



# Women's History Month Attorney Spotlight: Elizabeth Aboulafia

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Elizabeth Aboulafia is a partner in the firm's Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights department practicing in the areas of bankruptcy and restructuring as well as construction claims resolution and related complex commercial contract matters. She frequently advises companies in financial distress as debtors in Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases and out-of-court restructurings and workouts in a wide range of industries. In addition to company-side representations, Elizabeth has experience with all constituents in bankruptcy cases and workouts, frequently representing creditors, creditors' committees, equity holders and other key business stakeholders in debtor-creditor matters. Elizabeth also has extensive experience in the construction industry, and she regularly assists contractors to resolve claims and other contract disputes through alternative dispute resolution proceedings and/or litigation in bankruptcy court and state court. Learn more about Elizabeth Aboulafia through our Women's History Month Spotlight:

## **Who/What has inspired you the most in your career?**

My inspiration comes from growing up in a house where my parents always taught me and my sister that our potential was limitless, and that with hard work and persistence we could achieve whatever we set out to do. This philosophy has kept me motivated throughout my academic and professional career. As I have become more experienced and involved in various professional organizations in the restructuring and turnaround industry, including Turnaround Management Association and the New York Institute of Credit, I have had the opportunity to meet and learn from amazing women who have overcome adversity and achieved great success in their lives, and their stories serve as an ongoing source of inspiration.

## **What has been your greatest achievement(s)?**

My greatest achievement has been becoming a mother to triplets and less than two years later being voted into the partnership of the Firm as one of the Firm's youngest equity partners at the time. Work-life balance is very important to me, and I am proud of the fact that I was able to demonstrate my commitment to the Firm and continue to grow professionally during a time when motherhood was particularly demanding.

## **What does Women's History Month mean to you?**

I view Women's History Month as an opportunity to celebrate the trailblazing women who made stories like mine possible, and also to reflect on what still needs to be done. It is amazing to see younger women growing up in a

time when gender inequality may not impact their daily living in any significant way. While this is a testament to the extraordinary progress that has been made over time, it also highlights the need for younger women to be educated about the history of gender inequality and the reality that there is still much more that needs to be done to promote women into leadership roles and to keep them there.

**Why do you think diversity in the workplace is so important?**

I believe that a diverse workplace contributes to a culture that promotes happier and more productive employees. With the benefit of different perspectives, there are greater opportunities for learning and innovation, both of which I think are key to the sustainable success of any business.

**What progress have you seen on gender equality in your life and work?**

During the fifteen years that I have been practicing law, I have observed a gradual increase in the number of women in leadership positions, including on the bench and among the bar. I have also observed demonstrable change in the way that family leave (formerly known as “maternity leave”) has been transformed to better align with the modern family. In my career in particular, I frequently practice in the construction industry, a traditionally male-dominated field. Over the course of the last ten years, I have seen greater receptivity to the contributions of women, and it finally seems as if the gender barriers are starting to come down.

**What qualities about you as a woman have contributed the most to a successful career?**

As a full-time working mother of three, multi-tasking, time management, empathy and a problem-solving attitude are among my most important attributes. I find that these same qualities have helped to me have success in a profession where attorneys are routinely juggling to ensure that they can best serve all client’s needs and provide effective counsel.

**What advice do you have for any women starting off in their career?**

The best advice I can offer is to be true to yourself. It is great to learn from the experience of our mentors and role models, but do not feel pressured to fit into someone else’s mold. You will be more successful – and fulfilled – if you are authentically you.

## Attorneys

- Elizabeth M. Aboulafia