

# THE AMERICAN LAWYER

An ALM Publication

americanlawyer.com

SEPTEMBER 2017

## LIFETIME ACHIEVERS

*Our 14th annual awards honor lawyers who have had an extraordinary impact on society and their profession.*

### REGINA PISA | Goodwin

IN 1998, WHEN REGINA PISA WAS OFFERED THE JOB of chair and managing partner at her firm, Goodwin, she was hesitant to take it at first, because she enjoyed her M&A practice so much. She said she would consider it in 10 years—but her partners said Goodwin couldn't wait.

Goodwin was then a midsize Boston firm of 300 lawyers, focusing on complex litigation, real estate capital markets, financial services and private equity. The firm had lagging revenue, with its \$470,000 revenue per lawyer putting it behind several of its Boston-based rivals, despite profits per partner of \$730,000 that topped the list of Boston firms.

"I was elected with a mandate for change and told to be bold," Pisa says. At 42, she was one of the youngest people to ever chair an Am Law 100 firm, and one of the first women to do so. Under Pisa's charge to expand the firm, Goodwin grew by around 600 lawyers, five offices and three key practice areas. Over 16 years, Pisa took the firm from \$172.5 million in gross revenue to \$775 million in revenue and PPP of nearly \$1.75 million.

Through lateral hiring and a focused marketing budget, Pisa built key practices in technology, intellectual property and securities litigation and white-collar defense. She also established what she called "incubator practices," encouraging partners to pursue new market opportunities in an organized fashion. Goodwin's life sciences practice grew out of that model.

Pisa's focus on expanding in the United States, especially in California, and then internationally proved crucial. "It was really her vision that to thrive and succeed in the legal marketplace, we needed to be more than a regional firm," says David Hashmall, current chair of Goodwin. "She really fulfilled the strategy of becoming more of a presence nationally and internationally and maintaining our core values."

Pisa stepped down as managing partner in 2012 and as chair in 2014, returning to the practice of law. Her colleagues say her focus on people sets her apart. Pisa says being one of a small group of women in leadership roles actually helped her. "I always tell women,



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#### ADVICE TO YOUNG LAWYERS:

"Figure out what you love to do and do it with passion. Take charge of your career and don't wait to be offered a seat at the table. You have to take some risks. Be authentic."

don't be afraid to show compassion," she says. "That's a strong advantage."

Goodwin's partner, Laura Hodges Taylor, who has worked with Pisa since 1982, says Pisa kept a culture of collaboration intact as the firm grew.

"She called it collective entrepreneurship.

She came to that idea 10 years before you started reading about it in legal press. She was all about being outward-looking and client-facing," Hodges Taylor says, noting that Pisa transformed the firm with very little friction or displacement.

Pisa says she kept advice on the components of leadership from then-Massachusetts Chief Justice Margaret Marshall in mind: "Big things are the visionary stuff, the little things are the people and the middle stuff is the administrative stuff. Focus on the big stuff and the little stuff, and delegate the middle to others."

—MCKENNA MOORE

#### IF SHE WEREN'T A LAWYER:

"I think I would have gone to business school, and I would have gone into business in the sense of trying to create something new and different, whether a product or service, and working with people to achieve whatever that goal was."