

Igoe 'a pioneer' in law

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PATRICIA J. IGOE was the first woman lawyer to join the Levy, Goodman, Semonoff & Gorin law firm in 1979. She's the co-founder and partner of the **Robinson+Cole LLP** law firm's Providence office, which she helped to expand from five to 14 lawyers with multiple specialties in less than a decade.

Attorney Peter Lacouture, who has worked with her for 20 years, joined Igoe in opening the Providence office of Hartford, Conn.-based Robinson+Cole eight years ago.

"She's been a leader from the start of her career," Lacouture said. "She graduated from law school in the late '70s, when there weren't very many women in law firms. She was the first woman lawyer and partner in a firm in 1979. She is somewhat of a pioneer."

Igoe, who practices in commercial lending, real estate and business transactions, is confident in leading the way and taking the initiative to further the firm and its people. She is also not afraid to try something new.

Lacouture said Igoe encouraged Robinson+Cole to enter PBN's Best Places To Work program in 2013. That year, the firm won second place in the small-business category. Each year since, the firm has won first place.

One of the main reasons the firm's attorneys and other staff agree that Robinson+Cole is a Best Place to Work, he said, is the leadership, support and encouragement of Pat Igoe.

"Pat has the ability to pull people together and to inspire our young lawyers," Lacouture said. "She is always willing to talk to young staff with questions. She has counseled young lawyers, both male and female, and provided guidance as their professional careers progressed."

He said Igoe continues to exhibit the "glue factor" that was noted in her company evaluation when she was a partner

for 12 years at Peabody & Brown LLP in Providence. She brings people together with determination, drive and charisma.

"This is the personal attribute that helps bind an office of independent, strong-willed people together into a successful organization," he said. "She's a strong personality. ... [And] she has a strong relationship with her clients. They've followed her from firm to firm."

Igoe also believes in building relationships. She said that some of the loyal clients who have followed her from law firm to law firm have also become good friends.

Igoe regularly organizes internal networking sessions and social hours, Lacouture noted. She has spearheaded the firm's participation and sponsorship of the annual Bryant University Women's Summit for the past three years.

She has encouraged Robinson+Cole's participation purely as a result of her initial experience. "It [is] great for bonding with other women," she said.

A bigger example of her value to the firm, however, is that she helped build out and expand Robinson+Cole's Providence office. The expansion included not only more practicing attorneys but also a variety of new practice areas, including corporate law, data processing and her specialty, precious-metal lending law, in which she represents lenders and commercial users of precious metals, such as in jewelry manufacturing.

Igoe said the size of Robinson+Cole Providence has almost tripled since she and Lacouture opened it. But she added, "It's attributable to all of us. It takes a village, after all."

Though humble about her accomplishments, she is able to explain what motivates her. "My leadership style is to be collaborative," she said, "to make sure everyone has a



SUCCESS BUILT ON COLLABORATION:

Patricia J. Igoe, right, co-founder and partner of Robinson+Cole's Providence office, meets with legal administrative assistant Heidi Seddon.

PBN PHOTO/STEPHANIE ALVAREZ EWENS

role to play. I believe in listening and consensus building."

It's something she works to instill in young lawyers, she says. If they understand other people's perspectives, it works better for them and those around them.

Igoe is honored to receive her Business Women recognition. "It's always nice to get a reward for your work," she said. "But the best thing I have is coming to work every day and seeing the great people I work with." ■

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PATRICIA J. IGOE, Robinson+Cole LLP partner