

*As we continue to navigate unprecedented times, SGR pauses to recognize Women's History Month. We celebrate the achievements of two SGR attorneys through a Q&A and acknowledge several brave women who made history in 2020 with a game of matching.*

*Enjoy and stay safe!*



***SGR spotlights two of our attorneys for Women's History Month. Take a few minutes to learn more about [Tori Silas](#) and [Danielle Comanducci](#).***

### **Tori Silas • Partner, Corporate • Atlanta**

*Tori Silas is a skilled legal strategist and business advisor with more than 15 years of large law firm and corporate legal department experience as lead counsel structuring and negotiating complex technology and general commercial transactions, counseling on privacy, information governance, and data protection compliance.*



**Why did you choose your practice area?** In a way my practice area chose me. Prior to becoming an attorney, I worked as a consultant with PricewaterhouseCoopers and advised companies on the functional aspects of ERP solution implementations. After becoming an attorney and being faced with a decision to shift from a bankruptcy to a transactional practice, Technology Transactions and Privacy seemed to be a good fit based on my previous non-legal work experience.

**Who is a woman in history that inspired you?** There is a pretty long list of women that have inspired me, the majority of whom are not attorneys. Among them, Maya Angelou stands out because she pursued her craft as a writer and poet diligently. She was also a civil rights activist and was committed to a cause that was greater than herself. She also told her story and refused to be limited by the circumstances of her childhood.

**Do you believe a woman can have both a meaningful professional career and a fulfilling personal life?** Yes, I believe a woman can have both a meaningful professional career and personal life. In fact, I believe a personal life is absolutely a necessity. Absent having a personal life, whether that be defined as being married, being a parent or being a friend, we would be left to see ourselves and only be with those that view us through a professional lens. That could lead us to seeing and measuring ourselves only through that professional lens, including our self-worth and value. Women bring so much more to the table when we lead work-life integrated lives. Please note that I didn't say "work-life balance," as I believe that is a misnomer, and we should strive for work-life integration.

**What are three things you wish you could tell every woman you know entering the workforce right now?** First, you are enough (for whatever it is that you seek, desire or plan to pursue) – you are smart enough, courageous enough, creative enough, talented enough, etc. Please don't let anyone convince you otherwise. Next, the only limitations that matter are those that we place on ourselves. Finally, there is always a lesson in the journey, even if that journey takes you to places that you didn't plan to go.

**Looking back, what are your proudest moments in terms of what you have accomplished?** The proudest moments, for me, are not defined by titles or monetary compensation. The proudest moments for me are moments when I have had the opportunity to listen to my parents and share my accomplishments with friends and family because I can see how proud they are of me. I also feel a sense of pride when a law student or young attorney seeks me out for advice or even just a conversation about the profession. I take great pride in any opportunity to inform and support the next generation of attorneys that will inherit our profession.

---

## **Danielle Comanducci • Associate, Corporate • New York**

*Danielle Comanducci acts in an outside general counsel capacity and advises domestic and international clients on a multitude of corporate and financial matters, including mergers and acquisition, contracts, loan transactions, internal governance issues, and not for profit tax exemption, as well as a variety of regulatory compliance and administrative law matters.*



**Who is a woman in history that inspired you?** The great Madame Marie Curie for her brilliant mind and her enormous contributions to the male-dominated scientific world. Marie Curie's determination allowed her to break through countless glass ceilings during her lifetime, including becoming the first woman to win a Nobel Prize and the first person to win a Nobel Prize twice!

**Did you ever take a career risk? If so, why?** I started my journey into the legal profession while I was living and attending law school in France. Being Franco-American, I grew up in New York where I had been enrolled in the French educational system and then moved to France at the age of fifteen. After graduating law school in France with a degree in private and corporate law in 2006, like many twenty-year-olds, I had it all figured out... or at least I thought I did. Fast forward a little, French law degree in hand, I decided to pack my suitcases, move back to America and start it all over. I obtained my juris doctorate in 2010, passed the bar, and have been practicing law in New York ever since. Why risk starting all over? Well, truth be told, I felt that the common law system allowed judges and lawyers to take an active role in shaping the law, perhaps more than the civil law system I was used to. While uprooting myself out of my comfort zone, going back for another three years of law school and taking on a substantial amount of law school debt was not an easy decision, I have no regrets and encourage all young professionals to not be afraid to take a risk to get where they want to be.

