

Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly recognizes exceptional women attorneys who have made tremendous professional strides and demonstrated great accomplishments in the legal field. Smith Duggan Buell & Rufo partner Barbara Hayes Buell was one of those attorneys who received Top Women of Law honors in recognition of her many outstanding achievements.



Julie G. O'Neill



Partner

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GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

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s a partner in Morrison & Foerster's privacy and data security group, Julie G. O'Neill draws on her diverse work and life experiences to help clients with cutting-edge issues at the intersection of privacy and consumer protection laws.

A Peace Corps volunteer before entering law school, O'Neill's passion was to work in law or policy for a global organization.

"I wanted to see the world and didn't have the resources to do that on my own, so I applied to the Peace Corps," she says. "There, I was exposed to different aid agencies, and realized if I wanted to do something meaningful in development it was important to have an advanced degree."

Realizing a law degree would enable her to explore careers in which she could make a difference, she applied to law schools and started at Georgetown University when she returned to the United States.

In her first legal job, O'Neill worked on a joint program between the Federal Trade Commission and the antitrust division of the Department of Justice aimed at

helping European countries with antitrust and consumer protection authorities as they transitioned to market economies. She later worked in the FTC's New York office on consumer protection enforcement matters.

At Morrison & Foerster, O'Neill represents national consumer-facing companies, advising them on their privacy obligations, helping them navigate and comply with ever changing consumer protection laws, and defending them if they are the subject of FTC investigations.

Aside from working with clients, O'Neill views her work mentoring junior associates and helping them succeed as among her most important and rewarding duties.

"I believe our talent is our most important asset," she says. "It's important to me to help make sure everyone's doing okay, getting what they need from the firm, and getting the type of work they want."

She also has some go-to advice to empower young associates to help themselves too: "Take initiative, educate yourself, and find ways to add value." — Teri Saylor