

These Firms Have The Most Women In Equity Partnerships

By Jacqueline Bell

Law360 (October 19, 2020, 8:02 PM EDT) --At most U.S. law firms, equity partners are still overwhelmingly male, but women at some firms are starting to shake up that reality and smash the glass ceiling that has prevented them from advancing to the uppermost ranks.

While U.S. law firms have long professed a desire to achieve gender parity, progress — particularly at the partnership level — has been markedly slow.

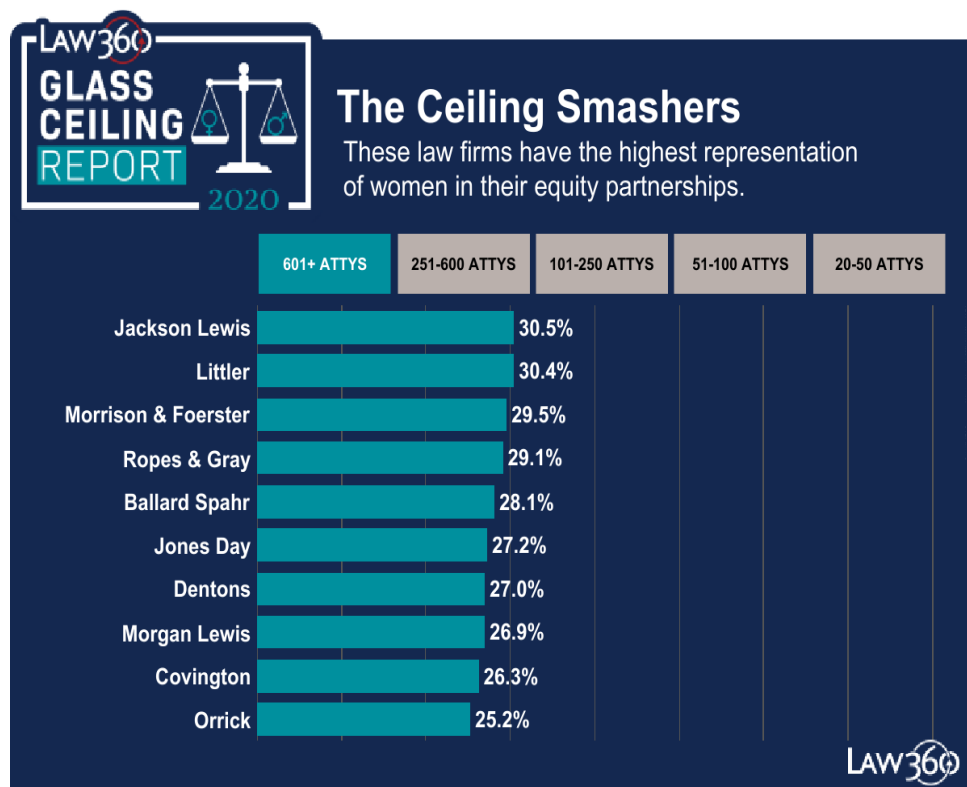
Women have made up at least 40% of law school students for decades, according to data collected by the American Bar Association, but less than a quarter of U.S. equity partners are women, according to Law360's latest survey.

Still, some firms have been able to make measurable progress, and show they are working to make good on their goals of achieving parity.

The firms on this list are finding ways to expand the representation of women in their upper ranks. At many of the largest firms, more than 30% of equity partners are women. At some smaller firms, more than half of equity partners are women.

These firms usher in a different image of what an equity partnership can look like. Some — such as Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy LLP — have more than doubled the industry norm in terms of female representation at the equity partner level.

Here are this year's Ceiling Smashers — the top 10 firms in each law firm size category that are outpacing their peers as the legal industry works towards closing the gender gap in its top ranks.



