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Women in the legal profession face numerous challenges: lagging pay rates, glass ceilings at some law firms, condescending attitudes from some male adversaries and judges.

But however many challenges women face today, they were considerably steeper 40 years ago, when women made up 4 percent of the profession compared to today's 40 percent.

Next month, *The Recorder* will honor 20 women who helped blaze what was then a dimly lit trail in a special report, Women Leaders in Law. These living legends are firsts and founders — the first women partners at big law firms, the first (or second) women judges on their courts, the co-founders of influential organizations like California Women Lawyers and Equal Rights Advocates.

Most of all, they've provided inspiration and mentoring — or "wo-mentoring," as San Francisco Superior Court Judge Angela Bradstreet calls it. "It meant the world to me to be able go to Herma Hill Kay or Dru Ramey or Joyce Kennard" for career and personal advice, says Bradstreet, who began practicing in the Bay Area in 1981. "The fact is back then it was a very male-dominated profession, and it could feel very isolating."

For purposes of this list, *The Recorder* limited eligibility to women in the Bay Area who have been attorneys for at least 35 years, and whose focus has been on practicing, teaching or adjudicating law. We acknowledge the trailblazing contributions of many, many others who became lawyers more recently, or whose impact has been primarily in the political arena.

Here then are *The Recorder's* Women Leaders in Law, 2011:

- Barbara Babcock, Judge John Crown professor of law, emerita, Stanford Law School. Babcock became the first woman on the regular Stanford Law faculty in 1972. She later went on to become assistant attorney general for the Civil Division of the U.S. Justice Department during the Jimmy Carter administration. Her scholarly work includes the recently published "Woman Lawyer: The Trials of Clara Foltz."
- Michèle Corash, partner at Morrison & Foerster. Corash was general counsel of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Presidents Carter and Ronald Reagan. She has been one of California's leading environmental lawyers during the past 30 years at MoFo.
- Margaret Crosby, staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. Crosby has been advocating for the civil rights of women (and men) at the ACLU since 1976, when she became the affiliate's first woman staff attorney. She is counted as a mentor by many heavy hitters in Northern California's public interest bar.
- Judge Nancy Davis, San Francisco Superior Court. In addition to being a role model for women who aspire to the bench, Davis was co-founder and longtime executive director of Equal Rights Advocates, which has been advocating for women and

girls since the early 1970s.

- Kathleen Fisher, partner at Calvo Fisher & Jacob. Fisher played a leadership role at Morrison & Foerster during the 1980s and '90s, doing stints as S.F. managing partner and firmwide litigation chair before joining her current firm. Fisher helped form Downtown Women Lawyers in the early 1980s, an ad hoc bar association for women that at one time claimed 200 members.
- Joanne Garvey, partner at Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton. Garvey was the first woman president of the Bar Association of San Francisco, the first woman on the State Bar Board of Governors, helped organize California Women Lawyers, and has played a leadership role in the American Bar Association.
- Joan Graff, president of The Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center. Graff has been heading up the Legal Aid Society for 30 years, and before that was a co-founder and staff attorney at Equal Rights Advocates.
- Nancy Hersh, partner at Hersh & Hersh. She became the first woman president of the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association in 1979, and has been a vigorous advocate on women's health care issues.
- Judy Johnson, former executive director, State Bar of California. Johnson played a leadership role at the State Bar for more than 25 years, first as head of the Committee of Bar Examiners, then as a Bar governor, later as chief prosecutor and, finally, as the organization's executive director for a decade.
- Herma Hill Kay, Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong professor of law, UC-Berkeley School of Law. Kay has been a member of the Berkeley Law faculty for 50 years, including dean for most of the 1990s. During the 1960s and '70s she testified before the California Legislature on the state's therapeutic abortion and no-fault divorce laws, and she co-authored the first law school casebook on sex-based discrimination.
- Justice Joyce Kennard, California Supreme Court. Kennard was the second woman ever appointed to the court, and was its sole female member for her first five years on the court.
- Judith McKelvey, dean emeritus, Golden Gate University School of Law. McKelvey became dean of Golden Gate in 1973, making her the second woman dean of an ABA-accredited law school. She also was the second woman president of the Bar Association of San Francisco and of California Women Lawyers.
- Retired Judge Mary Morgan, San Francisco Superior Court. Morgan became the nation's first openly lesbian judge when she was appointed to municipal court in 1981, and served as presiding judge in 1987 to 1988. She also did an eight-year stint on S.F. Superior Court, and is a former dean of the California Judicial College.
- Judith O'Brien, former Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati partner. O'Brien was the first woman partner at Wilson. She wrote the firm's maternity leave policy in the 1980s and served on the management committee in the '90s. She left the firm in 2001 to work as a venture capitalist and in-house attorney.
- Judge Marilyn Hall Patel, U.S. district court. Patel became the first female judge of the Northern District of California in 1980 and the district's first woman chief judge in 1997, a position she held for seven years. She previously served as a municipal court judge and INS hearing officer, and was a board member of the National Organization for Women during the 1960s and '70s.
- Eva Paterson, president, Equal Justice Society. Paterson worked for 26 years at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, including 13 as executive director, before taking her present position. During the 1980s she played a role in a groundbreaking sex- and race-discrimination suit against the S.F. Fire Department.
- Drucilla Ramey, dean of Golden Gate University School of Law. Ramey drove a variety of initiatives for women lawyers during her 17-year tenure as executive director of BASF. Ramey also has worked as executive director of the National Association of Women Judges and chairwoman of San Francisco's Commission on the Status of Women.
- Toni Rembe, retired partner, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. Rembe became Pillsbury's first woman partner in 1971 and was a longtime member of the firm's executive committee. The former head of Pillsbury's tax practice, she advanced the cause of women while serving on the boards of AT&T and other large corporations.
- Louise Renne, partner at Renne Sloan Holtzman Sakai. Renne transformed the role of city attorney while holding that position in San Francisco for 16 years. Renne is also a co-founder of California Women Lawyers and was its fourth president.
- Justice Kathryn Mickle Werdegarr, California Supreme Court. Werdegarr was the second woman appointed to the First District Court of Appeal and the third appointed to the California Supreme Court, where she has served the past 17 years. At Berkeley Law in the 1960s Werdegarr was the first woman editor of California Law Review. She also served in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division from 1962 to '63.



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