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## *Stephanie Scharf Recognized for Founding NAWL General Counsel Institute*

October 6, 2014. In a story recapping the founding of the General Counsel Institute (“GCI”) held annually by the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), attorneys Mimi MacDonald, Vivien Naim and Caitlin Kepple described the central role played by partner [Stephanie Scharf](#), a former President of NAWL, who conceived and then chaired the first GCI, held in New York City in 2005. As described in an article posted on Above the Law:

Stephanie Scharf, now a partner at Scharf Banks Marmor LLC, founded the General Counsel Institute (“GCI”). Scharf targeted the meeting to senior corporate counsel who had the goal of advancing to the role of chief legal officer. She recognized the need for in-house attorneys to build top-tier professional and management skills in a supportive and interactive learning environment and to learn from experienced officers and directors about the points of pressure and success for general counsels.

Together with NAWL President Lorraine Koc, then General Counsel and EEO Officer at Deb Shops, Inc. (now Senior Counsel at SugarHouse Casino) and NAWL President Elect, Cathy Fleming, then a partner at Edwards and Angell, LLP (now a partner at Hodgson Russ, LLP), Scharf quickly formed a planning committee which consisted of themselves, as well as Carol Basri, then adjunct professor at University of Pennsylvania School of Law (now adjunct professor at Fordham University School of Law), Caroline K. Cheng, Management Principal and Associate General Counsel at Deloitte LLP, Dorian Denburg, then Chief Rights-of-Way Counsel for BellSouth Corporation (now General Attorney for AT&T Services, Inc.), Michele Speller-Thurman, then a partner at Jenner & Block (now Senior Counsel at Abbott Laboratories) and Betty-Lynn White (now an Adjunct and Area Chair for the University of Phoenix and Adjunct Professor at Albertus Magnus College).

The Committee arranged plenary and workshop sessions to foster frank discussions about what it takes to be promoted and provide the means to improve skills and knowledge in a collegial atmosphere. They developed an innovative CLE program with opportunities to learn and network with other senior legal and business professionals and featured speakers Peter Harvey, then Attorney General of New Jersey, Catherine R. Kinney, then Co-Chief Operating Officer of the New York Stock Exchange, and Carol Robles-Román, Deputy Mayor, New York City. GCI met with rave reviews!

For more about the history of GCI and NAWL’s mission, [click here](#).