



Finding ways to celebrate in the new normal

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Hello from Karen Gill MBE & Maxine Benson MBE

This autumn, everywoman reaches a very important milestone – our 21st birthday. Despite the challenging times we’re living through, there is plenty to feel hopeful about, and to celebrate – as we explore in our introduction to this issue.



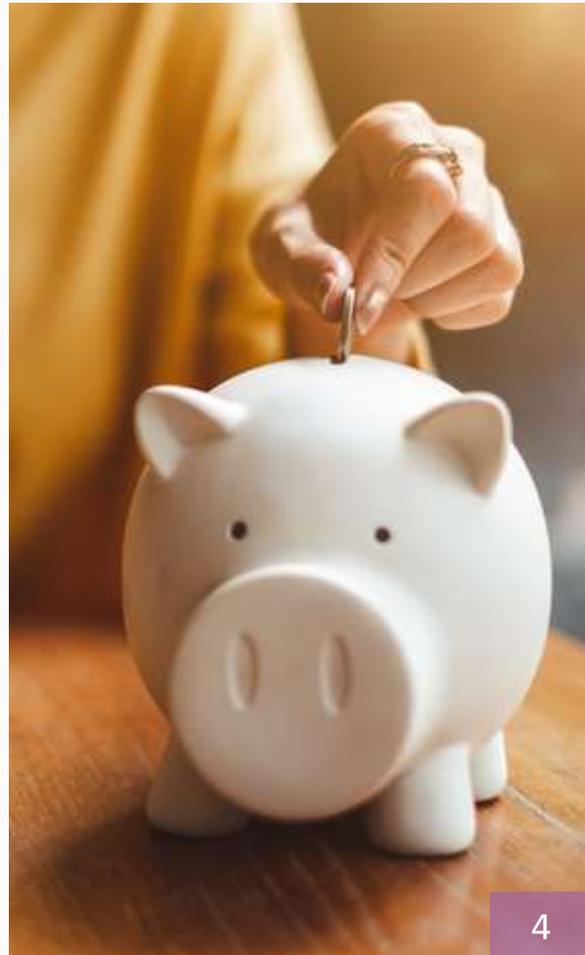
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‘Diversity in everything we do’

The financial services sector is finally making progress in female representation. Wealth management firm and everywoman partner, Saunderson House shares with us the approach to diversity that’s working right across their business.



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Hello from Karen & Max

Welcome



AT THE START of 2020, our roadmap for this autumn included a great many opportunities to celebrate our birthday – September marking our milestone 21st year in business. Of course, at that time we had no idea that an imminent global pandemic would render impossible the opportunity to gather in a physical space with the many women and men who've been part of our journey over the past two decades.

We're grateful that the technology that we've all become so reliant on since March has enabled us to continue connecting with our team, our many clients and associates – to allow us to pause and reflect on the story so far, and, of course, to raise to our screens a glass of bubbly or two.

That there are enormous challenges ahead there can be no doubt, but we're choosing to focus also on the many glimmers of hope, and to take more moments to celebrate these too. Among our portfolio of partner organisations – many of whom are facing daunting levels of disruption – the commitment to diversity and inclusion remains absolute; the many incredible businesses we work with are as focussed as ever on closing the gender gap. One of those partners is Saunderson House, the London-based wealth managers who are eschewing the saying-doing gap with a strategy around gender diversity that's inextricably woven into its culture and forward planning. We share their story on page 4.

Our key message has remained unchanged since 1999: that businesses who invest in diversity and inclusion place themselves at an enormous competitive advantage. This belief has been backed up by a vast library of data. And as a [McKinsey study](#) recently stated: 'The benefits of I&D are clear now—and that doesn't change in a crisis.'

What has changed in this crisis, of course, is the manner in which we connect, engage and inspire our global network. Suffice to say, our digital agenda is keeping our hardworking team very busy indeed, with new web-based everywoman events and community spaces being launched on a near weekly basis.

