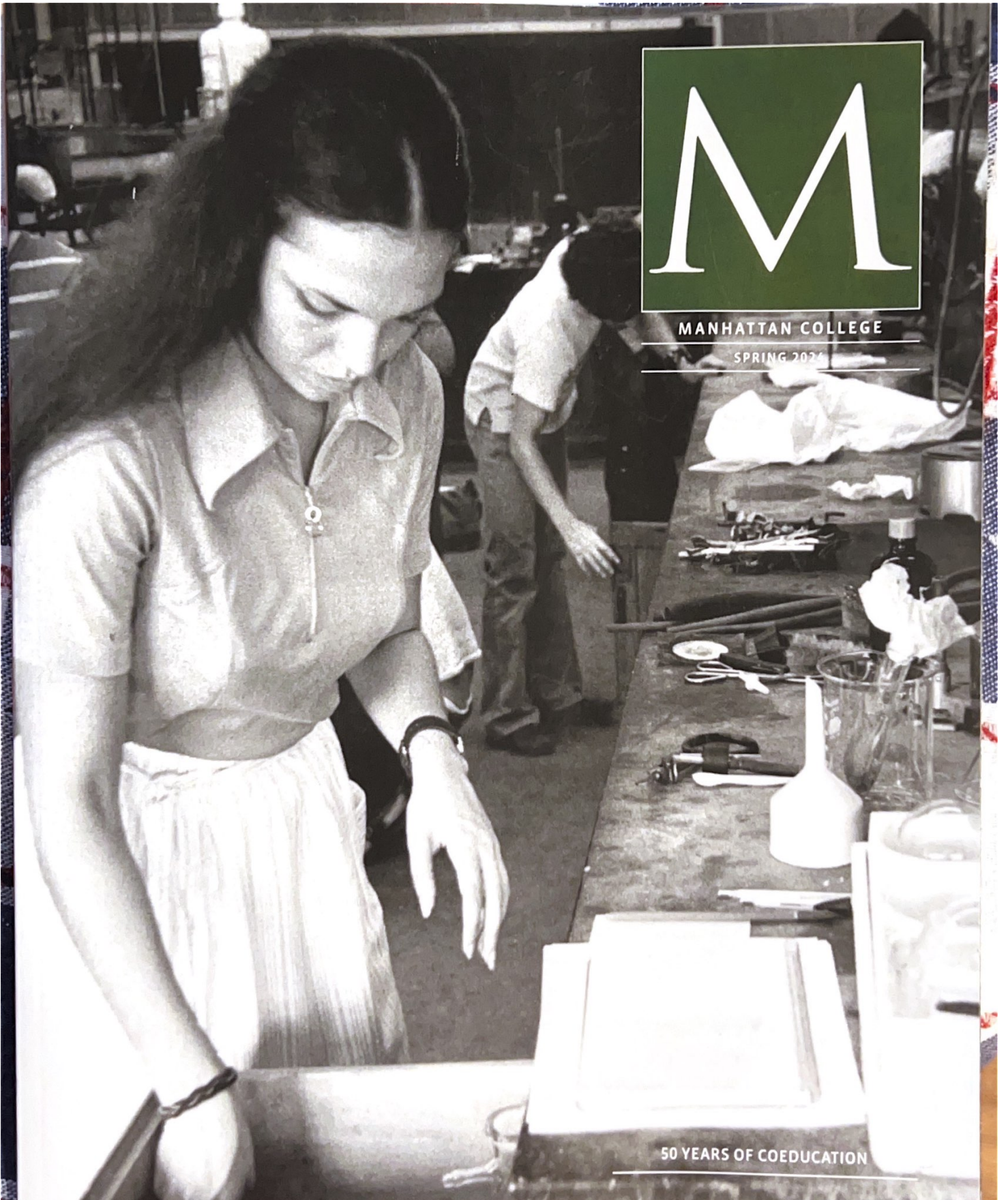




MANHATTAN COLLEGE

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Legal Eagle Reflects on Winning Cases — and Kudos

PIA E. RIVERSO '82 VIVIDLY REMEMBERS DECIDING, AS A YOUNG GIRL, THAT SHE WANTED TO BE AN ATTORNEY. Her father, Raphael Riverson '47, a civil engineer, contractor and real estate developer, often brought her to work, where she would sit in on meetings.

