

PUBLICATION

Baker Donelson Becomes a WILEF Gold Standard Certified Firm

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In 2015, Baker Donelson became a Women in Law Empowerment Forum (WILEF) Gold Standard Certified Firm. WILEF was established in 2007 with the purpose of educating and providing networking opportunities for women in law firms. WILEF created the WILEF Gold Standard Certification as a way to encourage the development of women in law firms. WILEF certification emphasizes the leadership roles achieved by equity women partners, rather than the policies or practices of the firm, or the overall number or percentage of women partners. To become WILEF certified, a firm with 300 or more practicing lawyers in the United States must successfully demonstrate that women represent a meaningful percentage of the firm's equity partners, highest leadership positions, governance and compensation committees, and most highly compensated partners. In order to meet the "meaningful percentage" criteria, an eligible firm must satisfy four or more of the following requirements:

- Women account for at least 20% of equity partners, or alternatively, 33% or more of the attorneys becoming equity partners during the past 12 months.
- Women represent at least 10% of firm chairs and office managing partners.
- Women make up at least 20% of the firm's primary governance committee.
- Women represent 20% or more of the firm's compensation committee.
- Women make up at least 25% of practice group leaders or department heads.
- Women represent at least 10% of the top half of the most highly compensated partners.

Only 50 law firms in the U.S. achieved this certification in 2015, and these firms were invited to a luncheon at the Yale Club of New York City to celebrate their achievement. Jill Steinberg attended the luncheon on Baker Donelson's behalf to accept the award.

WILEF Certification is an on-going process requiring firms to meet the criteria every year to maintain their certification.