

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

‘It Is No Longer Enough to Be a Law Firm,’ Gwendolyn Robosson Says

“In light of the business transformation that is being realized through technology, it is no longer enough to be a law firm—you have to be a technology business partner that can provide legal advice. Lawyers must have the ability to convey the value they can provide by supporting clients’ business objectives as they increase their use of technology.”

By ALM Staff

Gwendolyn Robosson of Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy is a Lifetime Achievement winner. The below responses were lightly edited for style and clarity.

Objectively, what key moments or accomplishments have defined your career?

The firm asked me to open a practice in New Jersey, and I am sincerely proud to say that I have built the practice from a core team of approximately 11 employees to a leading immigration practice with a client-facing team of more than 70 professionals. In doing so, I helped to establish and maintain long-standing relationships with leading clients in the high-end engineering, technology and pharmaceutical industries, many of which are headquartered in New Jersey. Through these and other valued client relationships, we

increased the size of the New Jersey practice by multiples and created opportunities for local employment. Our New Jersey practice currently includes more than 230 staff and houses the firm’s worldwide corporate shared services support teams and several members of our leadership team, including our general counsel, chief marketing and business development officer and chief financial officer. Given that various leadership functions are based in this single location, our New Jersey practice serves a critical role in establishing the framework for best-in-class service delivery worldwide. Additionally, our New Jersey office includes our International practice group and its leader, so we provide clients with strong global service management from one central location.



Courtesy photo

Gwendolyn Robosson, with Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy.

Subjectively, what are your proudest or most personally satisfying achievements?

My most personally satisfying achievements involve partnering with clients to advance program management and build global

immigration programs. The collaboration with them and amongst our internal team is truly gratifying. The work includes developing and refining strategic immigration policies; ensuring companies have a mechanism to monitor compliance; drawing upon government affairs resources to stay ahead of new developments; and proactively monitoring the market and preparing for any impacts. It also includes advising clients on the importance of technology, particularly data integration and analytics, to generate process efficiencies, manage their program and predict risk.

For example, I recently advised a client on the need to implement a data integration platform and other technology products of the firm to achieve the secure, accurate and complete transfer of immigration cases and program data. The work has generated operational efficiencies of value to the client.

At the firmwide level, I have partnered with other firm leaders to utilize technology, including Optical Character Recognition (OCR), to create efficiencies for internal and external clients and reduce the need for employees to execute manual tasks. I have also sponsored an

initiative to create standards within business processes and service delivery, looking to technology to deliver desired outcomes.

How are the business and profession of law changing, and are New Jersey lawyers well positioned for the future?

In light of the business transformation that is being realized through technology, it is no longer enough to be a law firm—you have to be a technology business partner that can provide legal advice. Lawyers must have the ability to convey the value they can provide by supporting clients' business objectives as they increase their use of technology.

At Fragomen, we are using data analytics for scenario planning and to identify risks or obstacles to the deployment of client talent across borders. Our IT Innovation Lab is driving efficiencies through robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning and data integration to ensure our clients have the best experience possible.

Across multiple fields, well respected members of the New Jersey bar are addressing these changes within the legal profession and the need to embrace technology in one's practice. These efforts will help to position New Jersey lawyers for the future.

What advice would you give to someone contemplating a career in law, or someone whose career in law has not been satisfying so far?

A career in law is highly rewarding, particularly in that you have the privilege of representing clients and providing strategic advice to address their business objectives. As a service provider, there is an expectation of a high level of accessibility and immediate responsiveness, which should be considered when contemplating a career in law.

A legal education is a discipline unto itself and provides one with the ability to analyze problems and create a framework for analysis that is transferable to and valuable in other fields. If you are not finding the practice of law to be rewarding, a legal education and the mental acuity it develops is relevant to many endeavors, particularly in fields where issue resolution needs to be advanced. For example, that could involve helping someone open a business and serving as a business partner in a new enterprise, or moving into a role in human resources—or any field that allows you to problem solve. The skill sets of lawyers, including strong communication skills, present opportunities in many sectors.