



Brinkley Morgan Names Woman Managing Partner

by **Monika Gonzalez Mesa**

Brinkley Morgan attorney Roberta G. Stanley has secured a title that has remained elusive for women at many established law firms: managing partner.

Stanley, who specializes in marital and family law, will lead the 40-year-old full-service firm's long-term strategic plan, including marketing and growth initiatives, and oversee the general management of the firm. Philip J. Morgan, who has served as the firm's managing partner for nearly 20 years, will continue as operations manager for a transition period, Stanley said, in part because of her workload.

Stanley, who was hired by Brinkley Morgan as a partner in 1996 to establish the firm's family law practice, is credited with expanding that practice to include eight attorneys at two offices in Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton. The firm, with a total staff of 52, has 22 attorneys—17 partners and 5 associates. The firm is planning to expand further in the near future, but Stanley declined to give details other than to say that the firm is recruiting.

Stanley said her goal is to make sure the firm has some long-term sustained

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growth. She also said she wants to continue to encourage and support younger partners and associates. "I have mentored lawyers and taken them from associates to equity partners," she said.

Stanley has been on the firm's management committee, helping make decisions about recruitment and partnership. Partners are rotated on and off the management committee, and the managing partner, as chair, makes all final decisions, Stanley said.

The firm is planning in March to move its Fort Lauderdale office to the Regions Building at Broward Boulevard and Third Avenue. The office space will be smaller because law firms don't

need the same amount of file and paper space they once did, she said.

Stanley is a fellow and past president of the Florida chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and specializes in complex marital and family law cases, including the preparation and enforcement of intricate prenuptial and postnuptial agreements, dissolutions of marriages dealing with equitable distribution, business valuations, taxation issues, alimony, child support, parental responsibility, paternity and adoption issues.

In 2015, just 18 percent of equity partners in law firms were women and they earned 80 percent of a typical male partner's compensation, according to the National Association of Women Lawyers. That same year, 25 Am Law 200 firms reported that they had a single manag-

ing partner; of those, only 18 percent were women.

In a profession where men outnumber women as managing partners, Stanley attributed her rise to a combination of hard work, mentoring others, office respect for others regardless of position and having a supportive spouse who always encourages and celebrates her success. She said it's important to have a spouse who is understanding about the demands of the legal profession.

"I have a lot of support from my husband and my family and for a woman I think that's important," Stanley said. "To be a lawyer is a lot of hard work, a lot of hours balancing between family and the law. ... I'm very lucky to have that."

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