

# Radars

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Dvorak Law Group, LLC  
U.S.A.

# Brenda Smith



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## 1. **Could you share a little bit of your background?**

My story begins on my family's farm in central Nebraska. Growing up in a smaller community with a very close-knit family, I stayed in-state for my undergraduate degree and law school. Completing an internship with the Supreme Court of the United States during undergrad solidified my desire to become a litigation attorney. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with highest distinction from Nebraska Wesleyan University, I was immediately accepted into the University of Nebraska College of Law, where I also graduated with distinction.

Since law school, I had the pleasure of being a founding partner at one of the fastest growing law firms in Nebraska, Dvorak Law Group, LLC. I lead the Litigation Practice Group and serve on the Firm's Executive Committee as Treasurer. Outside of being a member of the Nebraska State Bar Association and Nebraska Association of Trial Attorneys, I have also joined the Trucking Industry Defense Association (TIDA), and have built a strong practice in trucking litigation. I am licensed to practice in five states, three federal district courts, and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Community involvement was ingrained in my life since I was young, so I enjoy serving on several nonprofit boards in my community. My husband and I live in a small community outside of Omaha with our two young boys.

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## 2. **In your opinion, what are some of the key challenges women lawyers face in the legal profession?**

Despite increasing numbers, our industry continues to have the same discussions about the lack of women in leadership, disparate pay, lack of representation at the partnership level, and a general lack of inclusion opportunities compared to our male colleagues. I am so proud to help lead a firm that recognizes and rewards hard work and high-quality work product, regardless of gender, race, religious affiliation, etc.

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**3. How do you balance the demands of your legal career with other aspects of your life, and what advice do you have for aspiring women lawyers in achieving this balance?**

It is challenging to find the elusive work-life balance! One mentor early in my career said that each day is a new opportunity to prioritize my time wisely. I have learned that what I prioritize may change each day – one day it is my work, another it's my family, and others it's my own self-care. When you look at each day as an opportunity, you realize that each day/week/month may look different, and this is where you see the balance and freedom of your choices. I also believe strongly that women lawyers must choose a firm culture that supports you as a full person, not just an attorney.

## **Legalink can provide support by raising awareness amongst member firms of best practice approaches to gender equality in the legal profession**

**4. Can you share an example of a professional achievement or success that you are particularly proud of, and how did your gender play a role, if at all, in the accomplishment?**

A few years ago, I was the lead attorney on a highly contentious estate case. The parties participated in a lengthy mediation that was ultimately unsuccessful. As I reflected after the mediation, I realized the parties were so much closer than anyone believed. I called opposing counsel, who happens to be male, and pointed out this fact. He was initially in disbelief, but upon further explanation, he eventually agreed with my position. Thereafter, I was able to provide a practical approach regarding the outstanding matters and ultimately helped bring the matter to a conclusion. At times, women have a different view or different traits that allow us to look at a situation and determine an approach to conflict resolution in a very different way than our male counterparts.

**5. Networking and building relationships are essential in the legal profession. Can you share insights into how Legalink has provided you with opportunities to connect with legal professionals globally?**

The prospect of deepening my involvement with Legalink is exciting. My colleagues and our firm as a whole have greatly benefited from networking with legal professionals globally. The conferences and events hosted by Legalink have helped our firm to build strong, lasting connections with lawyers who share our commitment to excellence.

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**6. How do you see Legalink's role in supporting women lawyers in the network?**

I applaud Legalink's dedication to and support of women, particularly through the Women in Law group.

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# Radar — Women in Law

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