

Missouri Lawyers

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WEEKLY

McDowell Rice elects first woman president

BY JESSICA SHUMAKER

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Kansas City firm McDowell Rice Smith & Buchanan has elected its first woman president.

The firm elected Kristie Remster Orme to the position at its annual meeting Jan. 28. The election of Orme comes as the firm celebrates its 70th anniversary.

Orme said it's an honor that she sees as a natural progression of her 19-year career with the firm and prior experience in leadership and mentoring young attorneys.

"For me, I think anyone who does those things consistently for 19 or 20 years will inevitably be asked to assume greater leadership responsibilities," she said.

While she said she can appreciate the discussion that comes along with being the first woman to rise to that rank in her firm, it never seemed to be an impossible prospect.

"It never felt like there was that glass ceiling or gender barrier to work through," she said.



Kristie Remster Orme

She placed her new role in the context of other women in the Kansas City legal community ascending to leadership positions, noting a law school contemporary named last year to managing attorney at Armstrong Teasdale, Karrie Clinkinbeard.

"I'm more about that shift in the practice than our particular shift," she said. "I think it's a good thing for women, it's a good thing for the practice, good for each

of the firms that are going that route."

She said she hopes to bring a management style to the role that is a bit more progressive and inclusive than her predecessors.

"I tend to be more hands on and looking for folks to participate in management decisions and discussions with me than perhaps we've seen in the past," she said.

Her goals for the firm include growing its business and continuing to develop young attorneys.

She's already asked people not previously involved in management to take on leadership roles in different areas of the firm, which hasn't been the norm.

"I believe that everybody should have some responsibility for management," she said. "I think it helps build a better practice when you have everybody involved at that level."

Orme's practice focuses on complex commercial litigation and representation of banking and financial service providers. She earned her law degree from the University of Kansas. **MO**

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Kristie Remster Orme, President of McDowell Rice Smith & Buchanan