

50 Women to Watch: Kimberly Taylor

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by Kristin Calve, Publisher, Co-Founder



Kimberly Taylor, Esq., President, JAMS



In her role as president, Kimberly Taylor oversees JAMS' operations in the United States and abroad. Working directly with the CEO, Taylor is responsible for the company's overall operations, with oversight of business functions, including panel relations, marketing and practice development, Resolution Center operations and human resources. She also provides operational and strategic leadership for international expansion efforts and works closely with the CEO and CFO to handle the implementation of policies and strategy.

Taylor has been a key contributor to JAMS since she joined the organization in 1999. She previously served as senior vice president and chief legal and operating officer, where she oversaw the company's day-to-day operating activities in the U.S. and abroad. In addition, she worked with general counsel to manage the overall risk of the company, advising management and the board with respect to transaction and negotiations. Prior to that, she served as vice president of the East/Central Region, where she oversaw unprecedented growth and expansion efforts, led panelist recruitment and directed business development, strategic planning and daily management of Resolution Centers in the region. As associate general counsel, and an expert on arbitration processes, she developed and oversaw the training of staff and neutrals and served on the JAMS National Arbitration Committee. She is a frequent writer, lecturer and speaker, and has developed ADR programs for business and government agencies.

Prior to joining JAMS, Taylor practiced law in Ventura County, California. She earned her J.D. from Ventura College of Law, where she later served as an adjunct professor. She is a member of the California State Bar.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest professional achievement is becoming a lawyer. I did not grow up in a family that valued education and was actually discouraged from pursuing higher education by people in my life. Eventually, I attended law school at night while working full time and graduated at the top of my class, overcoming a number of personal obstacles along the way. The day I was sworn in as a lawyer marked a significant shift in the trajectory of my life, all for the better. This led to a career in ADR at JAMS, which also led to a move cross-country, which led me to my husband and beautiful step-children. The life we've created and lived together is my proudest personal achievement.

What is the most influential piece of advice (professional or personal) you have received?

Always take the high road. No matter how hard it may be, or how many roadblocks are on that path, you will never look back and regret your decisions. Despite its hardships, taking the high road is worth the view!

Where do you see the legal profession in 10+ years?

I think the legal profession will embrace technology and change more rapidly than in the past. This was borne out by the seismic shifts in the way lawyers and courts and other legal professionals work today, as we were all forced to change because of the pandemic. Artificial intelligence is already being embedded in much of our lives, and the legal profession will embrace this to deliver services to clients more efficiently. I believe we will continue to increase diversity in our profession so that we better reflect the communities that we serve.

What is/are your favorite extracurricular activity/activities?

Being outdoors at the beach or the mountains brings me peace. Combining that with physical activity is the best! I am an avid reader, and I love to experiment with new recipes. If I can do all of that with my husband and dog, I'm in heaven!

What is one thing people should know about you but don't?

I'd love to write a children's book. I have a story in mind—not surprising to those who know me that my Labrador Retriever is the main character—and I'm taking art classes so that I can—maybe—work on the illustrations.

Name your hometown/where you were born/where you grew up and where you live now.

I grew up in several places in Southern California and then moved to the East Coast, where I lived for about 15 years. I'm pleased to be back in Southern California, within a short walk to the beach and a short drive to the mountains.

If you were not a legal professional, what other line of work would you pursue?

I might have pursued teaching elementary school, or journalism. Both of these are challenging professions today, so I'm thankful I ended up in law, especially in alternative dispute resolution. Helping people resolve conflict is immensely satisfying.

Anything else you'd like to share?

I'm very honored to be included among the 50 "Women to Watch" by CCBJ. JAMS is an organization that celebrates women and includes women prominently among our associate, management and panelist ranks, so this is a meaningful recognition for me and for JAMS.

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