

Jennifer Selendy Profiled in The National Law Journal's Series of Plaintiffs' Bar Leaders

12/15/2022



Jennifer Selendy, founding partner of Selendy Gay, was featured in *The National Law Journal's* profile series of plaintiffs' bar leaders, speaking about her passion for litigation, her take on work-life balance, her career successes in the courtroom and beyond, and her advice for the next generation. Below are excerpts from the feature, which was originally published in its entirety on December 14, 2022.

What trends are you seeing in litigation or business of law? Do you have any concerns for the plaintiffs bar moving forward?

An important trend is around these liability management transactions. There's so much frothy credit markets and so many M&A transactions and SPACs and private credit deals that, with the downturn in the market, I think what we're seeing, instead of filing bankruptcy, we're seeing more of an effort on the part of the companies and their counsel to say, 'we've got to try to avoid the huge expense of bankruptcy, let's be more proactive early, let's try to restructure our debt early.'

Everybody's trying it, and sometimes the contracts maybe allow it. But a lot of times they don't. I think we're going to see that trend continue an effort to avoid the Chapter 11 space by doing more creative things.

How important is it for you to apply creativity, outside-the-box thinking and innovation in litigation?

One of the greatest things about being a plaintiffs lawyer is that it does require, oftentimes a lot of creativity and outside-the-box thinking.

It's harder to be a plaintiff. The odds are stacked against you in many ways, you have the burden of proof. The truth of the matter is that our judiciary over time has often been very pro defendant, very pro corporate, and it takes a lot of work to put together a strong case.

You are very active in philanthropy work. Can you talk a little bit about that and what that means for you?

I think that, for me, it's one of the great privileges of being a partner in a successful law firm—there's so much opportunity to do good if you want to.

This year was the founding of the [30 Birds Foundation](#) and the [evacuation](#) of somewhere in the vicinity of just over 500 people connected with the Marafat School Community in Afghanistan.

And we now just have a few people left at the temporary site in Pakistan, and almost everybody is now in Canada. The 30 Birds is going to continue its work to support evacuations and to support the education of these girls.

In that context, what is your advice for young lawyers? How have you been mentoring young lawyers?

I would say, the time that I spent as a very young lawyer, I never regretted the time that I invested in work, because I didn't view it as 'I'm an employee and I'm working,' I viewed it as 'I am gaining experience.'

I encourage young lawyers to think about the issue of work-life balance more along the lines of, do you love what you're doing? If you love what you're doing, then much of the work doesn't feel like work at all. You'll see it as an investment in yourself.

As a woman in a leadership role running your own firm, what are your priorities?

Overwhelmingly my priority as a leader is sound leadership. I have observed throughout my profession that what makes somebody a successful lawyer doesn't necessarily make them a good businessperson or a good manager or even a good leader of people. It has been my goal always to be a really good listener as a leader, to build consensus, to set up good governance processes and principles for decision-making and strategic thought within a law firm.

Attorney

- Jennifer Selendy