"There are always disputes on construction projects, and everyone would be talking," she recalls. "When the lawyer spoke, everyone would listen to what he had to say. Being the youngest of seven children, I thought, 'Wow, if I become a lawyer, it's a great way to get people to listen to me.'"

Now a partner at law firm Rivkin Radler LLP, and with more than three decades of experience in the practice of commercial litigation, Riverson has built a distinguished career in construction law. She counsels owners, developers, architects, construction managers and contractors on various aspects of construction law, including contract negotiation, license agreements, payment disputes and other matters. In doing so, she has won a number of significant legal decisions — and accolades from her peers.

Just a few of the kudos she's earned include being named a Super Lawyer in the Metro New York area in Business Litigation for 10 years running (no more than 5% of attorneys in each state achieve the Super Lawyer rating). In 2018, Riverson was selected as a fellow of the Construction Lawyer Society of America, an invitation-only honorary society, and in 2020, *Crain's New York Business* named her a Notable Woman in Law. Most recently, she was cited by the Best Lawyers in America 2024 in the category of Construction Law.

Of the acclaim, Riverson notes, "Dr. [Robert] Vizza [former dean of the Manhattan College School of Business] once told me that while other people can recognize what you've achieved in your career, you should always know internally what your goals are, what reputation you have built, and what you have achieved. Nevertheless, to have organizations of this caliber recognize my work is an incredible honor."

Riverson was one of four out of seven siblings who graduated from Manhattan, including the College's current president, Milo Riverson '81. It was a family tradition that began with her father, a civil engineering graduate. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and double majored in accounting and finance, graduating in three years by attending summer and winter sessions without a break until her senior year.

"In my family, the Lasallian values, the quality of education and the practical experience that one would receive as a Jasper were of great importance," she says.

After graduating, Riverson went on to earn her J.D. from St. John's School of Law in 1985. At the outset of her career, she worked on a case that provided a solid foundation for her future success. As a first-year associate, she was assigned to what was at the time the most significant insurance declaratory relief action arising out of contamination of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Colorado. (Declaratory

relief is a legal determination by the court that resolves legal uncertainties in a controversy.)

"That case gave me the exposure to attend and conduct hundreds of depositions, prepare and respond to numerous motions for summary judgement, participate in complicated pre-trial motion practice, and

then conduct 18 months of a trial," she says. "It was an unbelievable opportunity that gave me experience that most junior associates at a big firm do not have the opportunity to obtain. It truly developed my litigation skills, my writing skills, and my courtroom presence."

Later, when Riverson's firm wanted to develop a construction practice, she stepped up. "My father and brothers with significant construction industry experience were great resources in helping me understand the issues since I didn't have an engineering background," she says. She also found that her business education provided her with fundamental knowledge that gave her an advantage in the field. "I can read and comprehend financial statements, I understand damages, the methodologies to support claimed amounts, balance sheets, and financial transactions," she says. "It's a great background to have."

Now a formidable practitioner of construction law, Riverson is a member of the Construction Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association. She also has served as both chair and vice chair of the Nassau County Bar Association Construction Law Committee.

With greater seniority and less time spent traveling for work, Riverson sought to help her alma mater. She became involved with Manhattan's Women Inspiring Successful Enterprise (WISE) program and speaks on panels for students interested in pursuing a law career. She also joined the advisory board of the O'Malley School of Business.

Giving back, she notes, is a "natural thing for a Jasper."

"You want to afford opportunities to the students, and let them know that this is not an institution where you just get an education and leave," she continues. "Manhattan College is an institution where you get an education supported by loyal alumni who will assist you throughout your career."



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