



Ashley graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, from the University of Michigan before obtaining a Juris Doctor from the University of North Carolina School of Law.

She specializes in the areas of Medical Devices, Automotive Control Systems, Exercise Devices, Industrial Design, Packaging, Alternative Energy Technologies, Magnetic Motors and Other Magnetic Technologies.

Which women in history do you find inspiring and why?

There are so many women who have inspired me throughout my life but to name just a few, I would have to go with some of the groundbreaking women scientists, such as Marie Curie, Rachel Carson, and Jane Goodall. They each were not afraid to question the world around them and stand up for what they believed in.

Who were your role models/mentors in your youth and during your career advancement?

As a child, I always looked up to my grandmother. My grandmother graduated from college in the 1940s and worked her entire life. Throughout my education, I was also surrounded by many women engineers (mostly automotive engineers). A perk of growing up and attending college outside of Detroit, Michigan.

When did you first become interested in being an attorney and how did you ultimately choose your career path into the legal field?

Sometime in high school I decided that I wanted to go to law school and become an attorney. As I come from a family of automotive engineers, I was convinced, however, to go into engineering for my undergrad (just in case my law school ambitions changed). When entering law school, I discovered that I could pursue a legal career that would also allow me to utilize my engineering background, and I began to focus on the field of patent law.

As a woman, and in a profession that is still dominated by men, can you share an example of a hurdle or obstacle you experienced during your career and how you overcame it?

Being taken seriously. I have gotten a double take (more than a few times), when asked what I do for a living, and I respond that I am a patent attorney. Although it can be frustrating that stereotypes still place men in such positions, and it can be difficult for some to imagine a woman engineer, let alone a patent attorney, I have learned to just smile and not let it faze me.

What advice would you give a female high school or college student about pursuing her ideas and passions, becoming an attorney, or even about owning her own business?

Don't let anyone tell you that you cannot do something or be something. If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish unbelievable things. You and you alone are in control of your future.

How did you navigate power structures early in your career versus later in your career when you had a more formal leadership role?

When I was first starting out at a large law firm, I don't believe that I would have had the courage to speak out on anything. We, as first year associates, felt like peons with the partners our overlords. Now later in my career, the firm leadership is not so daunting, and I would feel completely comfortable voicing any concerns. As a more senior attorney, I also try to be welcoming and respectful to anyone that may be working under me.

What kinds of systemic change would you encourage women in positions of power to advocate for?

To strive to erase the stereotype that men hold positions of power, by continuing to hire and promote women to high level positions within firms, corporations, and the government.

You've experienced a number of different work environments. How/in what way(s) do you feel Jones Robb supports women attorneys in their work/life journey?

Jones Robb understands that attorneys also have a life outside of the firm, which is definitely not always the case with law firms. This is especially important for women attorneys, who are often trying to juggle a career, marriage, and family. Through my years at the firm, and three kids, the firm has been very understanding, affording me the opportunity to work from home (before it became the norm) and at a reduced schedule. I never felt like I was passed over for something, or missed out on an opportunity, because I chose to be a mother as well as an attorney. With the firm, I have been able to grow my professional career, while not missing out on the other important things in life, like being there for my children.

You were Jones Robb's first associate attorney. What has kept you at the firm for so long?

The people and the work. Jones Robb has such a great collegial environment, which I don't think that I would find elsewhere. Everyone that I work with is great. The firm has afforded me the opportunity to grow my practice with interesting clients and work, while allowing me to also have a family life. I think that our firm is unique in this respect.