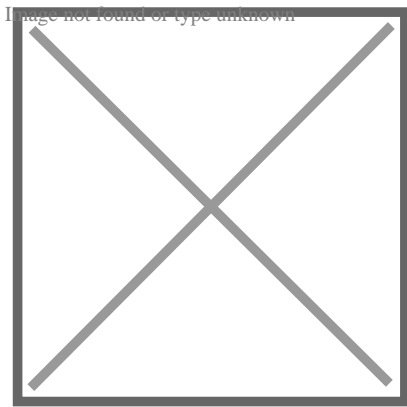


How #MeToo is Changing the World: KD Introduces Dr. Catherine MacKinnon to PLUS Women's Forum

By Louie Castoria

*In late May, KD brought a truly transformative figure in the women's rights movement to San Francisco, to place in historical context the #MeToo movement. Dr. Catharine MacKinnon, who broke new legal ground in her 1979 scholarly work, *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, described #MeToo powerfully and succinctly, "The largest movement against sexual abuse in the history of the world."*



Louie Castoria and Dr. Catharine MacKinnon

The May 22, 2018 event was one in a series of women's leadership presentations sponsored by the PLUS Foundation. Titled "Abusers and Accusers: How Women Leaders Are Changing the World," the sold-out event was a frank and at times shocking assessment of how far societies around the globe must go to turn workplace equality from a slogan to a reality. I had asked Dr. MacKinnon to share her insights with PLUS, and acted as interviewer for the first half of the event, paving the way for wide-ranging questions from the audience.

Dr. MacKinnon's advocacy is not only in the courts—she works on site with Apne Aap, a movement founded in India to rescue young women from being forced at early ages into lives of sexual slavery. Her work at the International Court of Criminal Justice at The Hague has redefined systematized rape as a form of genocide. She developed the "Nordic Model" for abolishing prostitution—decriminalizing all people used in prostitution, and strongly criminalizing pimps, traffickers, and buyers, an approach that is also being adopted outside Scandinavia.

In law schools from Shanghai to Jerusalem she has guided future generations of lawyers to continue her fight bring the sexes into equal standing before the law and in daily life. Dr. MacKinnon is the Elizabeth A. Long Professor of Law at the University of Michigan and James Barr Ames Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School, and a long-term visiting professor of law at Yale, her alma mater for law school and her Ph.D. in political science.

In her many scholarly works, Dr. MacKinnon has identified sexual harassment as one way those in power stay in power, by objectifying women rather than valuing them based on their merits and their innate dignity as people. I asked what men can do to aid the #MeToo movement in changing the imbalance of power in society. Her response was twofold, to seriously listen to what women say, and to promote the many qualified women to positions now mainly occupied by men. If I may paraphrase, to make room and make sure—room for women to take leadership roles, and to ensure that men who step down from those roles are succeeded by qualified women. It's hard to relinquish positions of authority, but if we want to see change, we must be agents for change.

On behalf of my colleagues at KD, and especially those in our vibrant Women's Initiative, I am grateful to Dr. MacKinnon and to PLUS for the opportunity to introduce an important and inspiring leader in women's rights to an audience of our clients and friends.