



2020 Ones to Watch: Leslie Berkoff, Moritt Hock & Hamroff LLP

August 18, 2020 - Spotlights

Name: Leslie Berkoff

Company: Moritt Hock & Hamroff LLP

Title: Partner

Education: JD

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game-changer” in the advancement of your career?

Around 20 years ago I was fortunate to be retained by several large commercial real estate owners/operators in the Brooklyn area to act as debtors’ counsel in a series of complex commercial real estate Chapter 11 cases. There was significant litigation with certain non-traditional and hard money lenders. After years of contested hearings and appeals, I was able to successfully reorganize the properties; some through straight traditional restructuring and others via a contested sale process. These cases really honed my restructuring and litigation skills and gave me great courtroom and trial experience. They also served to create a name for me within the real estate restructuring community.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

I hold leadership positions in the American Bar Association and New York State Bar Association. I have also played a significant role in the expansion and growth of the International Women’s Insolvency Restructuring Confederation having served as international chair and an active board member. This organization provides educational programming as well as professional development and business development opportunities for women in the restructuring field. Finally, I am also a proud member of the Imagine Awards Committee, which is a Long Island/New York City based initiative designed to recognize not for profit organizations and provide them with grants and enhance community awareness of their ingenuity.

What led you to your current profession?

I had the good fortune and foresight to take a restructuring course during law school from an expert in the field. This led to my clerking for a federal magistrate and thereafter serving as a clerk for one of the renowned bankruptcy judges in the Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of New York. My exposure to this field led to a love of bankruptcy law as I learned the area from jurists who had a passion for the law and the Bankruptcy Code.

What do you like most about your job?

I am a people person, enjoy the opportunity to analyze, argue and negotiate. I am a former drama club kid so the ability to perform is in my blood. Being a lawyer who is in court frequently is a natural progression. Bankruptcy lawyers by trade are deal makers and so that also aligns with my interest and bankruptcy is a unique area of the law which allows me to be a jack of all trades. On any given day I am a restructuring lawyer, corporate lawyer, and/or a real estate lawyer. I have the ability to draft, negotiate, argue and present, as well as try cases. Moreover, I have the chance learn about a host of different industries and businesses and have an impact on people's livelihoods.

What can our political leaders do to increase equality in the workplace?

I believe the first step would be for politicians to lead by example in how they choose to hire, engage with others and promote or support legislation.

Who or what inspires you?

Female lawyers who have achieved senior levels at their firms and have gained recognition in their field, and who not only act as role models for future generations but who also find the time to pay it forward.

If your life were made into a movie, what actor would you want to portray you?

According to friends and family it would be Meryl Streep from "The Devil Wears Prada" – only taken down a couple of notches erring on the side of respected rather than feared.

What social media platform do you use the most professionally?

LinkedIn is my primary platform for professional communication.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540