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## SANDRA SEVILLE-JONES, 1960 - 2019

### A leader ahead of her time who was devoted to her firm and colleagues

By Nicole Tyau  
Daily Journal Staff Writer

**S**andra Seville-Jones, co-managing partner of Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, has died following complications from surgery. She was 58.

Friends and colleagues remembered her Monday as a generous, team player and tireless giver who left a lasting legacy of inclusion.

“It was a joy to work with Sandra,” said Malcolm Heinicke, co-managing partner at Munger Tolles and Seville-Jones’ longtime mentee and friend. “She was collaborative, insightful, and really all about the team approach that we still value here.”

Seville-Jones joined the firm in 1986 and became co-managing partner in 2009. Before joining the firm, she was a paralegal and a debate champion, according to Munger Tolles alumnus Robert Adler.

“Those two skillsets showed in her early assignments,” Adler said, adding that her “willingness to question everything and her dogged attention to detail” served her well throughout her career.

In her law practice, Seville-Jones advised many high-profile companies in a variety of industries, including energy, entertainment, gaming and manufacturing.

As a leader, she oversaw the firm’s expansion to the East Coast when it opened a Washington, D.C. office in 2016.

“This is an enormous loss for our firm, our clients and the entire legal profession,” Ron Olson, the firm’s name partner, said in a statement. “Sandra was a close friend and colleague, a beloved firm leader, a champion of diversity and junior lawyers, and a great legal mind. She owned the values our firm most cherishes and enhanced them every day she was with us. Our firm is shocked and deeply saddened by Sandra’s passing, and our thoughts are with her family.”

Longtime office neighbor and Munger



**SEVILLE-JONES**

Tolles alumnus Robert Knauss remembered her uproarious and infectious laughter as much as her passion for the work.

“She brought the force of her intellect and her personality to her work,” Knauss said. “It made her extraordinary.”

Heinicke praised Seville-Jones’ ability to steer complicated cases to the best conclusion and said she had a tremendous gift for the work she did. And despite her busy schedule, Heinicke said Seville-Jones was always the kind of person to give of her time.

“Sandra devoted herself to MTO and to the people within it,” he said. “Everyone here knew that she was a resource, and the loss of such a tremendous colleague is very sad.”

Seville-Jones was a champion for women and diversity in law firms. She spoke frequently about the inclusion of women in law, advocated for young lawyers just getting their start and was a member of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity.

Adler said Seville-Jones pioneered the space for women in law firms, especially

in Los Angeles. When she started at Munger Tolles, it was uncommon to see female lawyers, especially in leadership roles.

“Sandra changed that attitudinally, and she changed that programmatically,” Adler said. “Sandra was determined to become a leader.”

Heinicke added that Seville-Jones’ impact was felt not only within Munger Tolles but beyond, demonstrating to young, female lawyers that they had a place in power at law firms.

“Sandra was a leader, and in many ways she was a leader before her time,” Heinicke said. “She was a woman managing partner and a very successful one for a long period of time in a profession where that isn’t the norm.”

In addition to advocating for diversity and inclusion, Seville-Jones pushed for better benefits for working parents and those who had family obligations. Her peers said it touched her life because of her close relationship with her father, Cliff, whom she cared for until her death. She is also survived by three siblings, Peter, Dawn and Dyan.

“She has shown real leadership and making sure that we have those measures in place to help people with family obligations, and I think that is really unique to Sandra,” said Hailyn Chen, who is taking over as co-managing partner at the firm.

Chen said she knows she has big shoes to fill leading and tending to the firm as Seville-Jones did. As the whole staff reels from the shock of Seville-Jones’ sudden passing, Chen said she wishes she could still get some of Seville-Jones’ advice.

“It’s ironic that the one person we want the most right now is the one person we can’t have with us,” Chen said. “Sandra was someone who we turn to to be our compass in times of crisis and who has led us through many challenging times. And we are really feeling her absence right now.”