

JUNE 6, 2022 | FIRM NEWS

CMC Spotlight Series – Meet Mikel Koon!

[Mikel Smith Koon](#) is Conn Maciel Carey LLP's first Chief Operating Officer. She brings over 20 years of experience in business management, including 10 years in law firm management, focusing on operations and human resources.

As the COO, Ms. Koon manages CMC's day-to-day operational efficiency by identifying key procedural issues. She crafts core processes to improve essential business functions that align with the firm's objectives. She also oversees the administrative divisions of the firm—marketing, accounting, IT, and human resources. As part of the firm's leadership team, she works directly with the Managing Partners, playing a pivotal role in developing and executing CMC's strategic plan as the firm continues to expand.

Ms. Koon has an entrepreneurial spirit with special expertise in project and people management. Prior to joining the legal industry, she founded and ran a consulting firm, Mosaik Strategies, for 16 years. Here she was dedicated to coaching small business and nonprofit leaders to establish growth initiatives and build strategic relationships to achieve greater success.



In her spare time, Mikel enjoys running, and she practices Jhoon Rhee-style Tae Kwon Do. She and her husband have two daughters.

Get to Know Mikel!

Where is your favorite vacation spot?

Any place on a warm beach! For short breaks, I love Cape May, New Jersey. For longer vacations, OBX. If money is no object, Hawaii.

What was your first job?

A sales clerk at Patterson Silks Fabrics when I was 16. This was a dream job for me. I learned to sew at a very young age, so working at Patterson Silks was like working in Heaven! I could only imagine the amazing clothes I could make with all of these beautiful textiles.

If you could share a cup of coffee with one individual, living or dead, who would it be?

It's hard to name just one, but right now I think of my maternal grandfather, Lawrence Disraeli Scott. Grandpa Scott died when I was young. He was a well-known and respected radiologist in Chicago. He earned his MD in 1933 from Meharry Medical College, an HBCU in Nashville, Tennessee. He became the best in his field, which wasn't easy in the 1930s and 40s for a black doctor. As a kid growing up, I never heard my grandfather complain or saw him unhappy. As an adult, I would be interested to learn more about what life was really like for him.



What do you do for fun?

I love to run and listen to books and podcasts. When I am out on the trail running and listening to a book, I feel like I've been on a week-long vacation. That's one of my favorite things to do.

What do you "Netflix"?

What don't I Netflix!? But honestly, my very favorite television show is Blue Bloods. It's so corny, but I love that it's not overly violent, it's not bloody and there are no real surprises. I know how every episode will end after the first five minutes! I love that about it.

What is your most embarrassing professional moment?

In the early 2000s, I was co-chairing a diversity seminar with a colleague. From time to time we would surprise each other and use examples the other person hadn't heard before, just to have fun with each other and see the other person's reaction. During this session in a room of about 200 people, she used an example centered around the people from Eritrea. Since all of my geography classes were way before Eritrea even existed, I had never even heard of this country. I had no idea what she was even talking about. She turned the session over to me to continue my portion of the session, using her example. I picked up the discussion, referring to the country as "ur EE' the a". Not only had I never heard of the country, I couldn't even pronounce it! It was so embarrassing.

What do you like about working for CMC?

I love the culture and the people at CMC. Everyone works hard and takes their work seriously. People accept responsibility for their actions, and they don't make excuses for their mistakes. The firm's leadership is solutions-driven. When something goes wrong, the partners don't look to blame someone. Instead, they collaborate with those involved to seek ways to avoid the issue again in the future. The partners accept mistakes as part of learning and part of life. Because of this, employees are not afraid to own up to their mistakes, but learn from their mistakes and move on. It's a very encouraging and positive place to work. Other organizations claim a collaborative environment, but I have found few that truly are.

Who is someone that you admire professionally?



There are a few that I admire for various reasons. I admire Bruce Schechter (an Intel alum and colleague) for knowing how to get the best out of people through encouragement and trust. Barbara Whye (graduate school friend, Intel alum and colleague, currently VP of Inclusion and Diversity at Apple) for her strength and perseverance. I'd also have to include Michelle Obama for her strength, perseverance and grace under pressure.

What advice would you give to young professionals?

Remain open to learning. Don't judge where the learning comes from. You might be surprised by the pearls of wisdom that come from the most unlikely places. Seek perspectives of others, regardless of their chosen paths or years of experience. Consider all points of view before making decisions. Remain open-minded and appreciate the value others can bring. Most of all, be humble. Becoming a lawyer is commendable, but that

achievement doesn't make you smarter or better than those who have journeyed a different path. Value contributions from all people.

Connect with Mikel

