

WASHINGTON'S

Most Influential Women Lawyers

In a profession still dominated by men, these power players have taken a sledgehammer to the glass ceiling to grab their place among the elite of the Washington bar.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A time will arrive, perhaps soon, when singling out lawyers by gender will seem wholly unnecessary. Unfortunately, we're not there yet. Don't buy it? Try answering this question: How many major law firms can you name that are run by women—ditto practice groups, corporate law departments, advocacy groups, public agencies? Some of them? Certainly. Half? Not even close. Barriers have fallen and continue to do so, and the lawyers on our list of Washington's Most Influential Women have career paths that any lawyer—male or female—would envy. These are power players, and they were selected by the editors of *The National Law Journal* for work that places them in an elite tier. We are recognizing their work, their influence and the fact that they may have had to work a bit harder than many of their male colleagues to get where they are today. Here's to the day when that won't be necessary. —DAVID L. BROWN, editor in chief



BETH WILKINSON

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

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Beth Wilkinson has held many influential jobs throughout her legal career—military lawyer, federal prosecutor, defense attorney and general counsel to a *Fortune* 500 company. For the past year, Wilkinson has been a partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, defending large corporations in high-stakes suits. In February, Wilkinson halted a six-case winning streak for plaintiffs suing Pfizer Inc. over its hormone replacement drug Prempro. The win was a bit of déjà vu for Wilkinson. In 2003 and 2005, while at Latham & Watkins, she secured a jury verdict for Phillip Morris USA after facing off against a lawyer who had earlier won multibillion-dollar judgments in similar cases. Wilkinson became general counsel of Fannie Mae in 2006 and left after the government takeover in 2008. As a prosecutor, Wilkinson delivered the closing arguments in the Oklahoma City bombing case, which led to a death sentence for Timothy McVeigh and multiple life sentences for Terry Nichols. “I’ve worked in almost every different area for lawyers that Washington has to offer,” Wilkinson said. “It’s given me some insight and ability to talk to a lot of different people.”

—SHERI QUALTERS