

**“It takes courage to counter conventional expectations, but it can lead to personal fulfillment, renewed creativity, and career advancement.”**



## **Tara D. Sutton**

**This Partner at Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi advises women to speak up and look for new challenges if they want to stand out.**

From the beginning, I sought out opportunities to work with leaders in my firm. Taking on assignments outside your comfort zone can be scary, but it can also help you stand out from the crowd. Observe successful people around you, whether male or female, and learn from them—they know what they are doing. Also demand the best (hardest) assignments, and your career will advance.

Make your voice heard. Don't be afraid to speak up and contribute your ideas, even if you are the only woman in the room. Do not let others marginalize your contributions. I found coming to meetings with a plan was

helpful. Standing out and speaking up can be difficult, particularly early in your career, but don't give up. Hang tough and persevere.

Make your own path. When I was 10 years into my career, I completely changed the focus of my work. I didn't change firms, but I joined an entirely different group and switched my practice from corporate to individual clients. It takes courage to counter conventional expectations, but it can lead to personal fulfillment, renewed creativity, and career advancement.

Contribute wherever you can. Firms and companies can be insular. It has been important for me to touch lives

beyond the people I work with. There are countless opportunities to engage, whether in your community or on a pro bono project with your workmates. Not only will you learn more about the world, but you will form unexpected connections and build your reputation in a positive and rewarding manner.

Keep your sense of humor. Your spirit of fun is often sacrificed when you feel overworked or stressed out. If I carve out places in my life for enjoyment, that is reflected in my work. A sense of happiness makes every new idea more powerful. **PDJ**