

Men Joining Women for Change: Harnessing the Power of Inclusivity

Speakers

Ida Abbott, Ida Abbott Consulting LLC

Amy Chronis, Deloitte & Touche LLP

Mark Coffin, Seyfarth Shaw LLP

Michele Coleman Mayes, New York Public Library

Hon. R. K. Sandill, Harris County District Court

ABA Commission on Women in the Profession
National Conference of Women's Bar Associations
Texas Women Lawyers

Sponsors



ABA MidYear Meeting
February 6, 2015 • 2:30 – 4:30 pm
George R. Brown Convention Center
Houston, Texas



**Commission on Women
in the Profession**
American Bar Association

This program was made possible by the generous financial support of the following associations, firms and individuals:

ABA Commission on Women in the Profession
National Conference of Women's Bar Associations
Texas Women Lawyers

Polsinelli
Alexander Law, PA
Dillingham & Murphy, LLP
EMD Serono, Inc.
Patton Wolan Carlise, LLP

Katherine Brown
Jeanne Marie Clavere
Christy Jump
Patricia Sturdevant
Nicolette Zachary



Professional and Practice Profile

Ida Abbott has been helping employers develop, manage and retain legal talent since 1995. She also serves as a mentor and coach to high achieving individuals seeking professional success. Ida has long been recognized as a leader in the fields of mentoring and sponsorship, leadership development and professional development, and is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management.

For many years, Ida has been at the forefront of efforts to promote women in the legal profession. She is co-Founder of the Hastings Leadership Academy for Women at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, where she is also a Faculty Fellow. She established and co-chaired the Bay Area chapter of Women in Law Empowerment Forum (WILEF) and has served on the California State Bar Committee on Women in the Law and on the Advisory Boards of the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation and the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

The other aspects of Ida's practice involve lawyers' professional development, particularly mentoring, sponsorship and leadership. Ida serves on the Executive Committee of the National Legal Mentoring Consortium, as Advisor and Research Panelist for the Institute of Mentoring, as Special Advisor to the International Bar Association's Law Firm Mentoring Program, and as a member of the Council of Management Experts based in New Delhi, India. She is a founder and former board member of the Professional Development Consortium, served as Vice-Chair of the Academic and Professional Development Committee of the International Bar Association, and has held many other leadership positions in bar associations and legal organizations. One of the ways Ida promotes effective law firm management and leadership is by bringing leaders together on a regular basis to learn, share and network with each other. She operates Roundtables for women law firm leaders and for professional development leaders in global law firms.

Ida's clients are located throughout the world. They include firms and companies of varying size and complexity, from small and mid-size local offices to global law and accounting firms. Before starting her consulting firm, Ida practiced law for 20 years. She specialized in complex litigation at Heller Ehrman LLP, where she also ran the firm's professional development and pro bono programs. She often served as a judge pro tempore in the San Francisco Superior Court and as a private and court-appointed mediator and arbitrator.

Ida has authored dozens of articles and numerous resource materials, as well as several highly acclaimed books, including *Sponsoring Women: What Men Need to Know*, *Women on Top: The Woman's Guide to Leadership and Power in Law Firms*, *Lawyers' Professional Development: The Legal Employer's Comprehensive Guide (2nd Edition)*, and *The Lawyer's Guide to Mentoring*. She has been a columnist for *Diversity & the Bar Magazine* and serves on the Editorial Board of Women in Law International. Her newsletter, *Management Solutions*, can be found on her website, www.IdaAbbott.com. Ida has been featured and quoted in numerous publications and is a popular speaker at national and international professional conferences.

Ida received her J.D. from Hastings College of the Law, M.A. from the University of Miami, and A.B. from Smith College.



Amy Chronis

Partner

Deloitte & Touche LLP



Amy is a senior partner in Deloitte's Global Oil & Gas Group based in Houston. Amy has served public and private enterprises, from emerging businesses to Fortune 500 leaders, for more than 30 years. Amy is a member of the Board of Directors for the Deloitte Foundation, a past member of the Nominating Committee of the US Board of Directors as well as the former Managing Partner of Deloitte's Central Texas practice.

