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Bringing integrity to clients, courtrooms

BY VICTOR PAUL ALVAREZ
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When you combine a zeal for women's advocacy and philosophy and throw in some courtroom expertise, you get Sheri L. Pizzi.

"I initially pursued a legal career because it seemed like a perfect synthesis of two of my passions during college – women's advocacy and philosophy," she said.

"I've noticed that it's still difficult for some of my female peers to actually ask for business. It's something that doesn't come naturally for some women. I think it's a skill that has to be developed," she said.

For those at Taylor Duane Barton & Gilman LLP, where Pizzi has been developing her skills, she already has produced some impressive highlights.

For instance, Pizzi obtained a jury verdict in favor of a surgeon in a case alleging ventricular damage as a result of emergency cardiac surgery; she secured an arbitration award in favor of a national hotel chain sued for age and gender discrimination; and she successfully defended a retailer in a

federal court employment action brought by a terminated worker.

"What is striking about Ms. Pizzi – and what sets her apart from other attorneys – is the exemplary passion and unyielding integrity she brings to the cases she handles," said Andria Coletta, a partner at the firm, who nominated Pizzi for this award. "She takes the high road and is consistently fair but

firm in representing clients. Her professionalism in and out of court is unwavering."

Coletta said Pizzi routinely handles high-exposure, complex civil-litigation matters. She concentrates her trial practice on health care professional-liability issues, with a particular emphasis on nursing-home litigation, as well as employment law. Pizzi, Coletta said, is as adept at litigating cases as she is counseling clients out of court on risk-avoidance issues.

"Her professional expertise is widely recognized, as demonstrated by the numerous seminars she has conducted on employment law, health care liability and risk management," Coletta said.

Pizzi counsels employers on



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HOME IS WHERE BUSINESS IS: Sheri L. Pizzi could not imagine living – or practicing law – anywhere other than Rhode Island.

various issues, including the discipline and termination of employees; the enforcement of non-compete agreements; the negotiation and drafting of employment and severance agreements; the protection of confidential business information; the creation of employee policies; and the resolution of wage and hour concerns.

That's a lot of legal heavy-lifting. But it's nothing compared to the 60-pound pack she carried to the 14,411-foot summit of Mount Rainier in Washington as part of The Climb to Fight Breast Cancer, Coletta said.

In honor and in memory of loved ones who have battled breast cancer, Pizzi raised thousands of dollars toward the search for a cure. This chal-

lenging climb required vigorous training to develop the conditioning, endurance and physical strength to summit the mountain.

In another example of breaking a sweat for a cause, Pizzi raised money to support cancer research by bicycling 150 miles through the Alaskan terrain near Mt. McKinley in The Breast Cancer Fund's "Bike Against the Odds." It is a fitting tribute to her mother, who died of breast cancer in 1996. Family – and her home state – mean a lot to Pizzi.

"This is my home and, as a true Rhode Islander, it wasn't an option to relocate for a job – how could I see my family if I moved?" she said. ■

