of male and female first-year associates at large law firms, the percentage of women partners, and in particular women partners in leadership roles, is far less. This “leaky pipeline,” as it’s called in the legal profession, is due in part to the need for many women to work fewer or more regular hours during child-rearing years or as a result of other family responsibilities.

For me, work-life balance is not something that I achieve in that “aha!” moment of “here’s how you do it.” Achievement is personal and in order to have professional as well as personal satisfaction, you first have to know what that means for you, which may be different than it is for the person who sits in the office next to you. That seems like an easy task, but too many women, and men for that matter, have a difficult time separating their own personal desires from the desires of society, employers, family, etc. I’ve learned that I am personally accountable for my own happiness and that I cannot lay that responsibility on others.

At the same time, I know with 100 percent certainty that I could not achieve balance in my life or satisfaction in my career without the support and total buy-in from my husband. I’m fortunate that he also is a corporate attorney and therefore knows that when I’m working on a deal, it will have a timetable of its own with little regard for my work-life balancing act. But because I love being a deal lawyer and the professional satisfaction it brings me, I can’t measure balance on a daily or even weekly basis.

Of course, there are times when maintaining that overall perspective is difficult. In those times, two things keep me going: a healthy sense of humor that allows me to readily laugh at myself when things don’t go as planned, and something a friend told me, “There is a time for everything, it just may not all be today.”

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