Amy received her BSBA in International Studies and in Accounting from The Ohio State University and completed the Executive MBA Program at Columbia University Business School. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants.

Her civic roles include WEN (Women's Energy Network), the Audit and Compliance Committee of The Ohio State University Board of Trustees, the Accounting Department Advisory Council for The University of Texas at Austin, the United Way Women's Initiative and The Texas Business Hall of Fame Foundation Board. She is also a member of World President Organization (WPO).

Amy and her husband John have three children ranging from 18-25 years old. Her hobbies include running, reading, travel and golf.



Mark W. Coffin

Partner

Houston

Direct: (713) 225-1337

Fax: (713) 821-0669

mcoffin@seyfarth.com | [vCard](#)

Biography

Practices & Sectors

Corporate

Capital Markets

Mergers &
Acquisitions

Commercial Finance

Health Law

Healthcare
Transactional
Experience

Healthcare Mergers
and Acquisitions

Energy and Clean
Technologies

Energy Finance

Mr. Coffin is both the Office Managing Partner and the Chair of the Business Services Group in the Houston Office of Seyfarth Shaw LLP. He has practiced since 1984, principally in the general corporate, securities, venture capital, mergers and acquisitions, and health law areas. Mr. Coffin represents both public and private companies in a wide range of legal matters including:

- Reporting and filing obligations under federal and state securities law
- Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), Private Investment in Public Entities (PIPEs), registered and private offerings of securities
- Corporate finance
- Venture capital financing
- Corporate governance
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Health industry regulatory and business law matters

Mr. Coffin serves and has served as outside general counsel and lead SEC Counsel for numerous public companies and represents both emerging and established companies with respect to a full range of business and transactional matters. He has also taught business and health law as a member of the University of Houston Law Center's adjunct faculty. Mr. Coffin is listed in The Best Lawyers in America (Health Care Law). He is also AV® Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell.

Education

- J.D., University of Houston Law Center (1984)
- B.A., Bowdoin College (1981)
Economics
- Certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt

Admissions

- Texas

Affiliations

- Former member of the Advisory Board of the Health Law and Policy Institute at the University of Houston Law Center

- Former Director of the Wesley Community Center; Childress Foundation and Texas Liver Coalition

Representative Engagements

- \$172 million offering of 6.5% Convertible Senior Notes of NYSE listed international energy holding company
- \$87 million Directed Offering of Common Stock of NYSE-AMEX listed international energy holding company
- \$85 million Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Common Stock of NASDAQ listed pharmaceutical company
- \$70 million Aggregate "PIPES" Private Placements of Common Stock and Warrants of AMEX listed international energy holding company
- \$200 million Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Common Stock of NYSE listed Gulf of Mexico offshore oil and gas company
- Formation of \$27 million State University affiliated Life Sciences Venture Capital fund
- Handling of twenty-seven (27) Venture Capital investments as counsel to \$1 billion telecommunications venture capital fund
- \$80 million Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Common Stock of NASDAQ listed Gulf of Mexico sub-sea construction services company
- \$1 billion recapitalization and related \$40 million 144A offering of global telecommunications company subsidiary

Accolades

- Selected in the 2012 Edition of *Best Lawyers in America*® in the practice area of Health Care Law

Michele Coleman Mayes

Vice President,
General Counsel and Secretary

The New York Public Library



Michele Coleman Mayes is vice president, general counsel and secretary for The New York Public Library (“NYPL”) and a member of the senior management group. Mayes is responsible for guiding NYPL’s legal strategy to enable NYPL to achieve its mission. She joined NYPL in August 2012.

Mayes brings extensive legal, corporate and government experience to NYPL. From 1976 through 1982, she served in the United States Department of Justice as Assistant United States Attorney in Detroit and Brooklyn, eventually assuming the role of Chief of the Civil Division in Detroit.

