

Shared Values

An Interview with former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch and Jessica Carey, Co-Chair of Litigation, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison

EDITORS' NOTE Loretta Lynch, a former United States Attorney General, is a partner in the Paul, Weiss Litigation Department. In this role, she advises clients on government and internal investigations and on high-stakes litigation and regulatory matters. Lynch's legal career has included both private law practice and public service, including three presidential appointments. She served as the U.S. Attorney General from 2015-2017, where she was appointed by President Barack Obama. Lynch has received numerous recognitions over her career; most recently, she was named a New York Law Journal "Distinguished Leader" and one of Benchmark Litigation's "Top 250 Women in Litigation," among others. Lynch received her JD and her BA from Harvard University.

Jessica Carey is Co-Chair of the Paul, Weiss Litigation Department and a member of the firm's Management Committee. She has deep experience handling a wide range of sensitive criminal, regulatory and complex commercial litigation matters, particularly on behalf of financial institutions, and has helped numerous clients successfully navigate their most significant, threatening white collar matters and internal investigations. In 2021, she was named a Law360 MVP for her achievements in the white-collar area. She is also recognized as a leading practitioner by Legal 500 in the Litigation: Corporate Investigations and White-Collar Criminal Defense category, among other recognitions. Carey earned a BA degree, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Boston College and a JD, cum laude from Fordham University School of Law.

FIRM BRIEF Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison (paulweiss.com) is a firm of more than 1,000 lawyers with diverse backgrounds, personalities, ideas and interests who collaboratively provide innovative solutions to their clients' most critical and complex legal and business challenges. Paul, Weiss represents the world's largest public and privately held corporations and investors, as well as clients in need of pro bono assistance.

How do you describe Paul, Weiss' culture and how critical is culture to the success of the firm?

Carey: Our culture here at Paul, Weiss is unique: it is one of constant collaboration, professionalism, mutual respect, diversity and inclusion, and an unshakeable commitment to pro bono work. This strong professional culture is critical to developing and retaining talent and promoting collegiality and teamwork. Leaning into these



Loretta Lynch



Jessica Carey

shared values during the past two years of great uncertainty and upheaval has made us stronger.

Lynch: I was drawn to the firm in large part because of Paul, Weiss' deep commitment to pro bono and public service, and its strong traditions of social advocacy, as well as professional excellence. In the face of a series of national and global crises, our team-oriented approach and openness to advocating for social change has served the firm well, as we have invested even more in pro bono service and in making our firm a more diverse, equitable and inclusive place.

Will you provide an overview of your roles and key areas of focus?

Lynch: Since I left my post as U.S. Attorney General to join Paul, Weiss, my main focus has been advising clients on government and internal investigations and on high-stakes litigation and regulatory matters. Much of that work is sensitive and remains confidential. I have also been involved in leading roles as mediator, fact-finder and problem-solver. Within the firm, in the past year and a half, I led and facilitated a variety of public and client-facing

events on systemic racism, ESG, and the emerging regulatory agenda of the Biden administration.

Carey: I handle a wide range of criminal, regulatory and complex commercial litigation matters, particularly on behalf of banks, fintech companies and private equity firms. I've represented major companies in sensitive investigations by various federal and state regulators and government authorities. I'm also co-chair of the Paul, Weiss Litigation Department – the first woman ever named to the role.

What have been the keys to the strength and leadership of Paul, Weiss' Litigation Department?

Carey: When it comes to the high-stakes, high-profile cases drawing media attention and government scrutiny, the Paul, Weiss Litigation Department is the go-to firm for the world's most important companies and financial institutions. We leverage unmatched trial skills, and we combine that with sophisticated business judgment and commercial, strategic advice. We are distinguished by the strength and success of our trial lawyers, our credibility with government officials and regulators, and our track record of courtroom wins and creative out-of-court resolutions. An extraordinary number of my partners, notably Loretta, but many others as well, have held senior roles in federal government.

How critical is it for Paul, Weiss to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when addressing client needs?

Lynch: Nurturing diverse perspectives is absolutely essential, and that is recognized here at Paul, Weiss. While diversity, equity and inclusion has long been a challenge for the legal industry overall, this is a firm that continues to proactively work to

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remove barriers to professional development and doesn't shy away from the tough conversations about racial justice and equity. Many of our clients come to us to hear about our experiences in this area and for guidance in their own diversity and inclusion efforts.

Carey: This is a “people” business, and there is a direct correlation between how successful we are in cultivating a diverse community and our firm's overall success. We have an edge because our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is a part of our DNA. We were the first firm to break down the barrier of Jews practicing with Gentiles; the first major New York firm to make a woman a partner, Carolyn Agger, in 1946; and the first major New York firm ever to hire a Black lawyer, William Coleman, in 1949.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the profession?

