

Q: Why do you think it is important to celebrate International Women's Day/Month?

A: We need to celebrate International Women's Day and Month until there is true career equality for women in terms of opportunity and pay, not just in business, but in all other areas of life such as education, government, sports and the arts.

Q: What was your journey to get to where you are now?

A: I broke my neck in a car accident when I was a young litigator at Baker McKenzie (BM). I was lucky but the experience has shaped my philosophy that time is our most precious commodity, and we must use it thoughtfully.

I saw a quote recently in Alain De Botton's book "How Proust can change your life" which said: "Just think of how many projects, travels, studies it—our life— hides from us, made invisible by our laziness which certain of a future, delays them incessantly".

With that in mind I left BM and started one of the first litigation boutiques. Managing the firm and running cases was challenging, but the several years I spent there were hugely rewarding on many levels as I stood in the shoes of clients running businesses and came to really understand what they needed from their litigators.

Recently, I chaired a panel of General Counsel including Stonebridge's Ryan Thorne, Siemens Energy's Suber Akther and ED&F Man's Catherine Odigie entitled "litigation post pandemic-the client's perspective" during Legal Business' Commercial Litigation Conference 2021. What the GC panel said is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLsXXTj6Cjo&t=2431s>.

It makes interesting viewing. One GC said they didn't want to hear their lawyer say they were not good at tech or with numbers. They all wanted clear advice including on certainty and price not just paperwork. This underlined the importance of understanding a client's needs which has been an important driver of my career.

Q: What challenges have you faced as a woman in the industry, and how have you overcome them?

A: Don't let others live your life or write your narrative and don't live in an echo chamber of your own views and experiences. I recently completed the CEDR mediation course and it was a brilliant reminder of how important it is to give people time to express their views, ideas and feel listened to. Focusing only on content and process can mean people don't feel heard and subsequently disengage. That is a shame, not least because the rush to implement the first solution may mean other options remain unexplored which might have been a win-win for all.



JANE COLSTON

Partner
Brown Rudnick


WWL 2022 says: "Jane Colston is a top-class lawyer who garners strong support thanks to her great expertise in high-value commercial banking, contract and tort disputes, among others". WWL "Asset Recovery Lawyer of the Year" for 2020 and 2021. Chambers 2022 states Jane Colston is "a fantastic lawyer and brilliant strategic thinker". Legal 500 2022 states "Jane Colston is a stand-out commercial, and fraud litigator."

Jane Colston is a Supervising Solicitor and a CEDR Accredited Mediator.


**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DAY**

ThoughtLadies that inspire





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Q: What advice would you give to other women in the industry building their careers?

A: Don't be afraid to blaze your own trail, look and plan ahead, create opportunities for yourself and others. The resilient learn new things and learn quickly including from mistakes. Three tips?

a. Look after yourself mentally and physically (I do weekly yoga with my Brown Rudnick colleagues).

b. Give support to others.

c. If you find yourself in a position where you can't see a path to promotion or more opportunity, don't be afraid to ask for help and/or change paths.

Q: What women have supported or inspired you throughout your career and why?

A: I have had great support from an executive coach, Sally Ann Jones of Riva Jones. I recently enjoyed recording a podcast with Sally Ann where we discussed resilience and how to build it up. We talked about seven characteristics of a resilient person namely: being positive and seeing possibility in a difficult situation; confidence in your skills; prioritisation (identifying and paying attention to what is most important to you); creativity; connecting with other people; having a disciplined approach; and finally, trying out new and different strategies.

It's possible to "strengthen" a weak resilience "muscle" and build better habits. I asked Sally Ann in the podcast how one would identify which resilience muscle needed work. She recommended creating a scale to represent each of the above characteristics. For example, take confidence - the scale would go from doubting your ability to cope with a situation at one end to believing that you can deal effectively with a challenge at the other end. If you look at creativity, the weaker muscle would stick with familiar ideas and look for the right answer, but the stronger muscle would come up with lots of ideas and possibilities. If you look at connection, the weaker muscle would be trying to solve things alone and finding it really quite hard to reach out to other people but the person with the stronger muscle would reach out to others for help and support. If you can gauge where you sit on the scale, then you will know if that particular resilience muscle needs strengthening.

We then spoke about how you might "strengthen" a weak resilience muscle or build better habits.



Regarding prioritisation for example, Sally Ann asked me to rank a number of attributes in order of importance to me (i.e what I looked for in my career) namely: contentment; independence; self-development; influence; privacy; money; security; challenge; developing others; competence; and duty/orderliness (this is not my order by the way!) I found it really helpful to work out what makes me jump out of bed in the morning (challenge and self-development are two of my drivers). Maybe try it for yourself to see what your priorities are.

To listen to the podcast, go to- <https://bit.ly/3huahCK> #womenshistorymonth

Q: 6. It's 2022, how can we move forward in the industry to raise awareness against bias and take further action for equality?

A: We all need to talk about the issues faced by women in the industry and barriers to equality openly and often, until they are no longer an issue. At a firm level, there is lots going on! Brown Rudnick will be hosting several events throughout the month of March to celebrate Women's history month, which highlight the accomplishments of women leaders in the legal profession.

On International Women's Day, Brown Rudnick's DEI Learning Series will feature experts and thought leaders discussing topics related to diversity and inclusion. We are hosting a fireside chat and film discussion with former Brown Rudnick Partner Mary Mazzio, an award-winning documentary film director and former Olympic athlete. Many of Mazzio's films focus on diversity issues and women's rights. Her most recent film, "A Most Beautiful Thing," chronicles the story of the first African American public high school rowing team in the U.S., comprised of young men - many of whom were in rival gangs - from the West Side of Chicago.

On March 17, the Firm's popular "Women in Business" (WiB) series which hosts events throughout the year featuring inspirational businesswomen speaking about their careers, will present a conversation with Ayse Lowe, global head of origination at Bench Walk Advisors, a litigation funding firm that provides funding for commercial claims internationally.

Brown Rudnick will also launch a new podcast SERIES, which I will host, based on the WiB series. The first two episodes will feature Sally Ann and Countess Alexandra Tolstoy, a British equine adventurer, broadcaster and businesswoman.

The Firm's "New Partner Spotlight" series, which highlights recently elevated BR lawyers in Q&A profiles, will continue with new instalments featuring Tia Chatterjee Wallach, Shari Dwoskin and Ruth Arkley. They are part of Brown Rudnick's most diverse new partner class in recent memory.

The Brown Rudnick women in history page can be found [here](#).

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