In 1982, Mayes entered the corporate sector as managing attorney of Burroughs Corporation. As Burroughs and Sperry Corporation merged, creating Unisys Corporation, she was appointed staff vice president and associate general counsel for Worldwide Litigation. In 1992, she joined Colgate-Palmolive Company as vice president and associate general counsel U.S. In 1993, she was promoted to vice president of Human Resources and Legal for North America and ultimately became vice president, legal and assistant secretary, and elected a corporate officer. In 2003, she joined Pitney Bowes as senior vice president and general counsel. In 2007 she assumed the role of executive vice president and general counsel for Allstate Insurance Company, a position she held until joining NYPL.

Mayes is the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Bar Association, Commission on Women in the Profession - The Margaret Brent Award, and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association Trailblazer Award. In 2009, Mayes was recognized as one of the most Influential General Counsels in America by *The National Law Journal* and by Ethisphere Institute in 2011 Attorneys Who Matter. In 2012, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from *The American Lawyer*.

She served on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration in 2013-2014.

In 2011, Michele and Kara Baysinger co-authored a book entitled **Courageous Counsel**, which chronicles the rise of women general counsel in the Fortune 500.

Judge R. K. Sandill

127th Civil District Court, Houston, Texas

Ravi K. Sandill is the Judge of the 127th District Court in Harris County. Judge Sandill was elected in November 2008 and became the first South Asian to be elected county-wide, as well as the first South Asian to be elected to the District Court Bench in Texas.



During his first three years on the bench, Judge Sandill has cleared over 7,000 cases and has called over 140 cases to trial. In addition to his civil docket, Judge Sandill has sole responsibility for Harris County's seizure and forfeiture docket, which uses assets seized from criminal activity to help fund the Harris County District Attorney's office and other local law enforcement agencies.

Judge Sandill graduated from the University of Texas at Austin and The University of Houston Law Center. Prior to his election, he practiced non-compete litigation and commercial litigation. After law school, Judge Sandill served as a briefing attorney to Justice Murry B. Cohen of the Texas First Court of Appeals.

Ravi is the Co-Chair for the Houston Bar Association's MOILP Committee, and he serves on the HBA's Continuing Legal Education Committee. He serves as the Houston City Co-Chair for the Texas Minority Counsel Program. Judge Sandill is on the Executive Board of the Garland R. Walker Inn of Court, is a Texas Bar Foundation Fellow and Houston Young Lawyers' Foundation Fellow. As a cancer survivor, Judge Sandill is involved in numerous cancer related charities around the Houston area, including the Leukemia Lymphoma Society's Gulf Coast Chapter (Judge Sandill is a former Board Trustee). As a frequent CLE speaker, Judge Sandill travels throughout Texas and has given speeches in other states and in international locations.

Judge Sandill resides in Houston with his wife Kelly, a partner at Andrews Kurth, LLP, and their son.

Coaching, Mentoring & Sponsorship

Considerable confusion exists about coaching, mentoring and sponsorship. Many people refer to coaching and mentoring interchangeably. While both processes provide personalized professional development, require special interpersonal skills and have a significant impact on a lawyer's career, there are some important distinctions between them. Coaching is also distinct from sponsorship, which is an advanced form of mentoring. Let's examine these processes and clarify their similarities and differences.

Coaching

Coaching deals with performance. It is *functional* and *results-oriented*. Coaching helps someone become more productive and effective at a specific set of functions, tasks or practices. A coach helps you identify and set goals in a particular area (or function) and develop a plan to achieve those goals. Then the coach gives you support while you implement your plan and achieve your desired results. Because you check in with the coach as your plan moves forward, the coach also keeps you disciplined and focused.

Lawyers who receive coaching usually fall into one of three categories: new or existing leaders who want to optimize their leadership effectiveness; high potential lawyers who want to achieve their highest level of performance; and under-performing lawyers who must improve their performance or change certain behaviors in order to stay in the firm and on track. A large and growing number of coaches today help partners and some high potential associates with areas like business development, leadership development and leadership optimization. Firms also hire specialists to provide coaching in areas like communication and presentation skills, writing, time and work management and team management. Many firms also provide transition coaches for lawyers returning to work after taking leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

A few firms have coaches on staff but most firms hire outside coaches to work with particular lawyers on an as-needed basis. These coaches are *paid* specifically to provide coaching services. Mentors, sponsors and supervisors might all act as coaches when they help someone improve performance or set career goals, but if the issue involves adopting new behaviors or changing problematic behaviors, law firms and individual lawyers usually hire outside coaches.