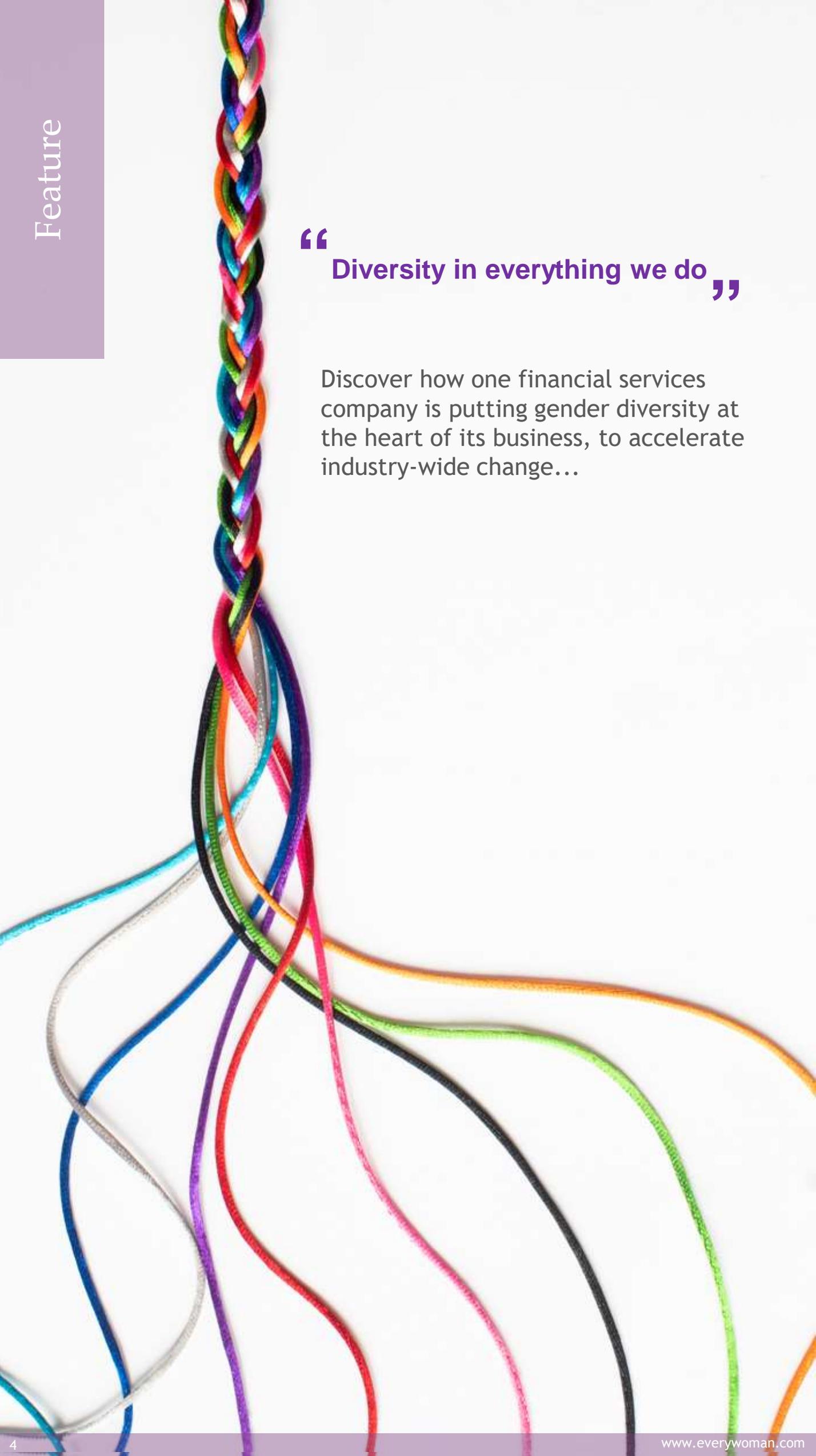
Over the last quarter, we've hosted online the [2020 Amazon everywoman in Transport & Logistics Awards](#), and partnered with Facebook to e-introduce talented women in technology looking for their next career move to some of the social network's most senior leaders. The everywomanNetwork, meanwhile, has put on one of its most attended webinars of all time – on the subject of [overcoming self-limiting beliefs](#) with two amazing speakers from our partner, Accenture. And we've launched a brand new [everywoman in Retail Hub](#) in partnership with Barclaycard, a free-to-join online community and learning platform for retail women, with a similar space for women in technology shortly to follow.

These last few weeks, we've also been celebrating another important event in our calendar – Black History Month. At everywoman, we've always believed that by telling the stories of amazing women from every walk of life, we can achieve powerful results. On page 8, we introduce you to Jasmine Twitty. At the age of 25, she became the youngest person in America to ever be appointed as a judge – an all the more remarkable achievement given her status as a woman, and one of colour. We hope you enjoy.

Warmest wishes,
Karen & Max

“ Diversity in everything we do ”

Discover how one financial services company is putting gender diversity at the heart of its business, to accelerate industry-wide change...



The financial services industry is finally making progress on female representation – a [2020 study](#) reports women now hold 23% of board positions. Like many other businesses in the sector, Saunderson House has set a target for the number of women it appoints into those executive roles. But its commitment to diversity and inclusion goes deeper; and for its Chairwoman, Kathryn Purves, the number of women in positions of influence is just one piece of a puzzle the London-based wealth managers are quickly and strategically piecing together.

