

Blaneys' Managing Partner Maria Scarfo named as a Female Trailblazer

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We are very proud to announce that our Managing Partner, Maria Scarfo, was named as *Excellence Awardee* in the *Female Trailblazer* category of the Canadian Law Awards 2021.

A true trailblazer, Maria is Blaney McMurtry's first female Managing Partner. In this capacity, she has proven immensely effective in guiding our downtown Toronto firm through the ever changing legal environment, not to mention the recent turmoil caused by COVID-19.

Maria has flourished at Blaneys and the firm has benefited.

She joined Blaney McMurtry as an articling student and she has been a long-time leader in an industry where lawyers are often mobile.

A busy insurance litigator, Maria is perhaps best known for her quiet humility and her trademark sense of humour – honed perhaps by improvisation classes in university and performances at after-hours pubs. Throughout her career she has helped those around her develop confidence in their own ability to manage, adapt and lead no matter the challenge. She is the quintessential mentor.

After numerous management appointments throughout the years, her partners elected her as their first female Managing Partner in 2013 and re-elected her in 2016. Indeed, despite the firm's term limits her partners again elected her, by way of special resolution, to a further term in 2019.

This is a reflection of her effectiveness and success as a leader.

In earning her partners' trust and respect for three consecutive elections, Maria established a path for other female lawyers to aspire to and to follow.

Maria is known as a promoter of gender equality. With her support, Blaneys' Partner Sundeep Sandhu established, and continues to serve as Chair of our Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Of Maria, she says, “Her style is very much focused on mentorship and she develops talent by encouraging others to succeed.”

Ian Epstein, who preceded Maria as Managing Partner, says “Maria encouraged female lawyers to join firm committees, including at the Executive level, and to play a leading role on those committees.” From 2017 to 2020, half of the firm’s Executive Committee was female.

Less than six months into Maria’s third term as Managing Partner, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and changed the world as we knew it. Under Maria’s guidance, the firm faced this seismic shift head-on.

Blaneys implemented its business continuity plan in March 2020. Most lawyers and staff moved to remote work. Maria led and guided the firm through an unprecedented amount of change in 2020.

Maria’s leadership skills are exemplified by the way she solidly moved the firm into a virtual model - seemingly overnight. She moreover encouraged us to focus on health and safety, not only our own, but also that of our colleagues, clients, families and communities.

Maria has truly been an example to us all. Ian Epstein concludes by saying, “Long after her term is completed, I’m sure that Maria will be viewed as one of the firm’s finest Managing Partners.”