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MAUREEN HARBOUR

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Partner
Kean Miller

2010 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Practicing law has never been enough for Maureen Harbourt.

Harbourt, a Kean Miller partner, has made a second career of improving the community around her, pushing the firm to form a diversity council, spearheading initiatives to recruit minority law students and encouraging it to adopt Glen Oaks Middle through the Volunteers in Public Schools program.

“Maureen is committed to making Baton Rouge a better place to live and conduct business,” says Steve Boutwell, the firm’s director of client services.

Harbourt was the first law school graduate to sign on with the original founding Kean Miller partners.

That was back in 1983, when the firm had 13 lawyers. Today, 130 attorneys practice there, making it the Capital Region’s largest firm. And Harbourt,

who made partner after five years, now represents local, national and international industrial and commercial clients in high-stakes environmental and regulatory matters.

Remember in 2004, when the Environmental Protection Agency came close to forcing the metropolitan area to use reformulated gasoline? Harbourt was the lawyer who succeeded in securing a stay of that requirement.

“I feel the work I did on that case really helped the entire area,” she says. “Not just because it would have been more costly, but because the science showed it would have made their air quality worse rather than better.”

Harbourt didn’t consider a career in law until she became involved in student government at LSU during the late 1970s, when environmental law was just emerging. As a new law clerk at Kean Miller, she ended up doing a lot of research on the subject.

Now that environmental considerations have moved into the mainstream, Harbourt represents clients in air permitting, emissions trading, cap and trade, underground injection, hazardous waste and remediation, and other regulatory issues. She represents the Louisiana Chemical Association, Louisiana Municipal Oil & Gas Association and Baton Rouge Area Chamber on environmental issues.

But Harbourt is equally devoted to community service. She formed the Kean Miller Diversity Council and served as its chair for four years, promoting awareness of the issue and initiating firm-wide efforts to help recruit minority law students. Kean Miller now offers a law school preparatory program for college juniors and seniors who are underrepresented in Louisiana law schools as well as Louisiana Diversity Forum seminars.

Harbourt, the mother of two grown

sons, also organizes activities to support the firm’s adopted school, Glen Oaks Middle, including tutoring and an annual book drive.

And through the Louisiana Resource Center for Educators, for which Harbourt serves as a board member, Kean Miller has provided more than 50,000 dictionaries to third-graders in multiple parishes.

In the years to come, she wants to continue her work mentoring and training new lawyers, passing along the tradition started by Kean Miller founder Gordon Kean.

“This is where we live and work, and our families are here; our clients and friends are here,” Harbourt says. “Baton Rouge has so much potential and so much to offer. Any area this size has its problems that need to be addressed, but it takes people to make that happen.”

—Penny Font