Maryland Carey Law

Volume 2012 Article 23

10-1-2012

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Recommended Citation
Stutz, Christine (2012) "Philanthropy Spotlight," *Maryland Carey Law*: Vol. 2012, Article 23.
Available at: http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/mcl/vol2012/iss1/23

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Philanthropy Spotlight

By Christine Stutz

Black Shares her 'Secrets to Success'

In the nearly 25 years since she graduated cum laude from the University of Maryland Carey School of Law, **Laura Black '88** seems to have been in perpetual motion. And she shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

After working as an associate in a large Baltimore law firm, Black—along with partner Mark Neumann, also Class of '88—launched one of the nation's first temporary legal staffing companies, Attorneys Per Diem (now called Special Counsel). After the firm was acquired by a public company in 1995, she served as CEO of the legal staffing division. The work she did to drive business helped propel the company to become one of the nation's largest providers of legal counsel.

In 2000, Black moved away from the legal profession to assume lay leadership roles in several nonprofits, including Network 2000 and The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. She now channels her considerable energies into a website, realwomenwin.com, aimed at empowering career women.

While Black highly values her legal education, she says, "There's a business part of me that I needed to actualize." This summer, she will embark on the business of publishing with her first book, *Big Butts, Fat Thighs and Other Secrets to Success: Empowering Women to Be Real in Business and in Life*.

The paperback, available in print and electronically, urges women to seek advancement by being exactly who they are, instead of trying to be someone they imagine others expect them to be. "I find that often, women can sabotage our own success," she says. Sometimes women hold themselves back with self-defeating thoughts about their own abilities, she says, and don't do a good job of promoting their abilities and accomplishments. The "big butts" in the book's title are a metaphor, says Black, for the insecurities that can prevent women from fulfilling their potential.

While her passion and entrepreneurial drive have taken Black from venture to venture, her commitment to the School of Law has never been stronger. An active alumnus, Black has been a longtime donor and member of the Board of Visitors, and she returns to campus each year to speak to students as part of the school's Women, Leadership & Equality Program.

"I love speaking with the students in the Program. I feel such pride in witnessing the high caliber of our students. Their passion, energy, intelligence, and motivation are inspiring," says Black.

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>
> —Laura Black '88

"This year, I am especially honored to match the Class of 2012's gift to the law school. By participating in this gift, our students experience firsthand the importance of philanthropy. It is my hope that throughout their lives, they continue to support this institution that provided them with the skills to build their own careers." ■

Published by DigitalCommons@UM Carey Law, 2012