



Job Title: Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel in the Office of the General Counsel

Education: JD magna cum laude, Duke University School of Law; BA cum laude, public policy & history, Duke University

Company Name: New York Life

Industry: Insurance

Company CEO: Theodore Mathas

Company Headquarters Location: New York, New York

Number of Employees: 11,320

Words you live by: “Your eyes make work. Sitting back and staring at a problem always makes it seem ponderous or insurmountable. Just jump in somewhere and get started.” – My Grandmother (in Haitian Kreyòl)

Personal Philosophy: To whom much is given, much is required. (Luke 12:48)

What book are you reading: *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose* by Eckhart Tolle

What was your first job: Receptionist at my mother’s medical practice

Favorite charity: City Year New York

We Stand on the Shoulders of Giants

There is one universal truth that women grasp intuitively—you can’t do it alone. Having the humility and foresight to ask for help is the key to having a long, fulfilling and meaningful career. Early in our professional journey, there is a tendency to equate asking for help with weakness. However, as we progress, we realize that attempting to have all the answers, or viewing successes solely through the lens of individual accomplishments, is short-sighted and harmful (both for us as individuals and for our respective teams). As more women take leadership roles, it is imperative that we keep cultivating support for one another and praising collective accomplishments, while still recognizing individual achievements. Women know that we all stand on the shoulders of giants.

I can mark the milestones in my life and career by the giants that leaned down to let me climb upon their perch, so I could see further than my grounded perspective would permit. My first giant was my mother, who immigrated to the United States from Haiti in the 1970s. Although she was a trained surgeon in her home country, she

had to repeat her medical training to be licensed in the United States. Despite not yet speaking English, she was able to pass her qualifying exams by recognizing the Latin roots of the medical terms.

I started my life on her shoulders, elevated by her drive, ambition, grit, and love. My career has been marked by the support of giants at virtually every step, and without them I would not be here. Women like the Honorable Ann Claire Williams, United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (Retired) and Sheila K. Davidson, executive vice president and general counsel of New York Life, to name a few.

While we all need to be grateful for those who support us along the way, it’s equally important to continue the cycle by lifting others, as we rise to develop the next generation of leaders. So my question is this: “Who is standing on your shoulders?”

What I have learned watching my giants, and through my own experience, is that our shoulders are broader and stronger than we imagine. Every time you lift another, your career and your legacy are strengthened. Letting others stand on your shoulders is the only way to truly develop them; it is the hallmark of great leaders and great organizations.