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KD's Women's Initiative and AIG Women & Allies Reception

A Conversation and Meet & Greet the Author of The Stiletto Network, Pamela Ryckman
April 11, 2018

*KD's Women's Initiative and AIG Women & Allies co-sponsored "***A Conversation with Pamela Ryckman, author of Stiletto Network" on April 11, 2018 at AIG New York City offices. This discussion session went into the details of Ms. Ryckman's book, the well-timed topic of empowering women to work together. Over 200 KD attorneys, AIG team members and clients spent an inspiring afternoon with the author followed by a networking cocktail hour.**

If you ask Pamela Ryckman, her book, *Stiletto Network: Inside the Women's Power Circles That Are Changing the Face of Business, is as much a love story as it is a business manual. In her research of powerful circles of women, she found that the old clichés of backstabbing and gossip had given way to genuine friendships and desire to see others succeed. Ms. Ryckman saw what happens when "bright, caring women come together to celebrate and unwind, debate and compare notes." While the spectrum of the groups ranged from CEOs, to women just entering the workforce, or to moms starting businesses from home, they all had the common goal: to claim power in a diversifying economy and to ask each other, "How can I help you?".*

Ms. Ryckman began by painting a picture of the new powerful business woman. In comparing attitudes of the past, like the "woman's powersuit", women assimilating into male dominated industries, and the inevitable Glass Ceiling, the audience was given a timeline of nearly 40 years of the changing role of women executives. Ms. Ryckman explained how the eventual whittling away of women at the top created not only the stereotype of a dragon lady, but a lack of professional camaraderie with male counterparts and scorn from fellow women. However, today's executives find that femininity, inclusiveness, mentorships, and supportiveness create a better business model for all employees. Seductive is no longer slutty, assertive is no longer bitchy, and getting into the boardroom has nothing to do with the bedroom. By women banding together over the years, today's generation has unprecedented advantages. Ms. Ryckman encourages them to grab them.

Pamela Ryckman

Ms. Ryckman's discussion was punctuated with funny pop culture references, like the 1980s movies Working Girl and Baby Boom; typical tales of woman on woman competition and children hindering a career. These were compared to women like Beyoncé and Angelina Jolie, who continually prove that walls were created to be broken down. Ms. Ryckman offered advice to the group about creating their own networks. Mainly, she felt the best way to begin was to find a diverse group of women. She found certain groups that were too like-minded tended to devolve into "book clubs fueled by wine," and not much was accomplished.

The overall message of the day was that, while these Stiletto Networks began with wealthy and powerful women, there is opportunity to be had for everyone. Her call to action to support other women in this era of renewed feminism and #Metoo is not only timely, but essential to these movements. KD is very thankful for Ms. Ryckman's participation in this discussion, as well as AIG for hosting the event. The consensus at the reception afterward was positive and most expressed a desire for similar events in the future.

BIO: Pamela Ryckman is screenwriter, journalist, and business executive with a focus on women in the workforce. She is the author of STILETTO NETWORK: Inside the Women's Power Circles That Are Changing the Face of Business and has written for The New York Times, Financial Times, and Washington Post, among other publications. Ryckman and Stiletto Network have been featured widely in the press. She has appeared on The TODAY Show, Rock Center with Brian Williams, Good Day New York, Bloomberg TV, and MSNBC, and in publications such as the Chicago Tribune, New York Post, U.S. News & World Report, Forbes, Bloomberg BusinessWeek, Inc., Entrepreneur, Huffington Post, and More.

KD Partners Jennifer Sherven and Ellen Storch, both leaders for the KD Women's Initiative, are flanked by Pamela Ryckman and the AIG and Allies team

The Kaufman Dolowich & Voluck Women's Initiative brings together women attorneys throughout the firm to exchange ideas, develop and expand business contacts and opportunities, and enhance overall attorney development. Our Initiative also serves as a vehicle through which our attorneys can connect with the community and other women's organizations. KD is committed to empowering women associates and partners to succeed by fostering a supportive environment that is responsive to their needs, as well as by providing opportunities for their development, advancement and leadership within the firm.

AIG Women & Allies strive to create and foster a community of professionals with a shared interest in the professional development, attraction and retention of women within the organization.The mission of the AIG Women & Allies Employee Resource Group is to create and foster a community of professionals with a shared interest in the professional development, attraction and retention of women in our organization while providing visibility and the benefits of a strong and committed network.

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