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Stephanie Scharf Awarded the 2015 Founders Award

Annual award presented by the Chicago Bar Association’s Alliance for Women

The Chicago Bar Association’s Alliance for Women has named Scharf Banks Marmor LLC founding partner [Stephanie Scharf](#), the recipient of its prestigious Founder’s Award for 2015. The award was presented on May 22, 2015, at the Alliance’s Annual Award Luncheon at the Standard Club in Chicago.

The prestigious Founder’s Award was established in 1994, and is given once a year to honor a lawyer who has significantly contributed to the advancement of women in the legal profession and whose career reflects the highest level of professional achievements, ethics and excellence.

“As a leader, advocate and entrepreneur, Stephanie has been a champion for advancing women in the legal profession throughout her career,” said [Theodore L. Banks](#), partner at Scharf Banks Marmor. “She also is a devoted wife and mother, and raised two successful children while rising to partnership at two of Chicago’s largest and most vaunted law firms. Three years ago, we formed Scharf Banks Marmor LLC, and today we are the largest majority-women-owned law firm in this city, and one of the largest in the country.

Banks continued, “as one of her children noted, one of Stephanie’s great skills is making others around her better. She demonstrates this every day, and we are honored to have her as a partner and thrilled that she is this year’s recipient of this distinguished award.”

[Sarah R. Marmor](#), partner at Scharf Banks Marmor, lauds Scharf for being unfailingly supportive of women lawyers, both at the firms where she has worked and more broadly through the many organizations, commissions and boards on which she has served.

“Stephanie has demonstrated great courage in her career and has served as a voice for women in the working world,” says Marmor. “She has spoken up, asked the hard questions, and crunched the numbers at every stage of her career – challenging the status quo in the big firms, running annual surveys for a variety of organizations, and revealing to the world the dispiriting fact that women do not advance in the law in the numbers and in the way that they should. But for all that, she also maintains the positive belief that the future will be better for women as they take the reins of their work lives and strike out in ever braver ways.”

Scharf focuses her legal practice on representing corporate clients on a wide range of complex matters, including contract disputes, insurance coverage for corporate policyholders, class actions, collaboration agreements, distribution and supply agreements, indemnity agreements, product liability defense, environmental torts and employment defense.

In three decades of representing clients in U.S. federal and state courts, Scharf has tried civil and criminal jury and bench trials, has taken the lead in the pre-trial, trial and appellate phases of litigation, and has overseen the settlement of multiple commercial disputes and complex tort litigation. She frequently counsels companies on ways to avoid litigation and mitigate risks at the product or enterprise level.

Scharf is one of the nation's leading lawyers for the advancement of women in the profession. A former President of the National Association of Women Lawyers, a current Commissioner of the ABA Commission on Women and a member of the Advisory Board of DirectWomen, she founded the NAWL Annual Survey of Women in Law Firms, the National Survey of Women's Initiatives, and the first-ever Survey of Women as Lead Counsel in Litigation. Among many other activities, she designed and chaired NAWL's first General Counsel Institute, its Supreme Court Committee, and its Summit for Best Practices for Advancing Women in Law. [For a copy of Stephanie's remarks, click here.](#)