

M I C H I G A N WOMEN IN THE LAW

2015

Susan D. Koval

Partner, Nemeth Law PC, Detroit

West Virginia University College of Law

Susan D. Koval said she is driven and enthralled by the multifaceted nature of management-side employment litigation, from wrongful discharge and discrimination to retaliation and wage and hour matters.

“I get to meet so many different kinds of people in different business settings, she said. “It has the human element and complexities of daily life — courage, cowardice, emotion, ego, sex, wrath, conflict, power, deceit and greed.”

But counseling and litigating for managers and executive-level employees is only part of the picture for Koval, a partner at Nemeth Law PC.

She is a hands-on mentor for young female lawyers, law clerks, staff and women beginning other careers. She strongly believes that effective mentoring involves ongoing conversations and active participation.

That woman-to-woman approach has produced creative problem solvers, risk takers and business-savvy, forceful communicators.

“What I appreciate the most about Susan is her insight and vision for my future,” said one of Koval’s nominators. “She sees possibilities for me down the road that I do not yet see.

“She has shared with me her experiences, interactions with others, successes and disappointments all in an effort to help me find a path of personal and professional fulfillment that I may not have otherwise taken the time to find at this point in my career.”

Then again, Koval could say it’s all relative. Her mother, Nedra, prompted and encouraged lively debate with her daughter — one of five children in her Weirton, West Virginia, household — and not only told her that she could accomplish whatever she desired, but led by example.

In fact, at age 43, Nedra went to law school and graduated in the class just ahead of her daughter. Koval’s proudest moment was in May 1985, when she stood before the West Virginia Supreme Court and her mother moved for her admission to the practice of law.

Koval is co-chair of the Labor & Employment Law Committee of the Eastern District’s Federal Bar Association, and a member of the Associated General Contractors of Michigan’s Legal Advisory Committee.

She has served as a volunteer mediator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s mediation program, in addition to speaking to and working with high school youth groups.

In addition, she actively participates in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and contributes considerable support to breast cancer research.

Koval recalled clerking for a federal judge after law school, who gave her the most important piece of advice she ever received: “Your reputation is yours alone, and don’t ever let anyone take it from you.”

Given her ongoing mission to guide and develop tomorrow’s female leaders in law and business, Koval’s reputation is secure.



Susan has practiced labor and employment law for more than 30 years. She helps young female attorneys become creative problem solvers and forceful communicators, and is active in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.