

▶▶ DISTINGUISHED LEADERS

BARRY WOLF

EXECUTIVE PARTNER AT WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES

What are some of your proudest recent achievements?

One of the most significant challenges in the legal industry today is the recruitment, retention and promotion of talented lawyers. I am proud of how Weil has embraced the need to change and evolve to better meet the needs of our newer generation of lawyers. In this past year, in direct response to associate feedback on the length of our partnership track, Weil shortened that track by two years—from 9.5 to 7.5 years—distinguishing us from our peer set. The other initiative that I am incredibly proud of is the rollout of our Weil Legal Innovators program earlier this year. Weil will initially work in partnership with five prominent law schools (with an expectation of future expansion) and more than 20 non-profit organizations in helping support the next generation of social impact leaders. Through this innovative initiative, Weil is investing \$1 million annually for 10 emerging leaders—who have been accepted but not yet matriculated into one of the five premier participating law schools—to work for one year at one on the participating nonprofits. Being able to create change like this is one of the most rewarding aspects of my job.

What does it mean to be a leader? Being a good leader means—first and foremost—setting the tone for the culture of the firm. I always tell people that Weil’s special culture has been the thing that attracted me and kept me here for the past 35 years. I need to sustain and grow that feeling of the firm as a family—one that embraces change and innovation while championing diversity and inclusion and commitment to pro bono and public service. While we are proud of and committed to our strong financial performance, the firm culture is what will always make Weil unique. It is my responsibility to be a chief culture carrier and to give the next generation of lawyers the tools they need to succeed and keep our culture alive and well.

Name a lawyer or mentor whose leadership inspired you. Weil’s most senior partner Ira Millstein has been, and continues



to be, a mentor to me. Ira helped to grow Weil into a premier global firm while never forgetting the values that make the firm special—an open and transparent culture where collaboration is encouraged and rewarded. He helped to develop what is now known as Corporate Governance well before it was a brand name—and he did all that while championing and developing scores of future leaders of the firm. I try to reflect those values as I perform my role as head of the firm.

How are the business and profession of law changing, and how should lawyers adapt for the future? We currently have a workplace that spans multiple generations, and leaders need to embrace change to meet that demand—everything from embracing new technology to understanding the generational differences of how people derive meaning and value out of work. To adapt to changing workstyles, our firm has—as just one recent example—formalized a remote working policy that allows all associates who are at their third year or more senior to work remotely one day per week. As a profession, we need to keep pushing outside our comfort zone.

What is the best advice for someone considering a career in law, or someone already in the profession who is seeking to make a greater impact? My one piece of career advice holds true for lawyers and non-lawyers alike: Do your absolute best and wow people on any assignment or project that you handle and great things will happen. It may not always be what you expect—but you’ll always create new, interesting and rewarding opportunities if you always deliver that “wow factor.”