

Mary Smith

Mary Smith served as President of the American Bar Association (ABA) from 2023-2024 and was the first Native American woman in this role.

Mary is an independent board member and former CEO of a \$6 billion national healthcare organization, the Indian Health Service. Mary currently serves on the board of PTC Therapeutics, Inc. (NASDAQ: [PTCT](#)), a global biopharmaceutical company and on the board of HAI Group, a leading member-owned insurance company for the affordable housing industry. Mary is also Vice Chair of the VENG Group, a national consulting firm.

She has served at the highest levels of government, both at the federal and state level. Mary served on the senior team of the Civil Division at the United States Department of Justice and was General Counsel at the Illinois Department of Insurance. Earlier in her career, Mary served in the White House as Associate Counsel to the President and Associate Director of Policy Planning.

In her private sector experience, she served in a senior role at Tyco International (US) Inc., a \$40 billion public company, where she managed a \$60 million budget. Mary also served as Special Counsel & Estate Trust Officer at the Office of Special Deputy Receiver; a Partner in the Chicago office of Schoeman, Updike & Kaufman, a women-owned firm; and an attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP in Washington, D.C. where she specialized in governmental investigations and securities class actions.

In bar activities, Mary is a past ABA secretary. She was the first Native American to serve as one of 13 commissioners on the Commission on Women in the Profession. She has held leadership positions in both the ABA Section of Litigation and the ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Responsibility. She also served as an ABA representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Mary has also served in leadership roles in state and local bars. Mary served on the Executive Council of the National Conference of Bar Presidents and is a past president of the National Native American Bar Association. She was co-chair of the Litigation Section in the District of Columbia Bar Association and also served on the Board of Directors for the Chicago Bar Association.

In her civic activities, she is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Economic Club of Chicago, C200, The Chicago Network, the Commercial Club of Chicago, the International Women's Forum, and the National Association of Corporate Directors.

Mary founded and serves as President and Chair of a foundation named after her mother and grandmother, respectively, the Caroline and Ora Smith Foundation, to train Native American girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (www.carolineorasmithfoundation.org).

Mary is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. In 2024, Mary was selected to Forbes 50 over 50. She also was recognized by Crain's Chicago Business as a Notable Women in Law and by the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Los Angeles County (APABA-LA) as a Trailblazer in the Law.



She was the recipient of the 2024 University of Chicago Diversity Leadership Alumni Award, and the Diversity Scholarship Foundation 2024 Advocate for Diversity Award. In 2023, Chicago United selected her as a Business Leader of Color, and she was the recipient of the ABA Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division's Nelson award, which recognizes exceptional service by a public sector lawyer, and the Justice John Paul Stevens award from the Chicago Bar Association. Law Bulletin Media included her as one of the honorees during the Fourth Annual Top Women in the Law Awards in November 2023. She also was selected as a 2023 Director to Watch by Directors & Board magazine. From the Cherokee Nation, she received the 2023 Cherokee National Statesmanship award. In 2022, she received the Abner J. Mikva Award from the American Constitution Society (ACS) Chicago Lawyer Chapter. She was also selected to Crain's Chicago Business' Notable Women in STEM in 2020 and 2023 and Crain's Custom Media's "Chicago's Notable Women Lawyers" in 2018. In 2017, she received a Special Recognition Award from the National Congress of American Indians for her work at the helm of the Indian Health Service. In 2015, she was recognized on the Lawyers of Color Fourth Annual Power List. In 2012, she was a recipient of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession's Spirit of Excellence Award. At the conclusion of her time in the White House in 2001, she received the U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director's Citation for Exemplary Public Service.

Mary graduated from the University of Chicago School of Law, *cum laude* and received a B.S. in mathematics and computer science, *magna cum laude*, from Loyola University of Chicago. Mary served on the Law Review and clerked for the Hon. R. Lanier Anderson III in the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.