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First things first: How this international lawyer became the first female chair of a global legal network

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In the first week of January, Hope Krebs received her travel itinerary for the rest of the year and part of 2017. It's a little intimidating, to say the least.

As the co-chair of the international practice group at Philadelphia-based law firm Duane Morris, Krebs is used to doing a fair bit of traveling. But her new role as chair of Multilaw has her leaving home for at least one week each month.

"Not being physically around my family to make sure everybody is where they need to be is a little frightening," she said.

Krebs was recently elected chair of Multilaw, a global network of independent law firms connecting clients and lawyers across international borders. She is the first woman in the position in the company's 25-year history. Krebs recruits law firms across the globe to join Multilaw's network, increasing resources for people and businesses in need of international legal services.

Her two-year commitment also benefits Duane Morris, which is a member of Multilaw. Through Multilaw's connections, Duane Morris' 700 attorneys have an increased geographical reach.

Krebs' new responsibilities are an addition to her regular work managing the international practice at Duane Morris, and it's important to Krebs to remain an active lawyer.

"I'm not giving up my day job," she said.

We spoke with Krebs about her new balancing act and getting her first taste of the business world before she even started high school.

First job: My very first job was in the hotel management industry. I was 13 and I acted as bookkeeper at my parents' resort in Lake George, N.Y. I was responsible for calculating the weekly payroll for the employees, paying the bills and doing anything that related to the bookkeeping part of the business. I also ran the front desk during the night shift along with my cousin. So I was involved in the family business pretty early.

Being in a service business, you learn the customer is always right – always – which is helpful as a lawyer. That's probably the most



Hope Krebs, co-chair of the international practice group at Philadelphia-based law firm Duane Morris, was recently elected chair of Multilaw, a global network of independent law firms.

important lesson I learned.

First industry job:

I'm a tax lawyer by training, so I actually worked as a tax accountant in college before I became a lawyer. My first tax job was when I was in my second year of college. I went to Drexel University in Philadelphia, which is known for its co-operative education program. My first job was in a medium-sized Philadelphia-based accounting

firm. I worked there during tax season for six months and went to school. My first law job was for a corporate law firm in New York. I graduated from law school and then went to New York and worked up there for a medium-sized law firm.

First drink of the day: Coffee, coffee and more coffee. I don't know how people get through the day without it. I still brew my own at home. I don't use the K-cup thing; that's not my style. I'm old school. I drink dark roast with a splash of sugar-free flavored syrup.

First workplace mistake: It was reaching a conclusion and proposing action for a client based on someone else's summary of the facts without verifying those facts for myself. That was a big mistake, because I was wrong. It turns out the facts weren't as they said they were. In my business, facts are key. I learned quickly that you do need to delve into the facts, and sometimes you need to know them even better than your clients.

What came of it was, in a small-picture sense, I was a very young attorney and the more senior attorney stepped in and helped me manage the mistake. In the bigger picture, what you learn is people do make mistakes, and you try to make as few as possible. As you practice, you really learn how to navigate through them. Sometimes, mistakes wind up being good things. You've got to plan through this for your clients and you can't get bogged

down with the self-loathing that comes with a mistake. You need to move beyond that and find a solution.

First big accomplishment: Being named co-chair of the international practice at Duane Morris. I was one of the first partners with an international practice to be hired at Duane Morris. Duane Morris was traditionally a large but very regional firm and our clients tended to do business within the U.S. I was definitely one of the first lawyers hired who had international practice.

First mentor: My first mentors were probably my parents. Besides teaching me the basics of life, they had enough confidence in me to allow me to be a bookkeeper for a family business at 13. That's a lot of confidence. Maybe it was a little crazy, but no one else would've given me that opportunity.

I've had mentors in every single job I've ever held. They're not necessarily people who are in positions of power, although a number of them were. I've had mentors who were co-workers, mentors who have worked for me. You learn something from everyone.

First task at hand in your new role: I was elected chair in October at our annual meeting in Hong Kong, and I had my first official responsibility right after. I flew from Hong Kong immediately to Taipei in Taiwan to meet with a law firm there. Multilaw had been considering a firm in Taiwan to become a member for quite some time. I actually went on a recruiting visit to meet with them. I had a day full of meetings in Taipei. I think I met 20 different lawyers at the firm, including the chairman of the firm.

First person you called when you got this job: My husband. I called him to ask if he thought we could make this work. I still have a high schooler at home and we're still managing the juggling task of making sure that everybody is where they need to be at the right time. That's hard enough with me being a lawyer and him working, but to add in that now I'll be traveling so much out of the country, I needed his buy-in. We're giving it a try.

Duane Morris LLP