



Rachel Passaretti-Wu
Partner



My credentials: BA summa cum laude, State University of New York at Binghamton; JD, New York University School of Law

My work location: New York, New York

Words I live by: The future is female.

My personal philosophy: Science matters.

What I'm reading now: *Epidemiology in Medicine* by Charles H. Hennekens, M.D., Dr. P.H. and Julie E. Buring, Sc.D.

My favorite charity: ACLU

My interests: Photography, jewelry making, and crafting

My family: Husband (Robert), 2 daughters (Ruby & Roxy), dog (Coco), and fish (The Powerpuff Girls)

Company: Dechert LLP

Industry: Law

Company Headquarters: New York, New York/Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CEO: Henry N. Nassau



In Her Own Words ...

My Experiences in STEM

Interestingly, until I began to reach the highest levels in my career, I didn't experience any gender gap. This was a blessing, because I didn't perceive any limitations and thought my potential was boundless. Although I've noticed some obstacles recently, I draw on my years climbing the ladder, and simply smash through any glass ceilings.

I think this is an immensely exciting time to be female, as awareness around diversity and inclusion, and a strong focus on women, is growing. I'd encourage women in STEM to continue to lift other women up, so we can increase diversity and raise the profiles of women at the highest levels.

Moving Women Forward in STEM

One way to increase diversity is to foster mentorships. After all, "You cannot be what you cannot see."

Having role models and mentors is a key way to support career advancement for all people. Our law firm has a program called Sponsorship and Sustained Support (SASS) to help women associates navigate the path to partnership, which significantly improves the playing field through female mentorship. In the five years prior to its implementation, 18 percent of lawyers promoted to partner were women. In the five years since its implementation, 31 percent have been women.

Bringing Down the Barriers

We have systemic and often unconscious biases, which impact our thinking, mindset, and behaviors. In addition, while women are under-represented in STEM fields, there are even fewer women of color to be found there. By drawing more awareness to these issues, we can shine a light on our biases, and help foster inclusive and diverse communities.

The STEM World is Changing

STEM is becoming more mainstream and popular, which is really exciting. Schools, and society in general, are changing in ways that encourage more and more girls to participate in STEM-related subjects from a young age. This, hopefully, will encourage more young women to enter STEM careers and pave the way for more female leaders in STEM moving forward.

In light of the unfortunate Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of science is suddenly top of mind for everyone. Hopefully, a "silver lining" of our current situation may be a greater awareness of the critical need for investment in, and support for, STEM industries.

Women in STEM 5 Years Out

I'd like to think women will be running the world in five years!