‘Board representation is incredibly important,’ says Purves. ‘But in some ways, it’s almost more straightforward to achieve that, than it is to grow a pipeline of female talent. I think it’s far more challenging and interesting to put in place goals around diversity coming through the firm and into both the executive team and frontline roles.’

Saunderson House launched its Equality & Diversity initiative earlier in 2020, putting targets of 30% and 40% female representation against Director and Assistant Director roles respectively. A raft of recruitment policies is already moving the needle. These include ensuring company information and job specifications are presented in gender neutral language; requiring 50/50 shortlists from headhunters for all new positions; and creating diverse interview panels – all initiatives that have been shown to have a material impact both on women’s willingness to go for roles and on their ability to succeed. Existing staff are scheduled to benefit from leadership and unconscious bias training, and a ‘keep in touch’ programme has been designed to ensure woman on maternity leave can stay up to speed.

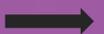
‘About 80% of our female employees return from maternity leave, but we want to improve that to 90%,’ says Purves. ‘When you’ve built that pipeline of women who you’ve invested in, to let them simply walk out the door is incredibly short-sighted. We keep our mat-leavers up to date, without overloading them, and ensure they’re as involved in decisions as they want to be. Often women on maternity leave get very little communication, so they switch off from work completely and then there’s a much bigger mountain to climb for them to feel confident to come back into the workplace. So for me, maintaining those connections is a critical part of building that pipeline.’





This concerted focus on diversity and inclusion is inextricably linked to the overall business growth strategy at Saunderson House. ‘We’re taking it very seriously,’ says Purves. ‘In terms of being able to attract talent these days, it’s incredibly important that you’re seen as an inclusive and diverse firm. In the same way that we look forward and try and plan other things that we do to improve the business, we firmly believe that making progress on diversity and inclusion does that. There are a number of firms out there who have very positive-sounding statements around this, but I think the reality is there’s quite a big gap between saying something’s important to you and actually setting yourself some very clear targets.’

It was that thinking that led the board to agree that the diversity drive should be treated as any other strategic imperative, by setting out an ongoing programme with clear targets and ownership. Though the HR division is heavily involved, the initiative’s executive sponsor is CEO, Tony Overy. By taking personal responsibility for achieving these goals, he wants to demonstrate that diversity and inclusion is ingrained in the culture at Saunderson House, as opposed to a silo ‘people’ project. ‘Leaders should be leading from the front and if you want to make a change in your business, you’ve got to sponsor it,’ he says. ‘We need to think about diversity in everything we do, so as CEO it seems natural that I should be spearheading that. It’s about bringing different people into our decision-making process so that we make better decisions for the business, our people and our clients.’



“ Women are more concerned about losing their jobs than men, perhaps driven by the challenges faced by the retail and hospitality sectors, and the part-time economy. ”



Many of those clients are women. The Women In Wealth initiative, launched in conjunction with the Diversity programme, is enabling Saunderson House to learn more about how it can better service those female clients' needs. Its annual survey explores financial wellbeing, and key learnings from the 2020 research include the fact that women tend to seek financial advice later in life than their male counterparts, and are typically inspired to do so by specific life events, rather than taking the more holistic view of their finances that's more common in men.

Interestingly, women rate the importance of reaching financial independence higher than their male counterparts. But the flipside of that coin is that they feel less understood by their financial advisor – something very much driven by the lack of diversity in this typically male business function. 'We need to get away from this one-size-fits-all approach and think about how we adapt our messages to speak to women specifically,' says Overly. 'There is generally in the country today a lack of financial education and that needs to improve, so that everybody – male or female – better understands the basics of financial planning. Having a more diverse range of people giving the advice must be a positive way of getting people involved earlier.'

This year's survey has also probed into the impact of Covid-19 on finances, and highlighted some notable gender differences. One is that women are more concerned about losing their jobs than men, perhaps driven by the challenges faced by the retail and hospitality sectors, and the part-time economy. Another is that women have a more personal, emotional connection to the family's finances, and are therefore more concerned about their finances in relation to caring for others – children or elderly relatives. Women are also more likely to be thinking about their wealth from an ethical standpoint and responsible investing.

These learnings are key to creating the initiatives and policies that will move the dial on diversity in financial services, says Purves. 'As soon as you start to pull on one string you find that they all link back to the wider issue - whether it's looking at how easy it is for women to access financial advice or how attractive we are as an industry to come work for us, to the whole piece around gender stereotyping and how if you look at the family environment, is it the man who's looking after the finances? There are so many elements to get right, and it's really incumbent on us as a firm, as an industry, and as a society to address those things in a holistic way. It's all incredibly interconnected and the only way we make progress is by tackling the whole.'

