

WOW
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“Nelson Mandela showed me that lawyers could be powerful catalysts for social change. I wanted to become one.”

Who inspired you to get into your profession?

“I was born and raised in South Africa. I was in 10th grade when Nelson Mandela was released from prison after 27 years in captivity. Before he became a political activist, he was a lawyer. I was inspired by his courage, his superhuman capacity for forgiveness and his commitment to the welfare and betterment of the downtrodden, the weak and the disenfranchised.”

What were your childhood ambitions?

“When I was 5, I wanted to be a beauty queen. When I was 9, I wanted to marry a prince, like Princess Diana. When I was 13, I wanted to be the editor of a glamorous women’s magazine. But when I became old enough to realize the immense possibilities for positive change in people’s lives that a career in law could offer, I was hooked.”

What do you think women bring to the workplace?

“We should always keep in mind that women bring to the workplace those same qualities that are valued in their male counterparts – motivation, intelligence, knowledge, skill, professional competence, talent, experience, wisdom and personality. In addition, women bring to the workplace compassion, a collaborative spirit, and a common sense and ‘can do’ attitude honed by their ability to juggle career and family.”

What are some obstacles you faced in the workplace?

“Despite the huge inroads women have made in the legal profession, it remains, to some extent, an old boys’ club. Although more women than men currently attend law school, only 35 percent of lawyers in the United States are women, and only 5 percent of the partners in law firms are women.”