

Litigation leader devotes time to others



Though Jean-Marie Crahan's primary focus is winning litigation, she also invests her time in mentoring women and minorities, and giving back through volunteer work.

As a partner at Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan LLP, Crahan chairs the firm's insurance coverage group and is a co-chair of the e-discovery group. She litigates matters in state, federal and appellate courts involving complex litigation and insurance coverage.

Since joining GSH almost eight years ago, Crahan has organized team-building exercises, a role she took on as the local partner in charge of litigation.

"I think it's very important for the people who work in the same group to use a team approach," she said. "You tend to get better quality work. People care more. Their best efforts come out because everyone wants to succeed and I believe succeeding as a group is more satisfying."

Crahan took some time away from the legal field to raise her children but was able to work her way back into the field and continues to rise, said Jerry Gonzalez, an equity partner at the firm.

"I think that is something that is noteworthy because it is remarkably hard to do," he said. "She has taken on a double burden that often falls on the shoulder of many women and she did it in a way that was remarkable to me."

Gonzalez described Crahan as a litigation leader in Milwaukee. "She has been instrumental in making sure there is good communication," he said. "She interacts with litigators across the country."

Crahan also serves in a leadership role with the National Association of Minority and Women's Insurance Alliance. She became co-chairwoman of the organization a little more than two years ago.

The purpose of the group, she said, is to provide an opportunity for minority- and women-owned businesses "to sit at the table" because they tend to be overlooked by the corporate world.

"I think the struggle is not that people aren't willing to provide the opportunities," she said, "but the networking that has occurred in the past, that still goes on today, still focuses on some traditional conferences and things like that where you might not find as many women- and minority-owned firms."

Crahan also serves on the board of directors for Journey House and helped her husband launch Bean Head Farm, a nonprofit that grows produce in Waukesha County for food pantries.

"I want to do what I can," she said, "to make the little world around me a better place."

— Katherine Michalets