

Member of the Month – Sharon Weinberg

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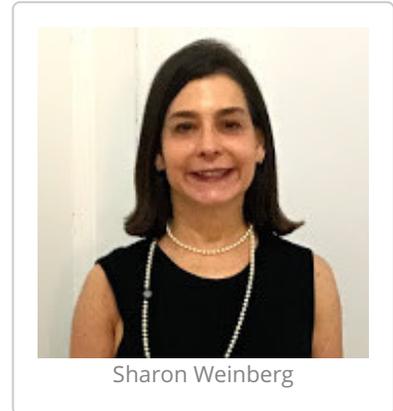
Meet the June 2019 FWA Member of the Month and see what she is doing in the financial community.

Please tell us about your FWA journey so far!

I joined the FWA when I was working with JP Morgan in their Asset Management division and had helped form an informal microfinance working group there. Since I was personally very passionate about microfinance and the FWA had a committee focusing on that topic (now called Impact Investing), I decided to join!

My interest in microfinance relates to my commitment to feminism, both in terms of women’s reproductive rights and their skills empowerment.

I came back to the FWA in 2017 to be a mentor in the new Member2Member mentoring program, which has been very fulfilling.



Sharon Weinberg

What do you think sets the FWA apart?

I love the fact that the FWA is a grassroots organization with lots of diversity. It feels very inclusive, because it’s a volunteer led organization where members have a chance to be actively involved in committees. I think it is important to take on leadership roles with organizations like the FWA because it opens avenues for the future, especially for those considering a career in the not-for-profit sector. Plus, it’s a great way to get practical experience and take on roles outside of one’s comfort zone.

Tell us about your career.

I have 30 years’ experience working as a lawyer and banker and most recently entrepreneur and angel investor. I started working at a law firm right after law school and did regulatory corporate work. I moved to JP Morgan and helped built their Funds Business, then led the Institutional Advisory Business and subsequently the Law Firms Group within the bank’s Private Banking arm.

Most recently I decided to pursue my passion for women’s empowerment and co-founded Blue Leaf Ventures, which is dedicated to helping entrepreneurs develop their great ideas into even greater businesses by providing capital, support, and guidance.

Last year I became an Advisor for Twentyeight Health, which is an online platform for women's health. The overall objective is to help educate women about their reproductive health and provide access to affordable contraceptives. We are currently working with CUNY schools to drive more awareness because they have a high presence of low-income students and immigrants who cannot afford or do not otherwise have easy access to affordable healthcare. Our overall objective is to make women's healthcare convenient and affordable and this is something I am most passionate about.

How did you transition from being a lawyer, banker and now businesswoman?

When I was working at a law firm, I agreed to move from regulatory corporate work to mutual funds after my first child was born because the nature of the work was more predictable, and I could manage my work-personal life more effectively. The mutual funds group was not particularly glamorous at the time; however, it opened a door with JP Morgan Chase when they wanted to build their Funds Business.

The one big change I had to face when transitioning to businesswoman was to create my own momentum and figure out what to do with my day, have a plan in place.

Who is a source of inspiration and strength in your life and why?

I really admire Virginia Apgar, the anesthesiologist who developed the famous Apgar score to summarize the health of a newborn child against infant mortality. Virginia Apgar initially wanted to become a surgeon and was discouraged because she was a woman (despite being 4th in her class!)

What I admire about Virginia Apgar is that:

1. She committed to and made her 'plan B' work
2. She looked at the situation and found a novel solution by developing the Apgar score in the 1950's, which positively changed mortality for babies (and which is still used today)

What are your top takeaways learned from your experiences so far?

First, during your day, try to connect with people and find something in common so that you create authentic, long lasting relationships.

Second, avoid the drama and gossip because it's a waste of time and negative for one's mental state.

Please share with us a book you recommend.

'The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down' by Anne Fadiman. It is all about the Hmong community in California. The book focuses on the life and medical troubles of a young girl from the Hmong community. It's an inspiring book because it highlights cultural clashes and the impact of miscommunication.

Previous Member of the Month