Coaches can help lawyers recognize barriers to top performance and develop strategies for overcoming them, or identify counterproductive behaviors and develop techniques for changing them. While coaches hired as skills experts (e.g., in presentations or writing) use their expertise to offer advice and guide a lawyer's skill development, most coaches act more indirectly. They help individuals look inside themselves to find solutions and achieve desired results. They are trained to use powerful questions that help individuals discover their strengths and deploy them to achieve their career goals. Some coaches are certified to administer psychometric assessments, helping lawyers increase their self-awareness. They might conduct interviews with co-workers, or study the lawyer's performance evaluations, to collect feedback for the lawyer. Then they help the lawyer process this internal and external information and use it to enhance performance.

Mentoring

Mentoring is broader in scope and purpose than coaching, and is based on a deeper, more meaningful relationship than coaching. It is *relational* in nature and *career-oriented*. Both the quality of the mentoring relationship and the factors that determine quality – trust, mutual respect, and mutual learning – are critical to the mentoring process. Mentoring covers more wide-ranging career issues than coaching because it deals with mentees' overall professional development and advancement, not simply performance goals. Although mentor and mentee might

spend time on improving performance, the relationship usually expands to larger and longer-term personal and professional career issues. Mentors often employ coaching as one of their tools, along with confidence building, role modeling, counseling and advocacy.

Within a law firm, mentors are predominantly lawyers with greater career experience and expertise than mentees. They act as mentors both informally in the usual course of work and through formal mentoring programs that have particular objectives and guidelines. They are *not paid* to be mentors; it is expected of them as part of their responsibility to the firm and its lawyers. However, given the time constraints and billing pressures in law firms today, many mentors lack the time to devote to mentoring and do not make it a priority. Consequently, firms are filling in gaps by hiring coaches to help with certain performance aspects of development, leadership and rainmaking. Coaching that targets specific areas where performance can be improved or optimized may be narrower in scope yet more effective than inadequate mentoring.

Mentoring is especially important, however, for career advancement. Unlike coaching, mentoring has a role in knowledge transfer and skill development. (Skill-focused coaching is an exception, as noted above). While coaches do not need to be lawyers, mentors within a firm usually are. They therefore play an important and direct role in helping lawyers become better, more highly skilled legal practitioners. Because they have relevant work and career experience, mentors are more likely than coaches to use their own experiences, insights and advice to help the mentee learn and progress. Coaches can help lawyers create a plan that calls for developing certain skills and getting certain work experience, but mentors can teach and model the specified legal skills and create the work opportunities needed to achieve those goals.

Another reason mentors are so valuable is that because they are lawyers in the same law firm, they know about the firm's decision-making processes and political dynamics. They can give mentees inside information about firm management and politics that enable associates and junior partners to develop and execute smart career advancement strategies. They can offer insights into client relationships and make introductions to business contacts. Mentors can welcome lawyers into firm networks, make them feel appreciated, and promote a sense of inclusion and camaraderie that heighten engagement and personal identification with the firm. Most significantly, mentors are part of the firm. They can transmit firm values, culture and professionalism to young lawyers and future leaders.

In sum, mentoring and coaching are both important for professional development. Coaches can be very helpful in mapping out performance goals and supporting lawyers as they execute plans and strategies. At a time when accelerating development is of paramount importance, coaching is a useful resource for improving effectiveness and productivity. But for purposes of learning, engagement and career advancement, coaches cannot replace the importance and value of mentoring by an established lawyer in the firm who takes an active and personal interest in helping a younger lawyer succeed.

