

→ PROFILE

by **Leigh Stuart**
photography by **Jody Robinson**

Attorneys Julianna Merback Burdo and Robin Schleifer Weiss inspire and achieve in pursuit of justice for their clients.

Women comprise a disproportionately slim percentage of individuals working in the legal profession—just 35 percent, according to a 2018 report by the American Bar Association. But at the Firm of Haggerty, Goldberg, Schleifer & Kupersmith P.C., this is far from the case.

“Our ratio of female to male associates is 50-50,” says attorney Julianna Merback Burdo, chair of the medical malpractice and catastrophic injury department for the Firm, which has nine offices throughout the Greater Philadelphia Area. “I think each of the Firm’s practice groups have several women lawyers on their team who are absolutely driving forces.”

Though she is the only female partner at HGSK, Burdo speaks with pride about what she refers to as the “broad brush of rising female accomplisheers” at the Firm. She has even taken on the role of mentor to one of these women, attorney Robin Schleifer Weiss, a University of Pennsylvania undergraduate and Law School alumna and daughter of HGSK President Charles J. Schleifer.

“I take very seriously the notion of mentoring,” Burdo shares. “I want to hand down some of the things my mentors gave me.”

Weiss is quick to share her appreciation and plans to “pay it forward.”

“It is absolutely important for females to look out for one another and guide each other through challenges,” says Weiss, who recently completed a term on the board of the YWCA Bucks County. “I hope to have the opportunity to mentor other young female attorneys in the future.”

Weiss already has a fair few nuggets of wisdom to impart: “Be comfortable and confident. Own who you are. Be true to yourself. Find your voice and your own way when it comes to trying cases, because what works for someone else may not work for you.”

While Burdo asserts that she is honored to have the ability to serve as a strong female role model for an up-and-coming attorney such as Weiss, she insists that gender should not be a focal point. Or, as she puts it, “As a legal advocate for my client’s right to recovery, I identify more as a tenacious human being than focusing on gender.”

HGSK lawyers fight for injured individuals in areas including Worker’s Compensation, Social



Some of HGSK’s female legal team includes (left to right) Robin Schleifer Weiss, Bethany Brooks, Suzanne Tighe, Miriam A. Newman, and Julianna Merback Burdo.

Leading Women

Security Disability, Personal Injury, Bad Faith, and Excess Coverage Cases. In their Bucks County office, Burdo and Weiss specialize in cases involving medical malpractice, nursing home negligence, automobile accidents and slip and falls. Because of the tremendous gravity of these cases, these two women lawyers work very hard to build strong connections with the individuals they represent; Burdo, for example, shares her cellphone number with every client.

“I am accessible to my clients, and my clients know that they are a priority, whether or not I am in the office,” she says. “My clients know that they have near constant access to me. The goal is to achieve justice, but also to lend as much emotional support as possible throughout the lengthy and oftentimes frustrating legal process.”

Burdo and Weiss agree that in cases involving injury, all victories are bittersweet. They agree that every one of their clients would give back a settlement to return to the day before an injury. In other words, good health is worth more than any sum.

“No amount of money can make up for a client’s loss, but a favorable outcome can help them move past a tragic chapter in their life,”

Weiss adds, “Clients seek answers. They want recognition that they were wronged.”

Likewise, those who have been injured want the individuals or organizations that harmed them to be held accountable. Burdo says clients want to make sure what happened to them doesn’t happen to anyone else. Whether a case involves getting a hospital to change a flawed policy or holding a wrongful party accountable for a neglectful action, Burdo and Weiss are committed to helping their clients heal.

“We cannot alter the course of events, but we fight hard to have our clients’ voices heard, and for those who erred to take responsibility,” Weiss adds. “That really resonates with Julianna and myself, particularly on issues involving women’s health. We handle cases involving miscarriages, stillbirths and birth injuries, as well as other gynecological issues such as breast cancer, breast surgery, GYN and urologic issues. As women, we can personally relate with the permanent impacts and the consequential effects of these and other types of catastrophic medical errors.” ■



For more information on the law offices of Haggerty, Goldberg, Schleifer & Kupersmith P.C., call (267) 419-6422 or visit HGSKlawyers.com.