Saunderson House sponsors the Hera Award for a longstanding female-owned business at the 2020 NatWest everywoman Awards. Members of the everywomanNetwork have participated in Saunderson House's 2020 Financial Wellbeing survey, the results of which will be published on 20th November 2020 at www.saundersonhouse.co.uk.





All Rise for Judge Jasmine Twitty

At age 25, she became the youngest ever American to be appointed as a judge.

*Five years on, she continues to set the pace for young women,
and women of colour aspiring to a career in law.*

It's extraordinary to become a judge at such a young age. How did it feel?

It was something I had envisioned for quite a few years, while working as a night clerk, so when I was appointed it was just like a wow-moment. But to go beyond that, it definitely has a deeper meaning; I believe my appointment is not just a reflection of me as a person, but something special for people around the world – boys, girls, women, men, people of all ages – just to show that whatever you set your mind to, whatever barrier needs to be broken in the process, it can absolutely be done. I'm grateful just to be able to share that special moment with everyone and lead a movement, if you will.

Did you always know you wanted to smash ceilings in the legal profession?

As early as elementary school, I was interested in a role in government and as I matured, that interest grew. After college, I started working at what was then the only 24-hour court in South Carolina, which is where I started my professional journey as a night court clerk. Being in that space, being surrounded by judges, seeing the highs and lows of my community, I realised that I could attain the experience and knowledge necessary to become a summary court judge. So I just worked hard at it – I sought out mentors; I asked questions beyond my job description; I asked to take on special tasks; I even volunteered to do the warrants for law enforcement officers, which I consider to be my classroom in the judicial arena. I made sure I learned the ins and outs. I took advantage of every opportunity that was available.



What is it about the law that you love?

I always believed that those in power have the influence to shape society as we know it. Growing up, I'd see things that I would like to change and think, 'How can I become a part of that process?' I was intentional about becoming knowledgeable about the issues at hand, and anytime a law changed, I always wanted to know why it changed and how it affected those it's meant to serve and protect.

Did you encounter barriers to entering the legal profession at intersections of your age, being a woman and being a woman of colour?

Initially, I did. I heard more noes than yesses. While interviewing at several municipalities, oftentimes I didn't get a call back or even a rejection letter. There were some interviews where I was confident they were going to see beyond the physical, beyond my age, beyond the obvious, but it didn't happen. Did my confidence waver? Absolutely. But I had to remember that I am worthy and I knew it wasn't a matter of 'if', but 'when'. I believe in being intentional at all times. I am intentional about aligning my actions with the end goal, and I knew without a shadow of doubt that I was doing everything to prepare myself for that time. So when I had those moments where I felt down because I didn't get the job, didn't get the call back, didn't get an acceptance letter – I used that time to hone my craft and to seek more professional development. And to mentor more – any time I am able to use my gifts to help others, it gives me this sense of confidence and this boost to feel like I am valued and I can make my mark.

What has been your experience of the legal profession as a woman and as a woman of colour in America?

I think there's the same challenges there as with anything else when it comes to diversity or women. I once had a judge tell me, 'You have three strikes against you: you're young, you're black and you're a woman. You can choose to use it to your advantage or allow people to beat you with it'. And I thought, 'Wow. I want to use that to my advantage!' So anytime I've been in situations where I felt like I was doubted or second-guessed because of one of those three things, I quickly switched over to just presenting the facts and being knowledgeable about whatever the subject area was that we were talking about.



What do you hope that you're sharing with the next generation?

That it is important to remain true to who you are and that this will lead you to where you want to be. Don't compromise your values for the sake of having an opportunity. I think people following me on social media expect to see a stuffy personality or someone that's very formal, but I choose to show my youth and the fact that I'm more than just a judge – I am a person, I am a woman, and I enjoy family, travelling, food. I think it's important to be relatable. I want people to see me beyond the robe – the robe is my profession. What I do, not only when I have the robe on, but when I step away from the bench, is, I think, the most important thing in me serving as a role model.

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I want [my legacy] to be about intentionality. I want to be remembered as someone who thought she could, so she did.

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How can we ensure more young women or people of colour feel that the legal profession is a place for them to grow a career?

