

## [Legal Careers: Are Women Still Judged by Different Standards?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on April 14th, 2014

Why is it that my work and life will be judged by a different standard than my male partners?

That may become the first line in the novel I am writing about a Houston lawyer, Gina Caruso. If you are a regular reader, you know Gina is my business parable character from [Rising Star](#). In that book, Gina worries that she will disappoint her firm's leaders after she completes working on her one big client's matter.

In my novel writing classes and my study, I have learned that my character needs to be likable, but I can't "fall in love with my character." That is a challenge for me. I have to give Gina flaws, I have to put her in peril, and I have to make her yearn for something that will be very difficult to obtain or achieve.



Rising Star

Sadly, like my character Gina, many women lawyers practicing in law firms are judged by a different standard.

On Sunday, The [Dallas Morning News](#) published an article and an editorial that addressed this issue. In the editorial: [Gender discrimination hasn't disappeared](#), I found most troubling this quote taken from a McKinsey Report:

Women are judged on what they have actually accomplished. For promising men, research shows, potential is enough to win the day.

If that is true in law firms, just imagine the additional pressure women lawyers feel to get results.

I have coached 100s of women lawyers throughout the US and Canada, including many of you reading this blog post. The women I have coached have accomplished a great deal.

I could share with you many examples of those accomplishments. Here are two very recent examples: [Visible Expert Profile: Staci Riordan](#), and [Holland & Hart Attorney Andrea Anderson Receives 2014 Client Choice Award for Intellectual Property – ...:](#)

The business section article was titled: [Gender gap seen in promotions at most law firms in Texas](#). As you might expect, there is a serious gender gap in most of the large Texas firms, with 18 of the top 40 firms having promoted either none or only one woman to partner in the last three years.

A few are doing far better than the pack.

Three law firms — Jackson Walker, Baker Botts and Andrews Kurth — voted 41 women into their partnership ranks during the past three years, accounting for nearly one-third of the women elevated to partner at the 40 firms...

No law firm in Texas has a better record in recent years of promoting women to partner than Jackson Walker. The Dallas-based firm elevated 20 women to partner between 2012 and 2014 — nearly twice as many as any other Texas law firm.

That is some great PR for [Andrews Kurth](#), [Baker Botts](#) and especially for [Jackson Walker](#). Those firms lead the way, while other law firms only make changes when their clients demand it. I am certain those three firms attract top women lawyers and their clients value it.

So, do you think when Gina's story becomes public, she will be judged by a different standard?

# Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

**Cordell M. Parvin** built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, [www.cordellparvin.com](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).