

Foley & Mansfield Coming Together for

By Haley Freeman



a Purpose



“Diversity is represented by a number of characteristics, including gender, race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, age, sexual orientation, viewpoints, economic background, education and experience.”

This comprehensive definition of diversity was arduously crafted by members of Foley & Mansfield’s diversity committee. Comprised of representatives from each of the firm’s 13 offices nationwide, the committee works collaboratively with team members from coast-to-coast to ensure that Foley is truly a diverse workplace that reflects the firm’s core values, as well as the broad spectrum of clients and communities it represents.

I asked the firm’s women attorneys, paralegals and administrators in Minneapolis, from veterans to recent hires, why they have made Foley & Mansfield their professional home. They unanimously agreed it is because this is a place where diverse individuals are appreciated for their uniqueness, helped to achieve their highest potential and celebrated for their contributions. It is a place where people from many perspectives come together for a purpose.

Lisa M. Lamm Bachman, managing partner of Foley’s Minneapolis office, described the firm’s commitment to excellence through diversity. “When we developed the diversity mission statement, it took a long time to finalize. We wanted to convey the idea of inclusiveness – making sure everybody feels like part of a team. But it goes beyond that to also understanding their purpose on the team and working toward a common goal. For example, when I give someone an assignment, I want whoever I’m working with to understand the background of the case and why accomplishing their assignment is important to the case. We’re all part of a team working together to serve our clients’ needs and produce the best outcome.”

The people at Foley believe that having a team of diverse and multifaceted individuals is essential to delivering the highest cal-

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iber, results-oriented legal representation to clients spanning multimillion-dollar corporations to small businesses. Consistent with that belief, they have thrown the doors wide to welcome and develop women in all areas of the profession.

Ailana T. McIntosh is a first-generation American raised by entrepreneurial parents. Her introduction to the law came through a junior high school mentoring program for female students, where she was paired with a woman criminal defense attorney. After law school, McIntosh followed in the footsteps of her first legal mentor and became a litigator.

“But I always had my eye on real estate or business transactions,” McIntosh said. “When I came to Foley 10 years ago, I did some litigation, but I was also able to work with a partner in real estate transactions. I had a desire to learn more, and he let me work with him on other cases. Eventually, I was offered the opportunity to work in our real property law section. This is an environment that empowers young associates to do the kind of work we like to practice in. It is also a very caring environment. It’s a neat combination you don’t see at every law firm.”

Elena D. Rozwadowski is a young associate practicing in product liability as well as toxic and mass tort. She came to Foley after beginning her career as an assistant county attorney. The opportunity-rich environment at Foley has helped her to rapidly expand her legal repertoire.

“I’ve been with the firm just over a year, and I’ve noticed that I’ve been given a lot of opportunities to prove myself – and been given trust as a result. I don’t think a lot of younger associates get to do the things they do here. I started going to depositions and doing practical work earlier than many other firms of this size. It’s about advancing based on your skills and what you’re ready to do, not what you look like or who you are.”

Tessa A. Mansfield echoed a like sentiment. From a family of distinguished

attorneys, Mansfield graduated magna cum laude from William Mitchell College of Law in 2014 and joined Foley’s commercial litigation, employment law and litigation, and real estate practice groups. She stated, “I love that we have role models here like Cindy and Lisa who have walked in our shoes and can help us through the steps. I work with Lisa a lot, and I participated in a trial with her my first year in practice. Not a lot of first-year associates get to do that. The senior women here have forged the way for us.”

After beginning her legal career as a judicial clerk at the Minnesota Court of Appeals, **Joanna M. Salmen** joined Foley in 2011 and has developed a strong practice in the areas of product liability as well as toxic and mass tort litigation. She was elected a firm partner in 2017. Like Mansfield, she has been personally inspired by the leadership of other women at the firm.

