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Championing Diversity in Tech, Law Firm: Regina Sam Pentti

"By gaining insights through data, we can move away from diversity efforts driven by gut and myths to ones driven by the evidence," says Regina Sam Pentti of Ropes & Gray.

By Zach Warren | July 26, 2021



Regina Sam Pentti, Partner, Ropes & Gray. Courtesy photo

The 2021 Legalweek Leaders in Tech Awards (<https://www.law.com/legaltechnews/2021/07/14/the-2021-legalweek-leaders-in-tech-awards-winners-are-here/>) looks to honor innovation occurring in legal departments and law firms across the country. The group of honorees in this first year of the Legalweek Leaders in Tech Awards have demonstrated knowledge, skill and compassion, recognized by the peers and clients who nominated them. From innovation in litigation to exploring new research opportunities to transforming the way access to justice is handled, the contenders for these awards have shown that true change is not only coming to the legal industry, it's already here.

Alongside their entries, we asked the winners of these awards a few questions about their work over the past year, their penchant for innovation, and more. Here's what Regina Sam Penti, partner and co-chair of the Diversity Committee at Ropes & Gray, had to say.

Winner: Regina Sam Penti, Ropes & Gray for Championing Diversity in Tech, Law Firm

Reason for Win: Penti is a partner in Ropes & Gray's intellectual property transactions, data and emerging companies practice groups. Last year, Penti dedicated over 500 hours to the firm's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, while still building her own practice as a technology lawyer. In the last 12 months, through Penti's leadership the firm mandated that all lawyers, including partners, commit at least 20 hours a year to activities and initiatives that promote the recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse attorneys; launched Ropes & Gray's new advocate mentor program for racially and ethnically diverse senior associates; and started the "Diversity Office Hours" bimonthly forum, among other achievements.

Law.com: The past year-plus has seen increased conversation about diversity in the legal profession. But on the whole, have you seen tangible improvement in getting the profession to where it needs to be?

Regina Sam Penti: Change will take time, but it must come. And I am confident that it will. I'm heartened to see so many of leaders in the legal and technology sectors using their voices and resources to peacefully demand and take steps towards that change.

What's a good first step in improving diversity efforts that many firms and legal departments haven't undertaken, but should?

Acknowledging implicit bias is a great first step. Racist or demeaning behaviors can be very subtle. Rooting those out, and helping people identify those behaviors or actions, especially those that set back others, is a great place to focus.

What role do you see technology playing in aiding legal diversity efforts?

Data is helping companies to understand where their diversity efforts are working, and where they are failing. By gaining insights through data, we can move away from diversity efforts driven by gut and myths to ones driven by the evidence. Data analysis products and platforms are going to help us glean deeper insights about a company's culture and its true commitment to inclusion.

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