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100 Years of Women at Fordham Law

2018

100 Years of Women at Fordham Law: Timeline Brochure

Fordham Law School

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Clockwise from left rear: Loretta A. Preska '73, Cira Martinez '79, Irene K. Duffy '57, Renee R. Roth '69, Sherry Klein Heitler '76, and Jacqueline Winter Silberman '72

1988

Georgene Vairo '79 is the first woman appointed an associate dean at Fordham Law.

1989

Jacqueline Winter Silberman '72 becomes the first woman chief administrative judge of the Civil Court of New York.

1991

Frances Berko '44 receives the Fordham Law Alumni Medal of Achievement, the first woman Fordham Law graduate to receive the honor.

1992

Hon. Cira Martinez '79 becomes the first Hispanic woman appointed to a seat on the Bronx Family Court.

1993

Fordham Law Professor **Deborah A. Batts** (right) is nominated for a federal judgeship in the Southern District of New York. When sworn in in 1994 she becomes the first African-American, openly lesbian federal judge.



Patricia Hynes '66 becomes the first woman in a national law firm to become a named partner.



Patricia Hynes '66 in 2018

1994

Janice McKenzie Cole '79 is sworn in as United States attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, the first African-American woman to serve as a chief federal prosecutor.

2002

Judith Kaye, chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals, addresses faculty and students of Fordham Law School. She is awarded the Fordham-Stein Prize for her dedication to improving the administration of justice.



2004

Mary Daly '72 becomes the first Fordham Law woman graduate to be named dean of a law school (St. John's University School of Law).

2009

Hon. Loretta A. Preska '73 becomes chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. She is the first Fordham Law woman graduate to hold the position.

2011

Sheila Foster becomes the first African-American woman appointed to serve as vice dean at Fordham Law.



2014

The Law School moves to its current location, 150 West 62nd Street.

2016

The Fordham Law Alumni Association elects its first female president, **Sharon L. McCarthy '89**.



2018

Fordham Law celebrates 100 Years of Women.

Learn more at law.fordham.edu/100yearsofwomen

If you would like to make a gift to the Law School in honor of Fordham Law women, please contact the Development Office at 212-636-6529 or go to law.fordham.edu/giving/100YoW

#FLS100WMN



Marc Arkin



Cheryl Bader



Aditi Bagchi



Helen H. Bender



Susan Block-Lieb



Elizabeth Cooper



Deborah W. Denno



Janet Freilich



Caroline Gentile



Jennifer Gordon



Bernice Grant



Tanya K. Hernández



Tracy Higgins



Leah Hill



Clare Huntington



Rebecca Kysar



Robin A. Lenhardt



Elizabeth Maresca



Chi Mgbako



Jacqueline Nolan-Haley



Kimani Paul-Emile



Catherine Powell



Martha Rayner



Susan Scafidi



Beth Schwartz



Marcella Silverman



Gemma Solimene



Linda Sugin



Zephyr Teachout



Rachel Vorspan



100 YEARS OF WOMEN at Fordham Law

On September 12, 1918, the Fordham Law faculty voted to admit women to the Law School. Ten days later, the Law School's customary start-of-term ad in *The New York Times* announced "courses open to women." In the week before classes convened, eight women signed up to study alongside 312 men.

During the 2018–2019 school year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of women at Fordham Law, recognizing our amazing women alumni, faculty, and students.

Their achievements form a timeline of strength and fortitude.



Fordham Law women faculty, 2018



The New York Times, September 22, 1918

1918

Fordham Law faculty vote to admit women.

1920

In the 1920–1921 academic year, **Ella L. Ralston** receives the \$50 prize for having the highest grade average in the third-year class of the evening division. **Evelyn M. Maye** and **Rosemary C. Boylan** are elected secretary and treasurer, respectively, of the second-year afternoon class. The second-year evening class elects **Catherine P. O'Hale** secretary and **Marion F. McCaffrey** vice president. The first-year morning class elects **Virginia Bell** treasurer, and the first-year afternoon class elects **Virginia A. Reilly** secretary.

1921

Patricia A. O'Connell, **Mildred L. O'Connor**, and **Ella L. Ralston** become the first women to graduate from Fordham Law. Ralston receives the prize for the highest standing in the third-year evening class.

1922

Ella L. Ralston is the first Fordham Law woman to pass the New York State bar exam.

1924

Ruth Whitehead Whaley is the first African-American woman to graduate from Fordham Law. She graduates *cum laude*.



Ruth Whitehead Whaley

1925

Ruth Whitehead Whaley becomes the first African-American woman admitted to both the New York and North Carolina bars.



Class of 1926

1930

Seven women receive degrees with the Fordham Law Class of 1930, fewer than at any time since the pioneering Class of 1921.

1932

Fordham records its first known practice of Ladies' Day, during which some professors set aside a single class to call upon the women students, who are otherwise silent for the classroom term.



Fordham Law Review editorial board in the Woolworth building, circa 1935

1934

Fanny Holtzmann '22 defends the Romanov family in a libel lawsuit against MGM Studios for false portrayals of the Russian royal family in a movie about Rasputin.

1935

Eunice Carter '32 becomes the first African-American woman assistant district attorney in the state of New York.



1936

Mildred Fischer serves as editor-in-chief of the *Fordham Law Review*. She and classmate **Elizabeth Duffy** share top academic honors at graduation.

1938

Fordham Law graduate **Fortune Veccharellio** is crowned Queen of the Lady Lawyers by the Queens County Women's Bar Association, founded three years earlier because women were not eligible for membership in the regular Queens County Bar Association.

1946

Gloria Crowley Markuson is one of the three women in her Fordham Law class to graduate. Markuson's class had been the first to enter the new building at 302 Broadway. She goes on to author more than 200 volumes of the Matthew Bender legal-treatise series.



1947

Lucille Polk Buell graduates first in her class, the first woman to do so. She is hired by Hughes, Hubbard & Reed, becoming the first Fordham Law woman to break into the high-powered Wall Street ranks.

1951

Noreen McNamara '51 becomes one of the first woman associates hired by Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy.



1955

Fordham Law marks its 50th anniversary with no formal acknowledgment of its woman students.

1957

Irene K. Duffy '57 becomes one of New York state's first woman family court judges.



Irene K. Duffy '57 in 2017

1960

There are three women in Fordham's entering class. Census figures show that women make up less than 4 percent of all law school admissions.

1961

Forty years after the first graduation of women at Fordham Law School, the graduating class of 1961 brings to 500 the number of women who have taken degrees from Fordham Law. The Law School moves to 140 West 62nd Street.

500

1972

Karen Burstein '70 becomes the first woman elected to the New York State Senate from Long Island.



Karen Burstein '70

Hon. Lucille Polk Buell '47 becomes the first woman appointed to the Fordham Law faculty.

1977

Sheila Birnbaum becomes the first tenured woman professor at Fordham Law.



1978

Lucille Polk Buell '47 becomes the first woman justice of the New York State Supreme Court.

1979

Hon. Cira Martinez becomes Fordham Law's first Hispanic woman graduate.

1980

Hon. Marilyn H. Patel '63 is appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, the district's first woman judge.



Hon. Marilyn H. Patel '63 receiving the School's Lifetime Achievement Award from Dean Matthew Diller in 2015.

1981

Patricia Farren '73 becomes the first woman partner at Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP.

1984

Geraldine Ferraro '60 becomes the first woman vice presidential nominee.



Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro '60

