

GIR Award for Services to Diversity

– **Karen Popp**, *Sidley Austin*

GIR is proud to present the first-ever GIR Award for Services to Diversity to Karen Popp.

In 2015, Karen Popp was among the 100 women profiled in GIR's first-ever Women in Investigations special. At the time she said: "I was raised to believe in gender equality" and credited her parents, stating that they raised her and her brothers "to believe that we could be whatever we wanted if we worked hard, were committed to our goals and believed in ourselves".



It's a message Popp took on board for her professional life. Popp's career path has taken her from the US attorney's office in the Eastern District of New York, to the US Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, to the White House during the Clinton administration, before joining Sidley, where she now leads the firm's global white-collar: government litigation & investigations group.

Throughout the years, Popp has shown great commitment to improving women's positions in the workplace, both within her firm and in the white-collar defence and investigations world outside. At Sidley, Popp has empowered women to take a visible, active role at Sidley, and thrive. She helps lead the development of the firm-wide women's programme and served as the first chair of Sidley's DC women's committee. Karen assisted Sidley in winning the 2005 Catalyst Award for its achievements in recruitment, retention and promotion of women lawyers (an award given to only a few law firms). She led the formation of the DC office's diversity committee for racial, ethnic and LGBT communities.

Popp has served on task forces on diversity and women, which were formed by the firm's executive committee. She has been an effective consensus builder at the firm and has been highly visible as a diverse lawyer and leader at Sidley. But most notably, Popp is a co-founder of the Women in White-Collar Defense Association, which she launched along with Beth Wilkinson in 1999 shortly after leaving government and noticing the distinct lack of female practitioners on panels or among the attendees at the American Bar Institute's Annual National Institute on White Collar Crime.

In just under 20 years, the association has grown to 30 chapters with over 1,400 members all over the world and is the premier referral network for female white-collar defence lawyers across the globe. Outside of the US, the WWCD has chapters in the UK, France, The Netherlands and Hong Kong, with plans afoot to launch chapters soon in Australia, Ireland, Brazil and China. The extraordinary growth of this organisation has been the result of Karen's vision, and impressive leadership and interpersonal skills. Not only did she create and implement the association's strategy, she did so with the unwavering spirit of inconclusiveness and belief that the organisation could help women in a practice that has historically been dominated by men.

The WWCD has since helped the visibility of its members, their "books of business" and the mentoring of others. Through the organisation, women help women in so many different ways – members plan local and annual events for networking and education, send each other business and job referrals, and are resources for each other on difficult legal/work issues, while all cheer each other on in victory and defeat.

The award will be introduced by
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Please see the full 2018 Women in Investigations Survey in your complimentary magazine. To view the full 2015 Women in Investigations survey, please visit the below link with compliments.

globalinvestigationsreview.com/wiisurvey2015