



Women Lawyers: Rewriting the Rules

Mona Harrington

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The very presence of women in the law—normal as it may seem to us today—signals revolutionary change in a social order that for centuries entrusted control over its rules to men. Mona Harrington examines both the problems women meet when they claim equal authority as rule makers, and the impact of new perspectives and issues that women bring with them into the profession.

On the basis of more than one hundred interviews with women lawyers, judges, law school professors, and law students, and through the stories of their daily experiences, Harrington pinpoints and analyzes the key factors holding women back in a profession still dominated by males—among them the “men’s club” ambience, the focus on billable hours, sexual harassment and the inequality it perpetuates, lingering unequal division of labor at home, and hostile media images of women in positions of power.

She shows us what life is like for women lawyers in practice today and how their dilemmas reflect the social issues of our time. She gives us the voices of women who have adapted to the cultural codes of corporate law and women who have broken them; women who have successfully balanced their professional and private lives and women who feel trapped by the combination of long hours at the office and full responsibility at home. She introduces us to women in new and alternative firms, on the faculties of small public law schools, in in-house legal departments, in prosecutors’ offices and courtrooms—women who are devising new rules and legal theories to bring about change.

Women Lawyers is must reading for every woman in the midst of—or contemplating—a career in the law, and for the men who work with them.

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