**What career advice would you give your younger self?** Relax. It's okay that you don't have all the answers. Yes, your head is spinning with all the information you absorbed during three years of law school and months of preparing for the bar exam, but there is still a lot to learn... and you will. So take a deep breath, roll up your sleeves, pick up that treatise, ask a colleague and you will figure it out. No one starts out knowing everything, and knowing what you don't know is as important as knowing what you do know. Don't be afraid to ask questions, reach out for support and take on projects in new fields. In the end, it will help you turn into the lawyer you were meant to be.

**Did you have a mentor? If so, how did they encourage you in your career?** I was very fortunate to have several mentors early on in my career (and still today!). Michael Friedman, Esq., SGR Counsel, who spent countless hours over the last 10 years brainstorming with me on how to approach various issues and teaching me how to think outside the box, a skill that has served me immensely in my career. Sasha Bau, Esq., SGR Partner, who has taught me more than I could describe, has always encouraged me and involved me in all types of client matters and gave me the opportunity early in my career to take on responsibilities and develop relationships with clients.

**Do you believe a woman can have both a meaningful professional career and a fulfilling personal life?** I think that it is possible to "have it all", but it is not always easy. Achieving a work-life balance is a constant challenge, especially during these unprecedented times. Trying to juggle an energetic two-year-old child at home while maintaining an active law practice has required me to get creative – whether having my daughter as a frequent guest on intra-office Zoom calls, working late into the night once she is asleep, or letting go of my "no screen time" ideals so I can get work done during the day- these are challenges that are shared by countless working parents. Generally, in order to strike a balance, I think the key is finding the employment culture, whether it is in-house, in private practice or public service, that understands and is sensitive to these challenges. Thankfully, I see a growing trend in law firms having more flexibility not only for working mothers, but working parents, whether it is allowing parents to work from home a few days a week or to work more flexible hours. One thing that the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us is that not only is flexibility possible, but it is necessary to ensure that employees can thrive and enjoy success in both their professional and personal

lives.

**What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?** Hiking, taking photos, watching old movies and, most importantly, spending time with my daughter, who is the sweetest, coolest and funniest person I know.

## Women Who Made History in 2020 Match Game

Match up the woman in the left hand column with her 2020 accomplishment in the right hand column. Answers appear at the bottom.

Name	2020 Accomplishment
A) Billie Eilish	1) First woman elected VP of the U.S. (previously first woman to serve as California's attorney general and first Indian American woman elected to the U.S. Senate).
B) Kim Ng	2) Set a record for a female astronaut for spending 328 days in space (previously part of the team who performed first all-female spacewalk).
C) Mellody Hobson	3) First of two Native Americans elected to Congress and nominated (pending confirmation) as the first Native American cabinet Secretary.
D) Sarah Fuller	4) 15-year-old Indian American scientist who created a water contamination tool in response to the water crisis in Flint Michigan and first <i>Time Magazine</i> "Kid of the Year."
E) Christina Koch	5) First woman (and only the second person) to sweep the "Big Four" categories at the Grammys and the youngest two-time Grammy nominee.
F) Gitanjali Rao	6) As the new GM of the Miami Marlins, the first woman to be GM in a major men's sports league in North America and the second Asian American to lead a major league baseball team.
G) Kamala Harris	7) First woman to play in a Power 5 football game when she played the kicker position for the Vanderbilt Commodores.
H) Deb Haaland	8) When named head of Starbucks' Board of Directors, she became the only black woman chair of a S&P 500 company.

Answers: A=5; B=6; C=8; D=7; E=2; F=4; G=1; H=3

