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Harris Beach PLLC names new managing partner

Heidi Schult Gregory is first woman in the role

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Heidi Schult Gregory, leader of the health care industry team at Harris Beach PLLC, is the firm's new managing partner for the Rochester office.

She replaces Phillip G. Spellane, who was managing partner for four years. Spellane now will continue with his business and commercial litigation practice and serve on the firm's compensation committee.

"She is someone who is widely respected — by our professional staff and attorneys, our clients, and so many others," Harris Beach CEO Christopher Jagel said.

"She's an excellent advocate for clients and relishes helping them achieve success and solve problems. In the wider legal community, she is recognized as a true leader, as witnessed by the many roles she's taken on judicial and other committees and in connection with many law-related associations," he said.

Gregory, who will receive a Leader in Law Award from the Daily Record on Nov. 12, will continue with her law practice advising healthcare clients on legal regulatory compliance issues, as well as handle healthcare litigation, guardianships and mental hygiene proceedings.

"This office has a long-standing history of dedication to community outreach. I look forward to sustaining and evolving that commitment and serving the changing legal and professional services needs of our clients here. Receiving the Leader in Law award at the same time makes this a fall to remember," she said.

Gregory has extensive involvement in the legal community in Rochester. She is a member of the Magistrate Judge Selection Panel for the Western District of New York and a member of the Judicial Hearing Officer Screening Committee of the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court, Fourth Department.

She is former chair of the Attorney Grievance Committee for the Fourth Department and a former president and secretary of the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys (GRAWA), where she is now on the board.

Gregory, 50, is co-chair of the Health Law and Reproductive Rights Committee of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York and a former trustee of the Monroe County Bar Association and a member of the Board of Advisors at her alma mater, Siena College, in Loudonville, Albany County.

Gregory is vice chair of the board of directors of Coordinated Care Services Inc., a non-profit organization that provides business and consult-

ing services to human service organizations.

After receiving her bachelor's degree from Siena College, she got her law degree at Albany Law School.

She started as an associate at Harris Beach in 1996.

Gregory is the first woman to serve as a managing partner at any of Harris Beach's offices, although there are several women in other leadership roles at the firm, including the compensation and management committees and in senior executive positions.

"The fact that I am a female is a great thing for this office and for the community," she said.

"We have other law firms in this community that I know have been led by women in the past and are currently being led by women, but for the associates here, for the staff here, to be able to see a female leader in this office I think is a great thing, is a special thing," she said.

Although Gregory worked part-time at Harris Beach from mid-2002 until 2009 to devote more time to help raise three children, her career path was affected only slightly, she said.

She switched to part-time after the birth of her second child, but still made partner in 2006 and didn't return to full-time hours until about 2009.

"The firm has always been very progressive in how it views its talent and appreciating that they need to look at some of us

in a very different way," she said.

Firm-wide, Gregory and other top managers will be dealing with the impact of technology on a changing legal market in the coming years.

On a more local level, at the Rochester office, Gregory said she will be "figuring out ways in which I can assist the attorneys in advancing their own personal and professional reputations, advancing within the profession, promoting them."

"I want to make sure that we're enhancing the reputation of this firm, that we're as visible as we can be. I want to be able to lift some of my colleagues and maybe get them out of their comfort zone a little bit," she said.

Gregory grew up in Rockland County and has wanted to be a lawyer since eighth grade, when she was inspired by a social studies teacher with a passion for government and the justice system.

"I kind of caught the bug. I gravitated towards those studies and I felt very strongly about identifying with a profession where I was going to be able to kind of make an impact," she said.

She worked at an Albany law firm for a couple years, then moved to Rochester, where her husband, Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas Gregory heads the Rochester branch of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

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