

# Chemistry to chair: Andrea Reid's trailblazing journey in IP



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In the halls of [Boston University](#), a young chemist named [Andrea Reid](#) discovered a passion for science that would shape her future in profound ways.

Her journey from the lab to the forefront of [Dechert's](#) IP practice is a tale of persistence and inquisitiveness.

Reid's journey began with a degree in chemistry, a field where she often found herself the sole woman among her colleagues. "I was the only woman in the course at the time—my classmates were like brothers," she recalls.

Her work in pharmaceuticals, delving into drug discovery and natural product synthesis, sparked a curiosity in medicinal chemistry.

This led her to balance full-time employment with the demands of a master's degree, a testament to her dedication and resilience.

After graduating with a masters degree, Reid joined a global biotechnology company and was introduced to patent law, where she initially worked as a medicinal chemist and eventually became an inventor on several patents.

Reid was asked to help more formally with the patenting process and jumped at the opportunity.

"I am a firm believer in saying 'yes' to new opportunities," Reid emphasises. "Through this exciting experience, I was introduced to IP attorneys and patent law."

"I have never looked back!" Reid exclaims.

Her path to becoming co-chair of Dechert's IP practice began when she joined the firm as a partner and started the patent counselling group in Boston.

**WIPR: Can you share how you have found navigating a sector that has historically been male-dominated?**

**Reid:** While there were occasional challenges early on, I did not let them define me. Instead, they made me a much stronger chemist, lawyer and person.

I learned both life and professional skills, as well as how to advocate for myself and manage my own career.

Importantly, the biggest supporters I've had throughout my career have been men. They've opened doors for me, given me opportunities to work on important matters and offered invaluable lessons and advice.

My advice is the same for both women and men. Say yes to new opportunities.

Saying 'no' won't get a person anywhere in their career. Be observant. Notice when doors open and be willing to walk through them, even if the other side is unknown. And always be willing to go that extra mile or two or three.

Leaders with interesting projects look first to the people who have shown the willingness to take the initiative (and the extra work). Be one of those people.

## **What was a challenge you encountered early in your career and how did you overcome it?**

I would say the biggest challenge that I faced early in my IP career was similar to that of many working mothers-balancing it all.

I was the mother of two young children while attending law school at night and working full-time. Juggling my professional responsibilities, studies and personal life was difficult, but the experience helped me hone many life skills.

I was fortunate to have a terrific support system of family and friends.

One of the many life skills I learned was to ask for help. I've always been a "do it yourself" person, but with only 24 hours in the day, I had no choice but to reach out for assistance.

If there is one piece of advice I would give to someone just starting out, it is don't hesitate to ask for help. It's okay to ask.

Interestingly enough, one of the most stressful moments during this time period was when I received a call from my daycare centre that my then four-year-old very precocious daughter was expelled from school.

Having childcare completely pulled out from under us, we had to work through a solution very quickly. I ended up hiring a nanny who was absolutely wonderful, and the whole situation ended up being a blessing in disguise.

## **Do you feel there is enough support for women entering into an IP or STEM career?**

I'm seeing a surge of females in STEM. Young women have more opportunities and female role models who paved the way; our efforts are working.

We see a greater number of young women succeeding and indeed surpassing their male counterparts in school.

We also see a trend towards more female law school graduates and junior associates.

It will take time for these young women to become our future leaders in STEM and IP, but I do believe that equal representation is in our future.

One of the most important strategies for supporting women in STEM and IP is fostering inclusion. It is important for everyone to be given equal opportunities to learn and grow in their careers.

Those unique "out of the box" matters teach us the most and build our professional experience. It's critical to ensure equal opportunity for all personnel to work on these important areas.

The objective is to increase female representation at all levels, especially at the leadership level.

When younger women see more experienced women working in STEM and IP careers, and especially in leadership positions, it helps them to visualise themselves in similar roles.

Representation fosters the “like likes like” aspect and enables others to see their aspirations are quite possible.

**Looking ahead, what do you see for the future of diversity and inclusion in the IP industry, and what role do you hope to play in shaping that future?**

The future equality of diversity and inclusion in the IP industry is coming.

We’re seeing more and more diversity in terms of the younger people in STEM fields—at this point, it is just a waiting game as these young folks in STEM bubble up into the IP field and leadership.

I hope to continue to shape that future by serving as a role model for all members of my team, leading by example and creating an inclusive environment.

I strive to ensure that every member of my team receives the opportunity to work on terrific projects.

<https://www.worldipreview.com/diversity/chemistry-to-chair-andrea-reids-trailblazing-journey-in-ip>