

Women Lawyers Celebrate Women's History Month



By Attorney at Law Magazine

Christina Morgan

Christina Morgan is a shareholder at Vial Fotheringham LLP in Mesa, Arizona. With over 15 years of experience, Morgan focuses her legal practice on HOA law and complex civil litigation.

AALM: Tell us about your best female mentor.

CM: My first and most significant mentor was Ronne Nunley, my boss during my job between college graduation and law school. Ronne wrote federal and state grants that funded substance abuse prevention, including rallying community support for the first clean indoor air ordinances in eastern Kentucky—the heart of tobacco country. Each time I turned in a report, press release, or another document, she asked me about its overall purpose and the target audience, influencing my approach to writing today. I admire Ronne for showing me the power of writing and speaking with deliberate purpose. However, the biggest lesson I learned from

Ronne is that we are stronger together. Collaboration can lead to bigger and better results. Once Louisville passed its clean indoor ordinance, major cities followed suit nationwide.

AALM: Tell us about the female legal icon you admire most (real or fictional).



Christina Morgan of Vial Fotheringham LLP

CM: Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG). She was the second-ever female U.S. Supreme Court justice, champion for women's equal rights, and continues to be a notorious pop culture icon. I am equally impressed that RBG raised her daughter while she attended law school and her son while working as a professor. Having a legal career and a family is possible! I had the privilege of meeting RBG in law school. Ironically, it was the same week that I found out that I was pregnant with my son. I was full of mixed emotions about managing my studies and the uncertain future of my career. The timing of her visit could not have been better. As a short woman, I also love that she was full of fire and stood 5'1" tall.

AALM: Tell us about some of the challenges you've overcome in your career.

CM: Pregnancy and the first two years of my son's life coincided with the start of my legal career. It was a marathon. I carried my son during my second year of law school. I loaded up on classes before he arrived, knowing he would need my attention. I gave birth between my second and third year, and due to the timing, I turned down a summer internship with the U.S. Army JAG Corp. My son turned 1 right before I took the bar exam and started a judicial clerkship. A few weeks after he turned 2, I began working as an associate in one of the largest firms in my state. I wish I could say it was any easier as an associate. It became easier as my son became older, but I continue to do my best to balance having a family and a career.



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AALM: How do you support future generations of women lawyers?

CM: I advocate for mentorship programs within law firms, especially my own. It does not need to be formal or limited to mentoring associates. We have had female staff members go to law school who began their careers as file clerks. It starts with simple conversations about the tools they need to advance their legal careers. Mentors, including male colleagues, can offer women opportunities for careers in law.

AALM: Share a quote or philosophy that has inspired you.

CM: Being a lawyer is often tough; sometimes, we must remember to be kind to ourselves. My favorite quote from "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz is along that vein: "Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret."