

On September 7, 2017, **Michigan Lawyers Weekly** honored its annual class of **Women in the Law**, including Bodman's Kathleen O'Callaghan Hickey. The publisher notes that lawyers chosen for this honor are "leaders in their firms, experts in their areas of practice, and mentors to their colleagues. These outstanding attorneys enhance their communities as well as their profession."

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

### **Kathleen O'Callaghan Hickey**

**Member, Bodman PLC, Detroit**

**University of Detroit School of Law**

Hickey's practice includes secured transactions, loan workouts, and counseling lenders on liability and loan structure issues. Hickey is a member of Bodman's executive management committee and co-chair of the firm's Diversity and Social Action Committee. She serves on the board of the Walsh College Foundation and volunteers with Detroit-based VIP Mentoring. Hickey served as a pro bono advisor with Service to Soldiers to assist military families.

#### **What does practicing law mean to you personally and professionally?**

My father was a lawyer. I'm sure some part of me desired to become a lawyer to make him happy and I know he was proud to say two of his children (one of my brothers is also a lawyer) followed in his footsteps. Practicing law as a commercial banking attorney has given me the opportunity to mix business and law into a great career. I have been fortunate to have several mentors, including a Michigan Court of Appeals judge and bright, creative partners, wonderful and loyal clients, and a supportive family along the way to help me build my career.

#### **Where did you grow up? Please provide one memorable anecdote about your childhood.**

I grew up in northwest Detroit. Back then, very few kids played organized sports or had extracurricular activities so we played outside all day until the street lights went on.

#### **What was your first job? What did you learn from the experience?**

My first job was babysitting a family of six kids. I earned 50 cents an hour. I worked my way through college waitressing. Both jobs taught me at an early age to resolve small problems quickly with tact and patience.

#### **What do you consider your biggest professional accomplishment and why?**

It's not really a single accomplishment, but developing a practice focus (banking, specifically commercial lending work) that has allowed me to be viewed by my clients as a go-to resource for highly sophisticated work that I handle on a national basis.

#### **Describe the biggest challenge you've had to face in your legal career.**

The biggest challenge I've had to face in my legal career is taking on an assignment from a client where I was not familiar with the subject matter. There is significant risk in not recognizing what you don't know and entering a legal arena in which you are not familiar can be very stressful.



#### **Please share your best tip for balancing your professional life and your personal life.**

My best tips are to try to enjoy the times when the workload lightens temporarily because you know the pendulum will swing the other way eventually and to surround yourself with colleagues that will back you up on work when your personal life must come first.

#### **What is the best advice you've ever received that you've actually used?**

Proofread, proofread, proofread!

#### **What are two things about you that not many people know?**

I'm a little rusty, but I can play some songs on an acoustic guitar. When I was 10 years old, I won a dance contest by doing "The Twist."

#### **How would you describe yourself in one word?**

Complicated.

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