“Since I’ve been here, I’ve always had other females to look up to. So often when I’m conducting depositions or I’m in court, I’m the only female there. If there is another woman, it’s typically somebody else from Foley. As women, we often get the opportunity to do this kind of work, when you only see males doing it in other firms.”

Ye Xu is a Chinese national who began her legal career in Beijing. After immigrating to the United States, she attended William Mitchell College of Law and joined Foley as a second-year law clerk. She is now an associate practicing in product liability defense as well as toxic and mass tort. Although she is far from her home country, Xu has discovered a place of belonging at Foley. “Even though I am a foreigner and my language and background are different from my colleagues, I have been treated as equal with others,” she stated. “Foley is family.”

When ’80s rocker chick, **Cynthia R. Bartell**, decided it was time for a career that would see her through retirement, she turned to the law. “I’m ornery, argumenta-

tive and like to win,” she laughed. “I think the practice of law was the only thing for me.” She joined Foley as a legal secretary, completed law school, and today is a firm partner and seasoned product liability and mass tort litigator. “I started here in ’94. I’ve been here the longest of all our women attorneys, but there are other women who have been here longer in our administration. I am so grateful for our support staff. I couldn’t do my job without them. They are a big part of what we do to get ready for trial. It’s all hands on deck when we’re preparing to get in front of a judge, and they do it happily. There is a strong bond between everyone here.”

Database administrator, **Angela M. Benser**, has been with Foley for 24 years. She started out as a junior paralegal with a degree in art history and a paralegal certificate. Although she had no formal training in computer science, she had both a passion and an aptitude for technology. The firm supported her ambitions, providing her with training opportunities and, finally, a move from the legal team to the IT department.

“I’m not sure I would have had the same career path at another firm,” Benser said. “IT is always so male-dominated, and art history really isn’t a prerequisite to data management positions. This is a unique environment, and I am so glad I landed here. I stay here because I know I’m appreciated, and I know they will support me in the years to come, as I continue to learn and grow.”

Amy E. Koski, litigation support services manager, began her journey at Foley 15 years ago. She has excelled in many positions at the firm, including paralegal, personal assistant and technical support specialist. She said, “Foley & Mansfield has allowed me to grow and learn in my career. I have been able to explore the legal, technical and management areas of the firm, and I have been encouraged to continue to



Standing (L-R): Tessa A. Mansfield, Lisa M. Lamm Bachman, Cynthia R. Bartell and Elena D. Rozwadowski
Seated (L-R): Joanna M. Salmen, Ailana T. McIntosh and Ye Xu

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learn in areas that are of interest to me. I have had the opportunity to be an employee as a single woman, a married woman and now a mother to twins, and at no time have I felt defined or limited professionally by any of my personal titles. Not only have I been given the chance to move around the firm, but I have also grown professionally outside my department with public speaking, mentoring teens, participating in industry-related groups on the boards of directors.”

Foley both encourages and supports community service that lifts people up and provides Foley team members with rewarding opportunities to bond with one

another. Bachman explained, “We are attuned to any charitable or civic group anyone is involved in. If someone is interested in raising funds for a charitable cause, our firm’s charitable foundation considers every donation request and most are usually supported in some fashion. Many of us also participate in each other’s events and activities or personally donate money in support of them. We also encourage and support pro bono work. Our firm credits up to 50 hours of pro bono work toward an attorney’s billable hour requirement, as long they are on track for their billable hours. It’s an opportunity for everyone to put their law degree to good use in the

community while also connecting with judges and other attorneys.”

McIntosh concluded, “It has occurred to me during this discussion that the approach the firm takes to dealing with lawyers and staff is similar to the one we take within our community – we are humans first. We might all be lawyers, but we are also humans, and we treat each other that way. We are all engaged in community and pro bono work because we are concerned about the society we live in. It speaks volumes about who we are as individuals and highlights the consciousness of our firm culture and the way we hire staff and attorneys who are engaged, who care, and who want to make a productive change.”