Carey: There are more opportunities than ever today for women to advance and become leaders in this profession, but the playing field is not yet level and women lawyers continue to be disproportionately represented at the highest levels of leadership in the legal industry.

I feel incredibly fortunate to work at a law firm like Paul, Weiss, which not only “talks the talk” but “walks the walk” in supporting the careers of women lawyers. That includes me: I was actively mentored and encouraged by partners at the firm. And I took advantage of Paul, Weiss' alternative work program as an associate and new parent, which allowed me even more flexibility in my schedule without slowing my advancement. I was working a reduced-hours, flexible schedule the year I made partner. The firm has also encouraged me to take on successive leadership roles, including on our Women's Initiative Committee, the Partnership Committee, and now our Management Committee and department leadership.

Will you highlight Paul, Weiss' long and deep commitment to pro bono work?

Lynch: For many decades, Paul, Weiss' dedication to service to others has made real, tangible change in this country, for the better. Paul, Weiss lawyers partnered with Thurgood Marshall in *Brown v. Board of Education* to help end racial segregation; established the principle of “one person, one vote” in *Gray v. Sanders*; and secured federal marriage equality for same-sex couples in *United States v. Windsor*. Recently, we have worked to preserve voting rights around the country,

spearheading a law firm coalition to oppose state-by-state efforts to restrict voting; and filed the first and only private lawsuit, *Sines v. Kessler*, in which white supremacists responsible for the 2017 violence in Charlottesville were recently found liable for conspiracy to commit racially motivated violence and ordered to pay more than \$25 million in damages.

What do you see as Paul, Weiss' responsibility to the communities it serves and to being a force for good in society?

Carey: Our partners, and the lawyers who join us, share a commitment to serving those in need in our communities and to working for the good of society. That means supporting our local small businesses and nonprofits and advising major corporations on how to become better corporate citizens. Over the past two years, we've redoubled our efforts to support communities impacted by the pandemic. We've led legal industry efforts to support racial justice, voter protection, reproductive rights, gun control, and economic relief for businesses and individuals impacted by the pandemic – often alongside our corporate clients.

Did you always know that you were interested in a career in the legal profession?

Lynch: In college, I was drawn to journalism, but law was always in the back of my mind; I ended up going to law school after doing a TV internship. For me, both journalism and the law are about storytelling. As a prosecutor, you help victims tell their stories, you help witnesses tell their stories and you tell the jury the story of the case. Both sides of that work involve crafting a narrative of what justice is and what justice looks like, so to be able to change and contribute to that narrative has been very rewarding for me.

Carey: I spent a good part of my childhood with my nose in a book – be it Nancy Drew or the Hardy Boys, I loved a good mystery – and spent hours every week at the local library. Law seemed like a natural profession to marry a love of learning and an interest in problem-solving. But not coming from a family of lawyers, I had little real understanding of the legal profession until after college, when I was a fellow at the New York City Mayor's Office. That was my first professional job (not counting my stints as a waitress, babysitter, pizza-maker or grocery store cashier) and exposure to lawyers who were making a difference in the lives of those around them. I loved that the profession required deep commitment, really digging into the issues, learning new things and providing a service to people.

What have been some of the most challenging aspects of advancing?

Carey: Finding the right role models can be challenging, since women are still outnumbered by men at the highest echelons of the profession, but it's important to find those people around you – both women and men – who have the type of career you'd like to emulate. Navigating a career while raising children (or any other care-giving activities) can be a difficult balancing act, but there is more flexibility and independence in this job than it might seem from the outside.

Lynch: There are certainly challenges both in being a woman in law and in being a minority. Young women are so often ignored in business settings; the eye doesn't really register them, so you need to speak up and make your presence known. Paradoxically, as a Black person, you are also visible and you stand out. But it can be very powerful to see that as an advantage rather than a disadvantage.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in law?

Carey: The life of a lawyer is often not predictable. An ability to roll with the punches, to not only adapt, but to embrace challenges and be energized by them, will serve you well in the practice of law. As lawyers, we keep a lot of plates spinning at the same time; you will likely be working on numerous complex and intertwined issues across disciplines, and be expected to achieve superior results for your clients. Developing flexibility alongside excellence will lead to opportunities that may surprise you.

Lynch: At the start of your career, take advantage of every opportunity to hone your craft and become the best you can be so that you'll always be applying the highest level of skill in helping those who need you. Keep striving for growth at every stage of your career, and as you advance, different opportunities will open up. Be open to stepping off the path you thought you would follow and exploring other options that resonate with you. Find what pulls at your heartstrings and give it everything you've got.

To junior female attorneys and attorneys of color in particular, please know that being different is an asset and gives you a unique, incredibly valuable perspective that can help you shine. Don't be afraid to speak up, make your presence known and look for ways to assume greater responsibility. The opportunities are endless in this fascinating profession of ours. ●