

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. – December 15, 2025 - The Women's White Collar Defense Association (WWCDA) hosted another successful Awards Gala on **December 2** at the **Ritz-Carlton** in **Washington, D.C.** An impressive showing of WWCDA members, colleagues, clients and other individuals in the white collar defense and legal community came together to celebrate this year's theme, "**Honoring Excellence. Inspiring Tomorrow,**" and celebrating those who have made an outstanding contribution to the profession while promoting inclusion in the white collar and compliance fields.

The unforgettable night was emceed by **Michele Roberts**, renowned attorney and former Executive Director of the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA), who, during her opening remarks, reflected on the legacy of WWCDA and the immense progress the Association has made.

"This annual event celebrates more than twenty-five years of WWCDA connecting members all over the globe and creating tomorrow's leaders in law," said Roberts. "Without everyone in this room, it wouldn't be possible to support WWCDA's mission to advance and support equality in the field."

This year, honors were presented to:

WWCDA Champion Award - Rachel Brand, Executive Vice President of Global Governance, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary, Walmart, Inc. "I believe we've reached a time when we in this room are not just the female leaders of the legal profession, we are THE leaders of the legal profession. Full stop. And that gives all of us an incredible opportunity to fulfill WWCDA's mission of promoting and mentoring those coming behind us – both women and men. Because they are all looking up to us."

WWCDA Group Award - Gap Inc., accepted by Julie Gruber, Executive Vice President, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer, and Corporate Secretary, Gap Inc. "That's what makes this award feel especially meaningful to me. The three aspects it honors - teamwork, compliance, and inclusion - really are a *triple threat* in the best sense. They represent the power of people working together, doing what's right, and ensuring everyone has a voice and a place at the table."

WWCDA Laurie A. Miller Leadership Award - Rita Mitchell, Partner, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP. "The WWCDA has stood out as an organization of trailblazers who forge

ahead AND reach back to help others along the way. Being a part of this extraordinary community has truly been transformative for me both professionally and personally.”

WWCDA Laurie A. Miller Leadership Award - Kit Addleman, Partner, Haynes and Boone LLP. "I benefited immeasurably from the mentorship, friendship, and generosity that define this organization. I am humbled to accept this leadership award, and I do so on behalf of everyone who has poured time, talent, and heart into building the white collar defense bar - and those who are just beginning to find their voice and power within it."

WWCDA Catherine M. O’Neil Mentoring Award - Jennifer Lieser, Partner, Kaplan Marino. "When I first joined WWCDA, I was a young lawyer trying to find my place. And what I found here was a community of professionals who not only made room at the table, they pulled up a chair for me."

WWCDA Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Outstanding Law Student Award - Annie Hong, MPA, J.D. Candidate 2026, University of California, Irvine School of Law. “Tonight, looking around this room, it is remarkable to see WWCDA’s mission in action - bringing members to the forefront of their profession, highlighting their unique talents, and celebrating their successes. Connecting, advancing, and making an impact together."

WWCDA Chapter Awards - New York Chapter and India Chapter

The Awards Gala program also featured remarks from esteemed speakers, including Amanda L. Tyler, Professor of Constitutional Law, University of California, Berkeley School of Law; Susan Bozorgi, Managing Partner, Bozorgi Law, PLLC; and Hannah Bornstein, Partner, Nixon Peabody LLP.

“The Awards Gala brings us together to honor those who have made a tremendous contribution to the field,” said WWCDA Global Chair and Co-Founder, Karen A. Popp, Senior Counsel, Sidley Austin LLC. “This event also gives us an opportunity to celebrate each other and the professionals we are, and to be inspired about how far we’ve come and to look forward to our paths ahead.”

Learn more [about WWCDA](#) and view the [2025 Awards Gala highlights](#).

About the WWCDA

Founded in 1999, the Women’s White Collar Defense Association (WWCDA) is a global organization of more than 4,700 attorneys and professionals across 51 chapters in 19 countries spanning North America, Europe, Latin America, and Asia Pacific. WWCDA

promotes the common business and professional interests of attorneys and other professionals whose clients include companies, other organizations and individuals in connection with the wide-range of white collar government investigations and enforcement actions (criminal, civil, regulatory, and administrative), internal investigations, compliance and ethics counseling, and related matters.

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