Sponsorship

A sponsor is a strong advocate who has power and influence and uses that advocacy to produce positive career results for you. Sponsors publicly endorse your qualifications and take risks on your behalf, arguing that you should move up to a higher compensation tier or urging their partners that you are ready for equity partnership or a significant leadership position. They alert you to opportunities and appoint you to key posts. Sometimes they call in favors, put pressure on colleagues, or put their reputation and credibility on the line for you. Partners become sponsors when they perceive special value in you and actively help you advance. It can occur for any number of reasons: they might see you as a natural successor, as having rainmaking potential that could benefit them, or as having expertise necessary to support their clients. Sponsors and champions may not guarantee success, but they make it easier and improve your odds of receiving a coveted leadership appointment, a fatter paycheck or a new client.

When we talk about sponsorship today, it is basically mentoring at the highest level. Sponsorship is the same as the traditional concept of mentorship: a prominent and wise individual takes you under his wing, supports and protects you, and promotes your career success. Current conversations about sponsorship call attention to these traditional notions of how powerful people can help others succeed in a law firm (or any organization). They also direct attention to a critical factor in sponsorship: the sponsor must be someone with power who purposefully champions the other lawyer's career.

The importance of sponsorship was underscored in a 2010 publication that found men enjoy greater career benefits from mentoring than women do.^[1] The research data showed that women are promoted less often than men because mentors actively sponsor men for promotions far more often than they sponsor women. Both women and men get career advice from mentors, but advice consists of words and good intentions. Sponsorship involves taking action on another's behalf to advance their career interests, and having sufficient clout to produce results. Because mentors do not sponsor women, women do not receive the same career benefits from mentoring that men do. In response, some law firms are starting initiatives to increase sponsorship for women and diverse lawyers. These programs generally target a group of mid- to senior associates or junior partners who are paired with one or two influential partners. Relationships tend to focus on creating high quality work and business development opportunities for the junior person. Most sponsorship programs are in the pilot stage, but early experience shows the need for very careful pairings and oversight. Although similar to other mentoring programs, sponsorship demands more of mentors, requires more focused effort from those being sponsored, and considerable ongoing involvement by program coordinators.

[1] Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carver and Christine Silva, "Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women," *Harvard Business Review*, September 2010; Nancy M. Carter, Ph.D., Christine Silva, "Mentoring: Necessary But Insufficient for Advancement," Catalyst, 2010

Ida Abbott helps employers develop, manage and retain legal talent. She also serves as a mentor and coach to high achieving individuals seeking professional success. This article is excerpted from her book, Lawyers' Professional Development: The Legal Employer's Comprehensive Guide, 2nd Edition (NALP 2012).

Women, Men and Sponsorship:
Selected References by Ida Abbott

Book:

Sponsoring Women: What Men Need to Know (www.AttorneyatWork.com 2014)
<http://www.attorneyatwork.com/law-practice-books/careers-books/sponsoring-women-print-edition/>

Book chapter:

"Men - The Key to Advancing Women," published in *Breaking Barriers: Promoting and Retaining Women in the Legal Profession* (Ark Group in association with Managing Partner, 2014)
<http://www.idaabbott.com/sites/default/files/articles/arkmen-the-key-advancing-women-cover.pdf>

Articles:

- Coaching, Mentoring and Sponsorship
<http://www.idaabbott.com/publications/newsletter/issue-34/coaching-mentoring-and-sponsorship>
- The Allure and Challenges of Sponsorship Programs for Women
<http://www.idaabbott.com/publications/newsletter/issue-34/allure-and-challenges-sponsorship-programs-women>
- Law Firm Leaders Need to "Lean In"
<http://www.idaabbott.com/publications/newsletter/issue-36/law-firm-leaders-need-lean>
- Should Your Firm Start A Sponsorship Program?
<http://www.idaabbott.com/publications/newsletter/issue-36/should-your-firm-start-sponsorship-program>
- Sponsorship: Why A Book For Men?
<http://www.idaabbott.com/publications/newsletter/issue-37/sponsorship-why-book-men>
- Beyond Mentors: The Need for Champions
<http://www.idaabbott.com/sites/default/files/news-archive/news31.html>
- Turn Your Mentors Into Sponsors (The Glass Hammer, Feb 2014)
<http://www.theglasshammer.com/news/2014/02/19/turn-your-mentors-into-sponsors/#more-12551>