

## ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY

*Simone Colgan Dunlap  
embraces what makes us all  
different and unique*

BY ALISON BAILIN BATZ  
PHOTO BY JAMES PATRICK

**G**rowing up on an oil company compound in Saudi Arabia, Simone Colgan Dunlap was surrounded by people from all corners of the world.

“The experience profoundly influenced my thinking. I learned the value of difference but to question inequality, particularly for women. I felt compelled to take advantage of opportunities that were not available to Saudi women,” says Colgan Dunlap, who is a partner in the Health Law Group at Quarles & Brady.

Colgan Dunlap’s passion for diversity led her to work at her college’s intercultural center, to teach in Japan, and, later, to law school where she interned for the U.S. Department of State, taking her to the United Nations in Geneva.

Her commitment to diversity and leadership continue – for many years, she chaired Quarles & Brady’s Women’s Forum and is now the chair of the firm’s Health & Life Sciences Industry Team, all while serving on its diversity committee.

“Inclusion matters – every person matters, every single day,” Colgan Dunlap says. “Employing a diversity of thought, creativity and experience to understand each other is what makes us all better.”



### *Etc.*

**Why are diversity issues so dear to your heart?** Diversity was a fact of life growing up. My mom is from India, and my dad is from Minnesota; we are a melting pot. Embracing differences and how they can enrich life was a natural by-product of that environment.

**How did your mom inspire you?** Calling my mom a strong woman is an understatement. She moved by herself to Saudi Arabia in the 1970s to work for an oil company, bucking multiple traditions. I have definitely been inspired by her example. **Why law?** I actually started out wanting to be a physician because I wanted to help people. When I spoke to practitioners in the field, they shared the less idealistic view of the profession so I decided to explore other options. Through law, I can act as an advocate for my clients and help them solve problems in a practical way. Health care law was a good fit given my initial interest in medicine.