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## Barbara Kolsun: A Career of the Spirit

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## Barbara Kolsun: A Career of the Spirit



*The following excerpt is from a keynote speech by Professor Barbara Kolsun, director of The FAME Center for Fashion, Arts, Media & Entertainment, to the Federal Bar Association Intellectual Property Law Section.*

I recently read a wonderful piece written by Anna Quindlen about it being so much easier to write a resume of your academic and work history than to elaborate on the formation and qualities of your spirit. I have thought about that a lot these past few years, and I want to talk briefly about what has become my life's work since founding The FAME Center at Cardozo about eight years ago and the importance to many of this in this room in training the next generation of lawyers who counsel the next generation of inventors, fashion designers and manufacturers and generally all creatives in this very complicated world they have inherited.

We now live in a startup world, and this next generation needs a well-rounded education necessary to service that world and manage its risks. I often tell my now hundreds of students over many years that we are service providers first and foremost. I compare us to flight attendants -- keep our clients safe from the beginning to end of the flight.

When hiring this next generation of lawyers in fashion companies and firms that represent them, look beyond the Ivy League and law review candidates and look instead at the quality of the education and their experience. So many of my students wrongly apologize for their English, music, dance, theater, philosophy and history majors. I went to a liberal arts college, Sarah Lawrence College, whose

graduates include Barbara Walters, Maggie Haberman, Vera Wang, Yoko Ono, Alice Walker, J.J. Abrams, Rahm Emmanuel (he was a dance major!) and world class-scientists, writers, chefs, CEOs, and the list goes on. I studied with Joseph Campbell and concentrated (we did not have majors) in theater and music and literature.

I chose Cardozo, the youngest of the New York law schools, for the faculty. I studied constitutional law with Telford Taylor, the lead Nuremberg prosecutor, David Rudenstine, whose scholarship includes the Pentagon Papers and now the Parthenon marbles and their return to Greece, and with Barry Scheck, my dear friend and mentor who started The Innocence Project. Cardozo graduates are prominent lawyers in all things FAME -- fashion, arts, media, entertainment, including streaming service and sports, music (always making the Billboard list of top music lawyers) and tech, including Google.

Our current students care about responsible fashion, trade, where what they wear is made, diversity and racism. Through our FAME Center, our students intern at dozens of fashion companies and other FAME entities, and our alum work at Chanel, Ralph Lauren, LVMH, Capri (Michael Kors), Marc Jacobs, The Children's Place, Macy's, Estee Lauder, Luxottica Group, Tommy Hilfiger and Tiffany.

The FAME Center, which I direct, was born in 2015 when Lee Sporn (former GC of Michael Kors) and I pitched the idea to our dean. We saw that no other law school offered a specialized curriculum preparing students for work with global businesses and international and local cultural institutions on issues such as brand protection and management and other legal challenges generated by the digital marketplace, taught by experienced leaders in the industry.

What distinguishes FAME from other fashion law programs is that we see fashion as part of the bigger world of entertainment and the arts.

I want to end with a challenge to all of you charged with hiring this next generation of fashion lawyers: Pay them fairly. My generation of women lawyers were rarely mentored since the assumption was that we would leave the practice of law once we had kids. Well, the world has proven that wrong. One of my idols and role models, Sara Moss, vice chairman of Estee Lauder, had four kids and rose to the top of the in-house fashion profession. I raised a son, now in business development at Orrick after six years at big firms in Hanoi and Singapore, while working full time.

So that is the resume of my spirit. Though I never made millions in a merger, I am very pleased with my legacy as a professor, mentor, editor, and most important, friend and role model. I hope you are all on the same path.