

WOMEN LEADERS IN TECH LAW Next Generation

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.

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CHRISTINA GREENBERG

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher

Christina Greenberg, who is currently seconded at Facebook, has served as the lead associate on seven multi-billion dollar public deals in the last few years, including the sale of Uber's Southeast Asian business to Grab.

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

Six months ago I got the opportunity to join Facebook as a secondee to help bring Portal to market. This was such an amazing opportunity to pivot into something new and learn an entire new practice. The idea of jumping into something completely new and ramping up so quickly was a bit overwhelming but also thrilling. I absolutely love the work I have been able to do as product and privacy counsel for the product and am so proud that I have had an integral role in bringing such an innovative product to market.

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

Joe Barbeau, a partner at Gibson Dunn. I worked with Joe on multiple deals when I first joined Gibson Dunn in 2009, and he became my mentor early on in my career and has mentored me for the past nine years. What I appreciate most about Joe is that he has given me opportunities again and again to stretch myself and move to the next level in my career even before I knew I was ready—and he was always sitting by my side to back me up, which gave me the courage to take the opportunities. For example, he offered for me to take the main speaking role in negotiations for a 31 billion dollar deal (the acquisition of St. Jude Medical by Abbott) when everyone else speaking at the table was a male partner of other large law firms. That experience made me feel like I could



negotiate any deal and catapulted my career. He has repeatedly navigated other opportunities for me, like putting my name in the hat to speak at multiple client events and putting my

name on the list for many pitches and client development opportunities that I otherwise would not have been able to attend. He has never been too busy to take time to advise me on any subject—whether deciding which deal I should do next, which partner in the firm I should work with or what I should focus on in my speaking engagements—all with the goal of helping me become a better person and lawyer.

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

Technology has the ability to improve the lives of so many people and help people focus on what is important for them to spend time on (by accomplishing tasks for people that they would otherwise have to do themselves), and it is great to be part of the engine that powers that advancement. For the past six months, I have provided privacy and product counsel support for Facebook's new smart display—the Portal—which has smart camera and sound technology that makes video calling feel like you are in the same room with the person you are talking with. This simple ability to communicate seamlessly with my family members while I am cooking or my kids are eating has changed our lives, and my kids actually ask every evening who we can call next rather than begging for the iPad. I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to help bring this product into the world, and I think it will improve the lives of so many by bringing back more face-to-face

communication into people's lives (while saving them time because you can do it while cooking or cleaning since it is hands free and is able to follow you around the room).

What's the biggest challenge?

With great power comes great responsibility, and when you are part of developing technology that will reach into people's lives and homes, it is essential to think about the user experience from a privacy and security standpoint, which is a big part of the role we lawyers play in the product development cycle. When products are being developed very fast, it is always a challenge to keep up with the development of new features so that we can step in early and spot issues and discuss potential risk mitigation strategies and not slow down the process. It takes developing real partnerships with all the business teams we support as well as a thorough knowledge of the technology that is being developed so that we can appropriately advise on the most poignant issues at the right time in the process so that we are perceived as adding value rather than being a roadblock to the development process.

How do you describe what you do for a living to people you're meeting for the first time?

I am a deal attorney who has recently applied the skills of shepherding large deals to completion and spotting and resolving issues to my work providing

privacy and product counsel support to Facebook in its launch of Portal.

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

Meals, shopping and gas. I use Plated as my meal delivery service, I shop from Whole Foods via Amazon Prime and I use Filled to fill up my tank. These are just some of the ways that technology has cut down on tasks and let me spend my time focusing on career and family.

One way it's made your life more difficult?

Too many choices. I often put off decision making because there are so many websites or forums I haven't yet consulted on the topic.

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

We should all think twice before accepting and repeating personality judgments that a woman is "difficult," "too direct," or "not deferential enough," as these comments are heard often as a reason not to hire or advance a woman but almost never heard with respect to men.

What's one area of technology that you're most excited about and why?

I am most excited about the development of voice assistant technologies. I can't wait until they are developed enough to take a bunch more tasks off my plate.

—Ross Todd