

NEW ENGLAND DISTINGUISHED LEADERS: JOHN MCGIVNEY, RUBIN RUDMAN



John McGivney, managing partner at Rubin Rudman, is one of the 2026 New England Distinguished Leaders award winners. Read a Q&A with him below.

What inspired you to become a lawyer, and what keeps you inspired?

My father was a lawyer and trial judge who died very young. His gavel rested on our home's fireplace mantle as I was growing up, and I aspired to be like him and worthy of his name.

Trying cases and preparing for trial is hard work. But courtroom advocacy is exciting, and clients often understand and appreciate it much more than the behind-the-scenes preparation and mundane tasks of daily law practice. In civil cases, there are only three possible outcomes—win, lose, or settle. While achieving a big win at trial or obtaining a successful settlement for your client is the ultimate objective, losing is part of being a trial lawyer. To handle the disappointment, you must truly love and be inspired by the work itself.

Please describe work on a recent case or issue that has made you proud.

When I became Managing Partner nine years ago, our firm wanted to diversify our lawyer demographics to bring on fresh, modern perspectives and to add complementary practice groups to our more traditional ones, so clients have one-stop shopping. I'm very proud of the fact that we've achieved these twin objectives and continue to transform our firm into one of the largest and most vibrant in New England.

During my tenure, we've grown to an over 100-lawyer law firm and are actively adding talent across our

departments. Since the beginning of 2025, we have added 18 lawyers to our team and are now ranked among the 25 Largest Law Firms in Massachusetts. I'm also very proud of the fact that women now make up nearly 60% of our practice group leaders, 45% of our partners, and 43% of our Executive Committee, and that our average attorney age is 40.

What qualities should a lawyer possess to become a successful and effective leader?

First, patience. Nothing happens overnight. Young lawyers need time and encouragement to develop. More mature lawyers need support to build their practices. Established lawyers need assurance that when their clients have unexpected needs or new opportunities are presented to them that the firm will be responsive and adaptable. Second, I'd say respect. Respect for the profession itself. Respect for your fellow lawyers, in the firm and outside the firm. Respect for the clients, many of whom are caught up in circumstances they never anticipated and have never experienced before. Third, the ability to improvise when necessary, to think on your feet when new issues appear, and to embrace new ideas and worthy changes. And fourth, love. Love your firm and your profession and be true to its highest values.