

Washington, D.C. Chapter

WASHINGTON, DC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Amanda Varma

Partner, Steptoe & Johnson LLP



In 2 sentences or less, describe what you do.

I advise multinational businesses, family offices, and high-net-worth individuals on U.S. federal tax planning, controversies, and policy, with a focus on international tax issues

When did you first join the Coalition? For DC, maybe we ask how/when you first became acquainted with the Coalition?

I received an e-mail about the Coalition expanding to DC and volunteered to be a part of the steering committee to form the DC chapter.

Positions you've held in the Coalition, if any.

I was on the initial steering committee, have served as a member-at-large and chair of the programming committee, and am now the vice president of the DC chapter and a member of the National Board.

What was your first job (starting out)?

I started my legal career at Steptoe as an associate (and before that, a summer associate).

Fondest career memory or highlight.

This is a hard one. Anytime I can help a client solve a difficult problem is a great moment and I've been fortunate to have worked on some really interesting and complex issues over the years. Becoming a partner at Steptoe was also a highlight.

Best advice you ever received.

When I was growing up and dealing with a problem, my mom would ask me whether the outcome would matter in a year or 10 years. I often ask myself the same question now, partly as a reminder to keep things in perspective and "not sweat the small stuff" but also to stimulate thought on how my response can impact the outcome.

Advice you would give to a woman lawyer just starting out (or mid-career)

Invest in your own personal and professional development and look for opportunities to learn and grow outside of your day-to-day work. For example, read about developments in your practice area, network, participate in a professional organization, take a pro bono case, or work with a coach or find other resources

to improve public speaking, writing, or leadership skills. Doing these things will not only make you a better lawyer but will also make the practice of law more fulfilling and enjoyable.

To what do you attribute your success?

Determination, perseverance, and hard work.

Favorite Coalition program you've attended?

I have enjoyed them all, but the very first event we had, which was a program on networking beyond the basics followed by a reception, stands out as a great moment that showed the promise of the Coalition and the power of bringing together women lawyers to share experiences, learn from each other, and build relationships.

Where do you hope to be in 5 years?

Since I'm answering this during the COVID-19 outbreak and after working from home for nearly four months, somewhere other than my house!

Coffee or tea?

Coffee.