I feel like every individual that believes they have extraordinary talents has an obligation to do more than just go to work and go home; I think you have to put yourself in spaces where those young people are – a classroom, for example. I go into classrooms and hold mock bond hearings that allow kids to not only get exposure to the judicial process, but to be a part of that experience. If more people of more professions actually go into schools, it'll open up kids' minds to professions or a world they haven't even thought about. Early exposure is the best exposure – to pique curiosity as soon as possible.



What have been the major milestones in the five years since you became a judge?

The major one for me was being featured in a reputable textbook in the US. To be a part of that experience has been therapeutic for me – to be a part of a child's education in that special way. I can only be physically present in one place at a time, but through that textbook, I can be present in classrooms around the country and that is a tremendous honour. Since that was released, I try to visit as many classrooms as possible that are using that particular textbook. So not only can kids read about me, but they can meet and connect with me, put a face to the story.

What do you want your legacy to be?

I want it to be about intentionality. I want to be remembered as someone who thought she could, so she did. I always say, 'Have a plan'. We know everything won't always go as planned, but at least you'll have something to keep you on track.



This interview is an edited extract of [episode 34 of our Global citizenship podcast](#), first published in October 2020. Each month, we bring you lively discussion and debate with inspiring women and male allies making a difference around the world, setting the pace and being the change. [See all our podcasts here.](#)

The everywoman Diary

Key dates for the coming months



everywoman Retail Hub

Ongoing

www.everywomanforum.com/retail

In partnership with Barclaycard, we bring you this free-to-access online toolkit curated specifically for women in retail looking to future proof their career and navigate the challenges ahead.

[Find out more](#)

The New Modern Masculinity

14:00 GMT, 19 November 2020

www.everywoman.com/imd-webinar

What is the new modern masculinity? How can we make the shift towards it and why is it so important in the corporate world? In celebration of International Men's Day, we speak to Gabriel Martín (pictured, right), Managing Director at Accenture in Madrid about his passion for equality and inclusion in the workplace.

[Find out more](#)

2020 NatWest everywoman Awards

3 December 2020

www.everywoman.com/natwest-awards

Centred on the theme 'Female entrepreneurship: keeping pace in a changing world,' our flagship awards programme returns for its 18th year to identify and celebrate the inspirational female founders whose creativity and resilience will help Britain weather the current economic storm. The ceremony will take place virtually.

[Find out more](#)

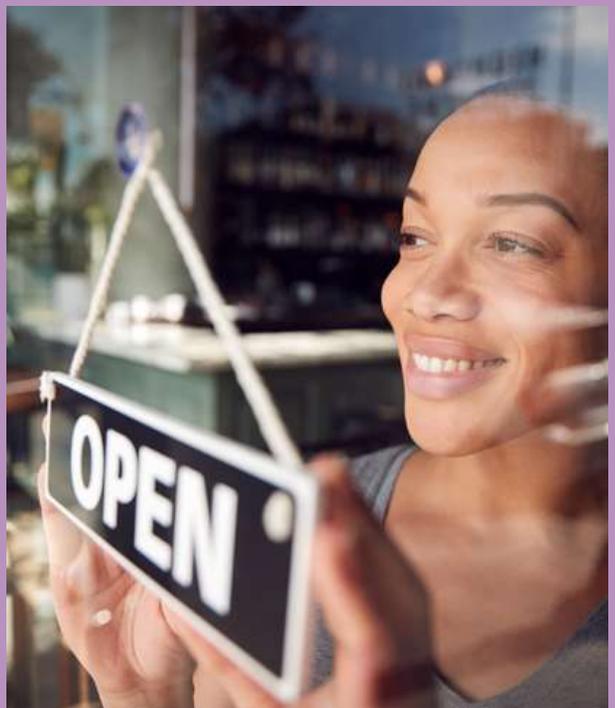
everywoman in Insurance Forum

Until end December 2020

www.everywomanforum.com/insurance

Bringing together insurance leaders from across the globe, a series of online events will provide women and male champions with the practical tools and support needed to increase the number of women in senior level positions within the sector from its current 20%.

[Find out more](#)



View our full calendar of everywoman events, awards programmes, forums, everywomanNetwork webinars and more, at www.everywoman.com

everywomanPartnerships

everywoman enjoys working with the following organisations.

 accenture

 AIG

 AMERICAN EXPRESS

 amazon

 arm

 BARCLAYS

 bp

 centrica

 experian.

 EY Building a better working world

 FACEBOOK

 worldpay from FIS

 FDM

 FedEx

 Heathrow

 HYPERION INSURANCE GROUP

 LLOYDS BANK

 mace

 M & G

 NatWest

 pwc

 RBS

 Revolut

 Royal Mail

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 TESCO

To discuss partnership opportunities, contact karenmax@everywoman.com