

WOMEN LEADERS IN TECH LAW

SAN FRANCISCO – After the events that have rocked Silicon Valley this year, are you more or less hopeful about the prospects for women in the tech industry?

That's the question that we put to all 65 of The Recorder's Women Leaders in Tech Law this year.

From a viral blog post about Uber's culture, a Google engineer's internal memo suggesting women are biologically less apt to succeed in technical fields, and allegations of harassment at some of the Valley's most prominent VC firms, this year's biggest tech stories are a reminder of the challenges that women still face in the field.

But the response from our honorees was a resounding chorus of optimism. They pointed out that you can't address a problem until you define it and that sunshine is often the best disinfectant.

As lawyers, advocates and advisors, they also have a special role to play in helping the tech industry take on issues of discrimination, bias and harassment. They have tackled some of the industry's biggest courtroom challenges, negotiated market-moving deals, and helped protect the industry's most valuable intellectual property assets. Given all these accomplishments, the optimism is understandable.

NOVEMBER 6, 2018

WWW.THERECORDER.COM

MEREDITH DEARBORN

Boies Schiller Flexner LLP

In the blockbuster *Waymo v. Uber* autonomous vehicle trade secret showdown, Boies Schiller Flexner's Meredith Dearborn argued various evidentiary issues for Uber before U.S. District Judge William Alsup of the Northern District of California pretrial and led the company's team of lawyers working on the jury instructions which, though they ended up going unused, explored untrodden ground in trade secret law.

Name an important opportunity you've had in your career and what you did with it.

I have worked on a number of big trials for tech companies. On

one trial in 2014, when I was still an associate, one of the partners told me that he wanted me to put on one of the witnesses at trial. I prepped our closing witness and put on his testimony, speaking before a jury for the first time. It was thrilling.

Who is the most important mentor you've had thus far in your career? Why?

My mother, Nancy Dearborn. Many work colleagues have sponsored me, provided me with opportunities and support, and lifted up my voice in the courtroom. But my mother—who is herself a lawyer—has been constantly there through all the ups



and downs and big decisions. I will always be grateful.

What's the best piece of career advice anyone ever gave you?

Trust your colleagues.

What's the best part of working in the tech sector?

The clients! Our tech clients are engaged, brilliant, strategic, flexible and approachable. I think in-house legal departments have taken the philosophy of the tech industry to heart.

What's the biggest challenge?

As a literature major, sometimes the biggest challenge is learning how the technology works. But this is also one of my favorite parts of my job: I love speaking with brilliant engineers and ask them to teach me about their work.

What's one way technology has made your life easier?

Reading documents on my iPad and marking them up with Apple Pencil. It has completely replaced the binders I previously routinely carried around with me.

One way it's made your life more difficult?

It's an old saw, but being constantly accessible through email on my phone has made it less easy to unplug.

What drew you to practicing law in the technology industry?

I am a San Francisco Bay Area native, and the technology industry is the backbone of our economy. I know so many people who work in the tech industry in all different positions: engineers, VCs, business people, in-house and outside lawyers. It is natural for me to contribute to the industry.

In 50 words or less, what's the best way to address tech's gender gap?

Tech companies can amplify women's voices in tech law

by hiring leading women and encouraging their outside firms to put women lawyers in lead trial roles. If clients demand it, firms will do it. Law firms can promote more women to equity partnership, and assist women in business development efforts.

Describe yourself in one word.

Resilient.

What's one area of technology that you're most excited about (e.g. software, medical devices, autonomous vehicles) and why?

The sharing economy has transformed transportation for me and for our cities. One startup I love is Scoot: their electric scooter-share program has taught me to ride a moped, opened up San Francisco to me in such a fun way.

—*Ross Todd*