

DEBRA SNIDER
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Debra Snider is an author and speaker. Her newest novel, *Lost Wyoming*, released in September 2016, is a poignant, ultimately uplifting tale of love, loss, and family ties. The novel tells the story of Maggie Winslow, a bright and thoughtful, yet thoroughly disillusioned heroine, as she discovers how family shapes who we are, who we aren't, and who we have the potential to become. In prose that Kirkus Reviews called "eloquent and often beautiful throughout," *Lost Wyoming* explores the complexities of relationships, the puzzles we must solve for ourselves, and the joys that await once we learn to get out of our own way.

Debra's debut novel, *A Merger of Equals*, published in 2006, is the captivating story of two smart, funny 20-somethings who learn on their way up the corporate ladder that quite a few so-called truths – about work, life and love – are in fact not true at all. The novel has been called "one of the most enlightening and true works of fiction about corporate life and love." From its provocative opening sentence to its touching final pages, *A Merger of Equals* is an intelligent, insightful tale for readers who want a fun, thought-provoking, and ultimately stirring read.

Debra is also the author of *Working Easier: A Toolkit for Staff and Board Members of Nonprofit Arts Organizations* (Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation, 2005) and *The Productive Culture Blueprint for Corporate Law Departments and Their Outside Counsel* (American Bar Association Career Resource Center, 2003). She has been a featured speaker in the United States and Europe on topics including strategic productivity, client development, change facilitation, leadership, law department management, time management, and success strategies for professional and business women. She has also consulted on these topics for corporate, legal services, academic, and nonprofit clients.

From 1995 through September 2000, Debra was Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Administrative Officer of Heller Financial, Inc. in Chicago (formerly NYSE:HF, the company was acquired by General Electric Capital Corporation in 2001). In her combined functions, Debra had management responsibility for approximately 100 people and \$100 million in annual expenditures. As General Counsel, she developed the vision, strategies and tactical blueprints for the law department, and led its transformation from a cost center into a true strategic asset for Heller. Productivity, employee job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, enterprise risk management, and operating efficiency were all significantly enhanced. Under Debra's leadership, Heller's aggregate internal and external legal costs boasted a *negative* compound annual growth rate from 1995-2000, despite substantial increases in overall corporate size, complexity and costs over the same period.

As Heller's CAO, Debra had executive management responsibility for the company's corporate services functions, including facilities, purchasing, office services, travel, records management, telecommunications, business resumption planning, corporate security, and the Knowledge Center. In that capacity, she developed and implemented process improvement, vendor management and other strategies and programs that aligned administration functions with business strategies and resulted in significant cost rationalization and savings.

From 1989-1995, Debra was a partner at Katten Muchin & Zavis (now Katten Muchin Rosenman) in Chicago, where she practiced primarily in the securities, securitization and mergers & acquisitions areas. In addition to her law practice, at KMZ she chaired the Securities Department, was Co-Hiring Partner and co-founded the KMZ Women's Forum, a network of over 750 professional and business women in the Chicago area. Before that, she was First Vice President and Associate General Counsel at The Balcor Company, and an associate at Hopkins & Sutter, another large Chicago law firm.

Debra serves on the Executive Council for Reading In Motion, a nonprofit organization committed to improving literacy in Chicago's at-risk children, and on the Advisory Board of Valorem Law Group. She is also a member of The Chicago Network, Chicago's premier organization of professional and business women. Debra is a 1976 Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan, where she majored in English Language and Literature and served as Associate Editorial Director of *The Michigan Daily*, and a 1979 graduate of the University of Chicago Law School. She and her husband now live in Nevada; they have two grown children.