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WOMEN

TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2019

Katharine A. Martin

Martin, who was recently in the spotlight as one of the lead lawyers advising Lyft Inc. as it went public in March, knew what she wanted to do from early on.

“I’ll give you a real flashback. When I was in high school,” Martin reminisced, “My dad worked for big tech companies. But then he eventually left to go work for a startup. And that startup went public in the 1970s. Wilson Sonsini represented the company and back then he would talk to me about these things, especially when I was heading off to college.”

After working for a law firm in high school where she was able to observe both litigation and corporate law, her course was set.

“It became very clear to me early in my career that I wanted to be a corporate lawyer as opposed to a litigator,” she said. “I made these decisions when I was a late teenager.”

Martin eventually went to Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati PC, the firm where her father’s company sought services some 40 years ago. Now, Martin engages in significant legal work counseling companies like Lyft and cloud-based survey generator SurveyMonkey Inc., who also went public in the last year with her



help. On top of that, she is chair of the board for the firm, which brings its own set of responsibilities.

“We have a great culture here, but obviously, as we transition from a first-to second-generation firm, and as the legal industry continues to evolve, we’re continuing to tap further into our innovation,” Martin said.

**WILSON SONSINI
GOODRICH & ROSATI PC
PALO ALTO**

Practice Type: Corporate

Those innovations include making automation and especially privacy a higher priority both within the firm and in its client-facing activities, as well as maintaining a high level of diversity on the payroll.

As Martin sees it, there’s always room for improvement.

“It’s always important that you reflect on what you love about your organization, and areas where you can continue to improve,” she said.

One of those areas is making her firm, and by example, other firms, better places for women to work.

“We obviously have to do a lot more, particularly with respect to law firms, professional services firms in general, for [women] to want to stay long term and become partners,” Martin observed. Her goal is to make the pursuit of a legal career an enriching one both personally and professionally for any woman lawyer.

“One of my focuses here at our firm is to make sure that that’s the case,” she said.

—Dan Heching