



Diversity *in* Practice

Diversity in law is a topic that has no one meaning. Do we mean diversity in ethnicity, race, geography, age, practice area? The lawyers profiled here represent the breadth of diversity in many of its meanings. Reading about their lives, though, reveals what we talk about when we talk about diversity: excellence and achievement. Their paths to success may vary, but their accomplishments in practice—and love for their work—demonstrate how they excel.

This month, also read a roundup of the current unsettled state of the law on affirmative action in law school admissions and a provocative piece that dissects some myths surrounding that admissions tool.

15 Alive and Kicking

Lisa Loo's Fulfilled Law Practice

16 Life in a Fishbowl

Responsibility, Rewards and Mentorship

19 Bold Moves

One Lawyer's Sustaining Practice

20 Learning on the Job

Litigator Loves the Diverse Caseload

22 Circuit Court Scrap

Affirmative Action Path Unclear to Law Schools

27 Myths and Facts About Affirmative Action

30 A Historic First

Asian American Conference Comes to Arizona



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN BECKETT
MAKEUP BY JULIE KOETH

alive & kicking

Lisa Loo's Fulfilled Law Practice

Born in Macau and married to a Cambodian political refugee, **Lisa Loo** knows what it means to face diversity head on. Though she's lived in the United States since she was 8, her life's experiences have been full of interesting twists and turns.

She finds diversity at work, where she is the Associate General Counsel for Arizona State University. In that position, she handles a variety of cases. On any given day, she will negotiate contracts from real estate and development to procurement. She handles risk management matters and oversees immigration issues that pertain to many of ASU's foreign instructors.

"I came to ASU because of the diversity," Loo says. She spent years in firms where her colleagues were specialists, while she remained a generalist. She says it was frustrating at times, but her hard work paid off. She was precisely what ASU needed when she applied for the job eight years ago. Now she's spinning the plates with her multifaceted caseload, and loving every minute of it.

Loo stays busy outside work too, where she makes it a priority to "give something back" to her community. She's been involved with many civic groups, including the State Bar of Arizona's Committee on Women and Minorities and the Arizona

State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Loo is also an original board member of the Arizona Asian American Bar Association. She says her capacity as board member often means serving as a historical reminder to new members: "Our younger members are always enthusiastic and eager to get involved," Loo says, "but they don't always know why we do many of the things we do or why we have hurdles still to overcome."

Before joining ASU's legal team, Loo was with the firm Streich Lang in Phoenix. She worked as a corporate finance associate for five years, but she saw one problem: "I always wanted to be a mother," Loo said. "If I wanted to see my children and have a quality relationship with them, I couldn't keep going the way I was going." That's when ASU came along.

Her husband travels for business often, so Loo is the primary caregiver of their three young children. She doesn't mind, though, because now she has the flexibility to attend a school play or her son's karate practice. After the kids are tucked in, Loo finishes up important projects at home.

At a bar association seminar some years back, Loo spoke on the importance of balancing career and home. She gave simple

advice: "Don't be afraid to ask for help when your friends offer. Sometimes, as working mothers, we often feel afraid to ask, as if to show weakness. There's nothing better than having a network of resources and support, so you can find happiness at work and home."

Loo is pleased to say that she is a black belt in tae kwon do, and in those studies is where she met her husband. Though she has not been in the ring in years, she often uses those skills in the professional arena. "My husband taught me that when you are sparring, always look your opponent in the eye. You always learn something from people when you are not afraid to look them in the eye."

Are there still challenges for professional women? Sometimes, says Loo, yes. She has been mistaken as a secretary once or twice, but she was too busy to worry about it. Looking back on her career, Loo knows that she has a knack for getting to the heart of matters, and she doesn't have to play the "zero-sum" game—winning at all costs. For Loo, it's about dealing in good faith so that all parties get what they desire.

A final bit of wisdom: "Let your strengths carry you. If I have a good roundhouse kick, I'm gonna stick with a roundhouse! I may not always win, but I'm okay as long as I stay in the ring." ▀