

Yes, Big Law can be caring, nurturing and understanding. Look for a firm with values.

When I started out as an associate at WilmerHale, I was aware, and wary, of the many tropes surrounding Big Law—the opportunity to work on high stakes, interesting matters on the one hand, but long hours, cutthroat culture, and minimal mentorship on the other hand. My original goal was to stay only a few years to take advantage of the professional development opportunities, and then move on before I burned out. But over a decade later I am still at the firm, grateful that not all Big Law stereotypes are true.

My first case team had dozens of lawyers, and I was one of the most junior lawyers, but I never felt like a cog in a machine. I was entrusted with ownership of a key issue, and honed the arguments with one of the lead partners in the lead up to and during trial. I was encouraged to share my views at team meetings, and received continual feedback on my work.

Ultimately, I learned that when it comes to finding a place to hang your hat, culture matters, values matter, and ultimately the people matter.

Meanwhile, when I started on the case, I had a one-year-old at home, and by the time we went to trial I was 8 months pregnant with my second child. Everyone I worked with was respectful of my commitments outside of work—doctor’s appointments, childcare duties, and just feeling under the weather—and I never felt sidelined because of them. My experience on that team was emblematic of the culture I found at WilmerHale, one that had high expectations not only for the quality of work we did, but also for how we treated others. I have happily stayed at the firm ever since, and tried to do my part to sustain the values that allowed me to grow both professionally and personally.

I’m fortunate in that I love my work, and for me that means not only enjoying the legal issues I tackle every day, but also respecting and appreciating the people I work with. Ultimately, I learned that when it comes to finding a place to hang your hat, culture matters, values matter, and ultimately the people matter.



Education: JD, Harvard Law School; ME and BS, MIT

Company Name: WilmerHale

Industry: Law

Company CEO: Susan Murley & Robert Novick (co-managing partners)

Company Headquarters Location: Washington, D.C.

Number of Employees: 1,988

What book are you reading? Whatever my kids are reading

What was your first job? Tutor

Favorite charity: The Henry Ford Invention Convention (K-12 invention education program)

Interests/Hobbies: Knitting, cooking, trying to braid my daughters’ hair

Family: Very grateful to my husband and our two girls