

Margaret Gill Book

Memories of Margaret:

Margaret's legal career was extraordinary by any measure in any timeframe. But it was also completely unique because she was the first woman in the US to lead a major merger and acquisition practice in a top global law firm. To be a pioneer of this stature in a man's world is an accomplishment that only someone like Margaret with a genius intellect and the courage of a warrior could pull off. And I and the millions of women lawyers who followed were the beneficiaries. But for me, she was much more than a professional role model. For my entire career at Pillsbury and my later board career, Margaret was my coach, my advocate, my safety zone and my beloved sister. I was blessed beyond measure to have Margaret in my life and my heart.

I actually came to Pillsbury because of Margaret. When I was a third year student at Stanford law school, I went to Pillsbury for my day of 10 interviews. The only interview I remember was with Margaret Gill. I was thrilled to have the chance to speak with a successful woman lawyer—my first such opportunity. Margaret was lovely to me that day and she was open to talking about subjects that weighed on my mind but that I had never discussed with anyone, including how to have children and a career, how to navigate in the law firm, and how to succeed as a woman.. I remember that conversation as though it were yesterday. It changed my life.

It is fair to say that after that, I never made a career or major life move without Margaret's advice. She helped me understand the politics in the Firm and was my advocate for advancement. She advised me on how to deal with complicated partners and clients. She gave me the tips and itineraries for traveling with children in Europe. Stanton Court in the Cotswold will always be Margaret country to me. When Margaret went to AirTouch, she brought me along as the company's primary litigator, and entrusted me to head groundbreaking antitrust litigation. No other woman litigator in the country had the opportunities that Margaret gave me. When I was asked to become Chair of the Firm, Margaret was my advisor on what to do. She was perhaps the wisest woman I have ever known.

And I wasn't the only one to know this. Margaret was regarded widely as a consummate lawyer and client advisor. In 1975, when she was only 35, she was chosen by our client to handle the largest merger in history as of that time—the \$2.2 billion acquisition of Utah International by General Electric. This was extraordinary for any lawyer—but revolutionary for a young woman in the 1970s. Margaret took on the challenge with her usual extraordinary command, and became one of the most famous business lawyers in the US. After that, she was involved with all the top clients of the Firm on virtually every strategic transaction we handled: Chevron, Bank of America, Intel, AT&T and Pacific Telesis, and on and on. Because of her talent, the limelight came to Margaret, but she never liked it. Margaret wanted to be judged by the quality of her work and the skill of the teams she trained and nurtured, and she always diverted attention to others.

Margaret was a strong leader within Pillsbury. She served several terms on the Firm's Management Committee, managed the Firm's Corporate Securities Practice for 15 years, and headed the all important Associate Review Committee from 1981 to 1991. Luckily for me, she was the head of that Committee when I was elected to the partnership!

It was no surprise when in 1994 Margaret was recruited by Pacific Telesis to become the Senior Vice President of Legal, External Affairs and Secretary of the spin off of the Telesis cellular business, known as AirTouch. Margaret was a magnificent general counsel for AirTouch. In my career, I have worked for and with many General Counsels, but none were as able as Margaret. One thing that really stands out is her tactical negotiating brilliance and her toughness. When I was settling critical litigation for AirTouch, time and again I would bring her what I thought was an amazing settlement deal that was the best we could do. But she would always send me back for more, and she was right. Margaret was laser focused on what motivated every side in a negotiation, and she could always spot a new avenue that opened up the deal. I have never seen her equal.

One of the most critical skills Margaret taught me was how to appear completely career focused while in fact putting family first. Today fortunately this kind of adaptive behavior is less necessary, but then it was critical for success. She was very clear that Stephen, Elizabeth and Richard were her first, second and third priority, and she lent me some of her backbone to stand up for my own family. At her knee, I learned how to work from home, to use the telephone to cover

where I actually was in physical reality, how to schedule long vacations months in advance with careful plans to cover the clients during my absence, and much more. She was the master.

Margaret and I shared a deep love of the ballet. Margaret nominated me to the Board of the San Francisco Ballet, and we served together for many years. Margaret was the Board member who the Ballet turned to in every sort of crisis. Her calm competence, deep knowledge and background on all governance matters, and her strategic insights kept the Ballet in great shape. She chaired the 75th Anniversary Gala of the ballet, a huge fund raising and artistic high point.

In February of this year, my husband and I had to change our ballet tickets to another night, and when we went to our seats, we were thrilled to see that Margaret and Steve were right next to us. It was not planned by us but by God. It was just before California was shut down by the Coronavirus, and it was the last time I would see my beloved Margaret in person. This was in my mind a miracle.

One of my longstanding goals in life has been to help other younger women in the way that Margaret helped me. I sincerely wish that everyone's life could contain a Margaret. She will be missed profoundly by me and many.