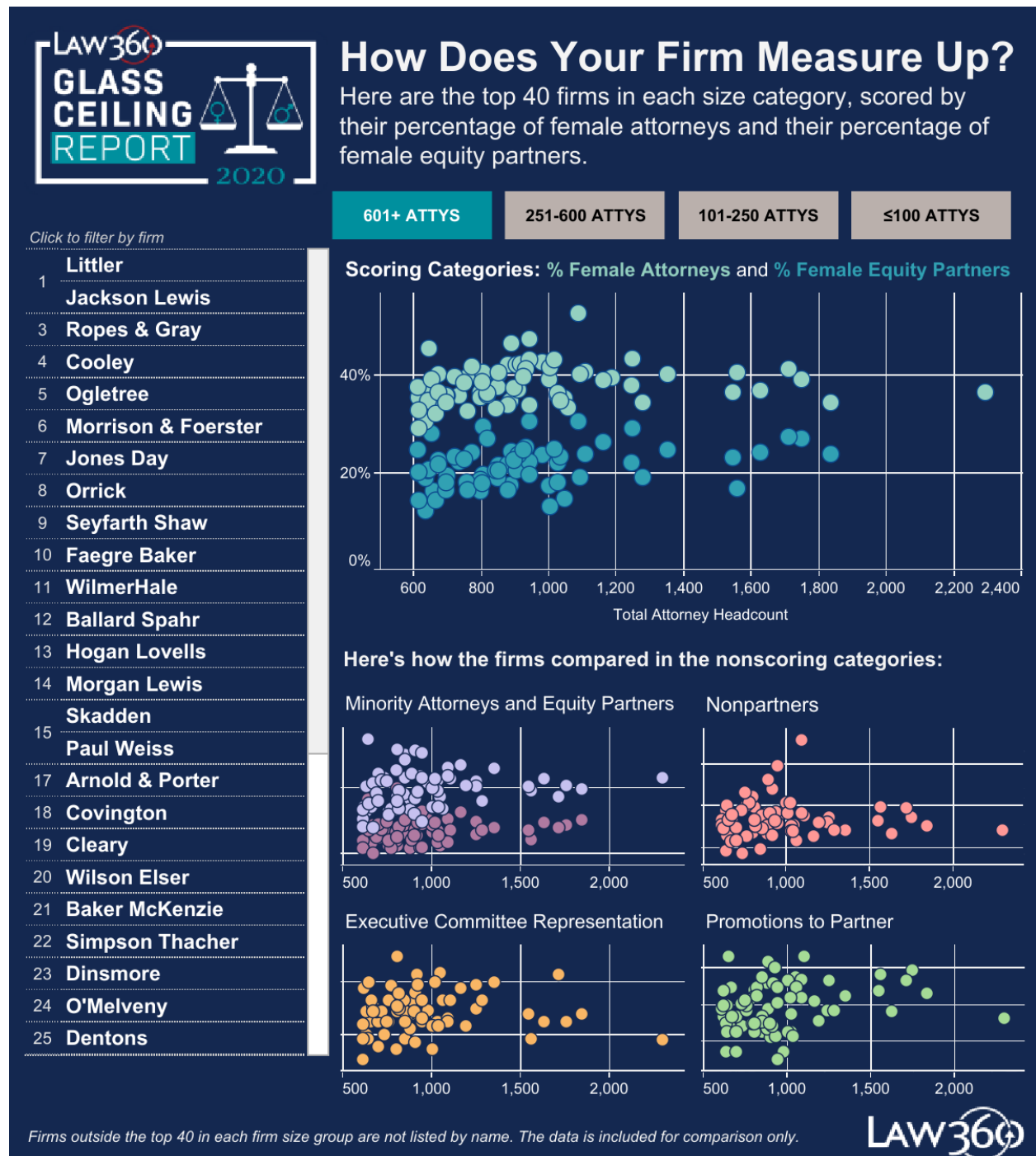
Glass Ceiling Report: How Does Your Firm Measure Up?

By Jacqueline Bell

Law360 (October 18, 2020, 8:05 PM EDT) -- Law firms have long struggled to clear the barriers that women face in the industry, particularly when it comes to accessing the top ranks.

Progress over the past few years has been, at best, minimal. The representation of women at U.S. law firms shrinks significantly at the level of partner and above, according to Law360's 2020 Glass Ceiling Report.

Less than a quarter of equity partners at surveyed U.S. firms are women. Executive committees have a similar lack of female representation.



Law firms as a whole fundamentally struggle to support the rise of women in their workforce, at all levels. This was true even before the onset of a global pandemic, and questions remain as to whether even those meager efforts will be stalled as the economic uncertainty continues.

Our survey data shows where law firms stood at the end of 2019, before the start of what has been an unprecedented year, one that has altered the working life of attorneys across the U.S.

Law firms face sharpened questions on gender parity in the workplace: What has worked, what hasn't, and where do they hope to be?

Law360's Glass Ceiling Report attempts to shed some light on those questions.

Here, we look at how law firms compare with firms of a similar size on two straightforward measures: the percentage of female attorneys at the firm and the percentage of female equity partners.

For the firms that rise to the top, we also provide a more detailed look at other measures: the percentage of female nonpartners, the percentage of attorneys who are women of color, the female representation on the firm's executive committee or similar management committee, and the percentage of recently promoted partners who are women.

We see this review as the beginning of a conversation that we hope will expand as we develop new ways of examining gender diversity in the profession and evaluate the data that is the most relevant to answering these difficult questions.

Methodology:

Law360 reviewed data from more than 300 firms to develop the ranking. In order to be included in the review, law firms had to at least provide demographic data on their overall attorney headcount. Firms had to have at least 20 attorneys in order to be reviewed.

In order to compare organizations of similar size, we divided law firms into categories by the number of total attorneys reported: 601 or more attorneys, 251-600 attorneys, 101-250 attorneys, and 100 or fewer attorneys. For those size categories, we spotlight the 40 firms with top scores.

In order to determine a firm's total score, we ranked law firms on their proportion of female attorneys and their proportion of female equity partners. Firms were awarded a proportion of the 50 points available in each of the two categories based on their rank in that category. Possible scores range from 0-100.

Most firms, but not all, provided data on the additional measures, and not all firms had relevant data to share. Some firms do not have executive committees, for example. Firms that are marked "no data available" could not provide data for those measures. The partner promotion measure includes firm responses to our survey query on the total number of attorneys promoted to partner, both equity and nonequity.

A few firms have merged since data on their 2019 numbers were provided, including Faegre Baker and Drinker Biddle. Since this data is reflective of numbers as of Dec. 31, 2019, they are listed under their previous names.

--Editing by Pamela Wilkinson and John Campbell.