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OPENING ARGUMENTS: Hilary Rapkin '93

WEX Chief Legal Officer, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary

What is your pre-Maine Law background?

I grew up in Montreal. I came to the United States in the early 80s to attend Bowdoin College and ultimately the University of Maine School of Law. I studied art history in college and have a great love of art and travel.

Why did you choose Maine Law?

After spending two years in Boston working at a large law firm as a paralegal, being accepted into the University of Maine School of Law gave me the opportunity to return to Maine, which I love so much. The class size seemed like a good fit for my personality and learning style as well.

What is your current work?

I spend most of my time consulting and advising with the CEO, my peers, and my legal team. The topics can range from SEC compliance and international legislative matters to employee relations. The scope of my work is exceptionally broad, which is one of the things I particularly enjoy about what I do. The best part of my job is that every day is different and presents new and exciting challenges. I've been fortunate to work for a company that has been on a huge growth trajectory since I walked in the door — and actually even before that.

How did Maine Law prepare you for your career?

The University of Maine School of Law offers a broad and varied curriculum. This provided me a wide range of opportunities and career paths that I could pursue with my degree. I always knew I didn't want to be a litigator, but there were many other possibilities to explore.

What has surprised you since your graduation from Maine Law?

One of the biggest surprises has been realizing how special the education is, and how useful its application is to many other aspects of the business cycle. Learning to think critically, question the facts, communicate clearly, and write effectively are all skills that are vitally important and provided in a good legal education.

What is your advice for students?

Always be open to new possibilities. You may think you know exactly what you want to do after law school, but you should still remain receptive to opportunities that come your way. I didn't chart my course to become the general counsel of a publicly traded company, but I took every

Hilary Rapkin has been with WEX for more than two decades. She is currently responsible for overseeing WEX's global legal, regulatory compliance, government affairs, and corporate philanthropy functions. She manages local counsel in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and South America, in addition to the in-house counsel at the company's Maine headquarters. She is the 2018 recipient of the Law School's L. Kinvin Wroth Distinguished Alumnus/a Award.

opportunity presented and reached out of my comfort zone to do things I hadn't even imagined. Also, learn some of the soft skills that will make you a strong lawyer — listen, relate well, and develop empathy for your clients and your colleagues.

How does Maine Law fit into the community?

One of the things I like most about the Law School, besides having met my husband there 25 years ago, is the community that it builds. There's a unique bond created in each class, which extends to Maine Law overall and into the greater Portland area. Community is very important to me, so that part of the school resonates deeply. We are so lucky to live in or around Portland, and that's because many people make it a priority to ensure its growth and success as a small city.

How do you stay connected to the school?

WEX is fortunate to have been asked to participate in the Law School's new Certificate in Compliance. By providing insight and feedback on the program, we get to shape the curriculum and send employees to hone their compliance skills. It's a great example of collaboration and a true win-win for everyone involved. In addition, we participate in the internship and externship programs. The students are talented and enthusiastic, and we thoroughly enjoy being part of their educational experience. We're proud of the work we do at WEX, and we like when others get to experience the "magic!"