



BREATHES THERE A WOMAN or man who is not stirred by the rousing lyrics uttered in the film *Mary Poppins*? For those unlucky few who have not heard the call to action penned by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, here are a few words:

Cast off the shackles of yesterday,
Shoulder to shoulder into the fray,
Our daughters' daughters will adore us,
And they'll sing in grateful chorus—
"Well done, sister suffragette."

Let me take a few moments to explain our focus on women in the law in this issue. In doing so, perhaps I'll even make clear why I'm quoting show tunes.

Almost all of the available evidence shows that women are advancing well and quickly in the law. But a world of varied experiences can take cover behind that word *almost*.

- Are women making partner? Yes. But are they reaching equity partner status or management committee positions in percentages equal to their numbers? Generally, no.

- Do women feel that their treatment is equal to that of men in their workplace? Yes. But are they as optimistic as men about their prospects for career advancement? No.

As Joyce Edelman, chair of the Ohio Joint Task Force on Gender Fairness, told the *ABA Journal*, "Sometimes decision-makers in corporations are more comfortable dealing with someone who looks like they do."

Some respond, sensibly, that reasons exist for those discrepancies beyond discrimination. For example, perhaps larger numbers of women are entering the profession just as many lawyers are deciding that the legal life is out of sync with a balanced life: Many male attorneys are pessimistic

about their prospects, as well. Furthermore, if women more often take advantage of alternative work arrangements such as flex-time or part-time status, their path to partner may be slowed, which they may feel is a reasonable trade-off.

To address questions like those, *Arizona Attorney* surveyed more than 80 legal employers in the state, asking these firms, courts and agencies what alternative arrangements they provide to attorneys and who takes advantage of them. The

responses showed that men benefit as often as women from these variations.

Also in this issue are profiles of women lawyers whose routes to success have perhaps diverged from traditional paths. We read about a judge, a county attorney, academicians and small-firm practitioners. They are stories of women who love their work; they can inspire all lawyers—women and men both.

Do law firm hallways echo differently for men and for women? Somehow, say women, they often do. And it is increasingly important to determine why. This fall, for the first time in history, women are expected to be the majority of students enrolled in U.S. law schools. As former Bar President Roxana Bacon puts it, "We are becoming the owners of the profession." The ranks of women lawyers are swelling, and the practice is destined to change.

As my own daughter turns 5 in April, I am happy to be able to tell her about the many lawyers who commit themselves to eliminating that insidious word *almost*. And until the word is history (or herstory), read inside how some remarkable women challenge themselves and our profession. No matter your viewpoint, I expect you'll agree that we can tell these women in grateful chorus, as the song does, "Well done."

Jim Sigo