



Women of Finseca series

Christie Corado , EVP, General Counsel, Corporate
Secretary, and Chief Privacy Officer at MIB Group, Inc.
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Courtney Mesmer

*VP of Member Learning
and Experience
Finseca*

Women of Finseca brings you the personal journeys, aspirations, and lessons learned of women leaders in the financial security profession. We sat down with Finseca Board Member Christie Corado to hear her story and insights on opportunity, balance, and taking risks.

Courtney Mesmer: Tell me the story about how you became a financial security professional.

Christie Corado: My father was in the business with his own insurance agency. I am the oldest of three daughters. When I was 19 years old, my father encouraged me to get my life insurance license to work with him over college break. This experience turned me on to insurance regulations and tax law. I was a sophomore at Penn State at the time, working toward my finance degree. I ended up going to law school and pursuing a career as an in-house corporate lawyer with a focus in insurance legislation and regulation. Thus, my focus in the financial security profession is a navigator of the legislation, regulations and identification of emerging risks in the insurance industry. I also have my security registrations. I have maintained my insurance license and securities registrations, which has kept me closer to the sales process and assists me in doing my job of providing legal and regulatory advice.

Mesmer: What is your biggest professional lesson that you learned from being in the financial security profession?

Corado: I started out as a “legal resource” in a small life insurance brokerage general agency, spend the majority of my career as General Counsel of Crump Life and am currently the general counsel, chief privacy officer, and corporate secretary at MIB Group, Inc. Throughout my career, I successfully navigated through four acquisitions. Because of this experience, my most valuable lesson is to find the win-win in each situation and redefine your role, as necessary, to create that value add for yourself and your employer. Ask yourself, “What does this new opportunity bring?” “How do I add value to the new organization?” “How can I use my unique skill sets?” .

Entire books have been written around the concept of finding the positive in a situation and reframing your thinking with a growth mindset. To some it may sound like little more than a motivational speech. However, when you actually practice, you realize that these recipes for success actually work. But, you can't fake it. No matter what life throws you, both personally and professionally, I have learned it's really your perspective that makes all the difference.

Mesmer: Insurance and finance used to be an all-white boys' club, but that is changing. Based on your personal experience, do you feel that the profession is evolving? Do you think women are contributing to that, and in what way?

Corado: Yes, it's definitely evolving. It is exciting that Finseca has its first female Board Chair in Jeri Turley. It's great to see more women taking on leadership roles and paving the way for the next generation of women who will have strong role models to follow.

One of the areas that I'm interested in is women on boards. Women represent the majority of all purchases and more than fifty percent of the population, but are underrepresented in management and on corporate boards.

We also know, because we are in the life and retirement insurance industry, that actuarial tables

prove women live longer than men do as a whole, and that there's going to be a significant wealth transfer over the next decade. Therefore, a lot more money will be in women's hands to make investments and insurance decisions. This is an opportunity that may lead to greater demand for women in financial services and open doors for more women to join the financial services industry. In addition, insurers and distributors are seeking more diversity in their workforce, which opens more doors for women to join the industry and also join Finseca to assist them in their career journey.

Mesmer: Is there anything that you feel that you are personally doing to move more toward closing the disparity gap, specially related to diversity and inclusion?

Corado: From a business perspective, my prior employer, Truist Insurance Holdings/Crump Life, has done an amazing job educating its employees on diversity and inclusion. The most valuable lesson was a session on “unconscious bias” — more specifically, awareness of your own unconscious biases and how to identify them. Co-workers anonymously shared stories from all different perspectives about how they encountered discrimination. For me, hearing those personal stories and being able to ask questions provided more insight than anything else I've watched or read. People were really open, didn't judge, and answered questions honestly. Having more conversations on this topic, would help close the disparity gap. Not just at home and in the workplace, but at cocktail parties, or on a walk with a friend, or at a coffee shop.

From a personal perspective, I focus on mindful speech and three major questions to ask yourself to be thoughtful in conversations: is it true?, is it accurate?, and is it kind?. If the answers to these questions are yes - it doesn't leave time for the stereotypes, judgments, or unkind statements that may leads to discriminatory remarks.

Mesmer: What advice would you give to a woman considering this profession?

Corado : I love our industry; I love this profession. I think the sky's the limit for anyone entering. The industry is underserved by young people, and obviously statistically underserved by women. I am very much an advocate for students in college

joining our profession. As a member of the Board of Governors at Saint Joseph's University Maguire Academy of Insurance and Risk Management, we assist students with internships and mentoring. In addition, I am a member of Finseca's Board of Directors and participate in Women's Impact, which is specifically designed to attract females this profession.

Once we attract these new entrants, we introduce them to the many tools within the Finseca Foundation supporting growth, development and leadership. The industry is also appealing for those who are looking to make a change or for those re-entering the workforce if they took a break for family or other reasons.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that I am a mom who works. I have five adult children (ages 18-30) and had to find my work-life satisfaction over the years. That meant readjusting my schedule frequently and missing school programs, meetings or business trips from time to time. Sometimes it meant taking a step back, and sometimes taking a step forward. The message is that this industry allows moms (and dads) to put their family first and be professionally successful. My husband, Michael, is also in this business, and we are looking at an empty nest this fall. We raised our five children while continuing to thrive in the insurance industry.

Mesmer: Looking back to when you started your career, what advice would you give to yourself five years in?

Corado: Find your authentic self! I was a proponent of "fake it until you make it" when I was younger and less mature. I would study the successful individuals in our business and would identify the attributes and habits that I felt made them successful. Then I tried to emulate them, but it didn't work because I wasn't them. Once I embraced my authentic self, including the quiriness that goes along with it, I became confident in who I was. So, for me, being true to myself, setting goals, working smart, building relationships, and asking for help are the keys to personal success.

Mesmer: Anything else?

Corado: The best performers in any endeavor spend a great deal of time studying the fundamentals. They read, study, and practice the basics. Finseca is a great source of continuous information and education through its timely legislative and regulatory reports as well as through the meetings I attend and committees I join. I absorb this information and use it as an opportunity to call producers, to generate business, and to educate my company on emerging risks and trends. It has taught me the importance of advocating on Capitol Hill and I hone those skills as an Ambassador of Finseca. Finseca has made a huge difference in my professional life over the last 20-plus years. I was able to meet like-minded people. I was able to ask for help. I was able to find mentors. It is an absolute playground for networking. So, I really do encourage others to be a student of the game for personal growth and development and to get involved. You get as much out of it as you give and, in my situation, even more so.

Know a leading lady who has inspired you? Send their information our way to events@finseca.org

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