



Andrea Cianchette Maker, a partner and government relations group leader at **Pierce Atwood**, is also co-chair of the FocusMaine economic development effort. She is pictured at Pierce Atwood's offices in Portland.

PHOTO / TIM GREENWAY

WOMEN TO WATCH

LAW AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Andrea Cianchette Maker

Partner

Pierce Atwood LLP

Pierce Atwood LLP

Merrill's Wharf,
254 Commercial St., Portland

Founded: 1891

Top executive: David E. Barry,
managing partner

Employees: 253

Revenue: Did not disclose

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Lawyer, lobbyist, leader

BY JAMES MCCARTHY

It's easy enough to rattle off negatives about Maine's economy, but Andrea Cianchette Maker deliberately takes a different approach.

As leader of Pierce Atwood's government relations practice group and co-chair of FocusMaine, an economic development nonprofit formed this year, she prefers to focus on Maine's strengths, not its weaknesses.

"There is some rhetoric in Maine about our disadvantages. But let's be honest. In

any political campaign they say, 'It takes seven positive messages to offset one negative one.' The weight of a negative comment is much heavier than the buoyancy of a positive comment. We don't offset our negative comments often enough with positive ones, I think," she says. "The strong businesses are always looking at what their competitive advantages might be — like Dead River, WEX, Unum, IDEXX, Jackson Laboratory. They are all doing that."

Maker spends much of her time, then, educating policymakers and helping to steer public debate over Maine's economic future into a more positive direction. It's what comes naturally — it's part of her DNA.

A native Mainer who grew up in Pittsfield, Maker combines idealism with a civic-minded pragmatism. She says she owes a great deal to lessons learned from her late father, Alton "Chuck" Cianchette, one of four brothers who in 1949 started what's now known as Cianbro, Maine's largest construction company.

“My father’s father came from Italy when he was 11 years old, on a boat, by himself,” she says. “When he got here, he had a very strong ethic that this was the land of opportunity and that this was a land where you gave back ... because it gave him so much. It’s an ethos that permeates my family. So, always I have known I’d be giving back to the community — and my community has shifted over the years. But it’s always really been the state of Maine: That’s my community.”

‘Seizing the advantages’

Focusing on competitive advantages is very much the strategy behind FocusMaine, a private-sector effort led by Maker and former WEX President and CEO Mike Dubyak. Joined by economist Chuck Lawton and MaineHealth CEO Bill Caron at the initiative’s public launch in January, the two unveiled a 10-year plan to create 20,000 to 30,000 jobs in agriculture, aquaculture and biopharmaceuticals.

“We’re seizing the advantages,” Maker says, explaining that the three priority sectors were selected based on data identifying inherent strengths that would enable Maine to compete both nationally and internationally in rapidly growing markets.

In the agriculture industry, FocusMaine’s analysis identifies the opportunity to create as many as 14,280 direct and indirect jobs and additional net food exports of up to \$200 million by 2025.

Ambitious? Yes, but Maker thinks those goals are eminently possible.

“There’s a trend of people wanting traceable, high-quality, authentic food,” she says. “We have plenty of water. We also have a heritage for being authentic and we’re traceable. We live close to a huge percentage of the United States’ population, so our food can be shipped to that population and still be fresh and local. We also have a higher percentage of new farmers in Maine than any other state and land that is relatively inexpensive for agricultural purposes. So there’s huge upside potential for Maine in feeding the Northeast and beyond.”

The aquaculture industry is already strong, but the effort would also encompass farm-raised Atlantic salmon, kelp, algae and mollusks such as oysters, scallops and clams. Like agriculture, there’s a growing traceable seafood movement creating rising demand for locally sourced and sustainably harvested cultivated seafood. Aquaculture could yield 17,400 new direct and indirect jobs by 2025, with additional net exports of between \$230 million and \$800 million.

Finally, Maker says, Maine’s potential for growing its biopharmaceutical sector is based on proximity to Boston, which is a major research-and-development hub for the pharmaceutical industry.

“The information we have is that the companies doing the research are wanting, or are going to be needing, manufacturing capacity within a two-hour drive of Boston,” she says. “Maine is within that circumference of Boston. So the question is, ‘Can we get Maine within that circle?’ That’s the play we want to make.”

Biopharma could yield 12,240 new direct or indirect jobs by 2025, with additional net exports of between \$150 million and \$380 million.

Maker credits Robert Moore, who recently retired as CEO of Dead River, with providing the insight that put FocusMaine on the right track.

“He said, ‘You know, when I want to grow my business, I look at what the market needs and how I might be able to serve it,’” she says. “In other words: Who are the customers out there that we can uniquely serve? That’s the FocusMaine approach.”

Lessons from life

Maker half jokingly says as a 12-year-old girl growing up in Pittsfield she envisioned becoming stewardess. It appealed to her sense of adventure, which she still has, but her father steered her gently toward law.

“I think my father believed that getting an education in law was the best education one could get,” she says. “But he always quickly followed it up by saying, ‘You don’t have to be a lawyer. Get the education and then, if you want to be a stewardess, be a stewardess.’”

After earning an undergraduate degree in business administration from the University of New Hampshire, Maker says her dad arranged for her to meet with his friend, George Mitchell, then President Jimmy Carter’s appointee as U.S. Attorney for Maine. He talked about his work and how valuable a law degree could be to someone wanting to make a difference in the world.

Maker entered the Maine School of Law and had internships with Mitchell, by then a U.S. senator, and with then-U.S. Rep. Bill Cohen. Those internships influenced her chosen path in law to work in the field of government relations.

“I clearly came to appreciate that policymakers are really just seeking good information that helps them make informed

In her own words

What triggered your career path?

Early on, my father [Alton E. (Chuck) Cianchette] planted the seed that an education in law would best prepare me for anything I might want to do. He thought the knowledge of the law would be helpful, but more importantly, he advised me to gain a lawyer’s education and training in how to analyze information, work with people and make decisions.

Did you have a mentor or role model?

My father was my first mentor. As a teenager, I would say that the best thing for women’s lib is fathers with daughters, because it was clear my father was my strongest advocate who encouraged and permitted me to live a very active life. In my early career days, David Flanagan had a strong impact on me when we worked together at Pierce Atwood by appreciating my abilities and supporting me despite my relatively young age and my gender. Years later, Carol Wishcamper taught me a lot about facilitation, collaboration and interactions in groups. She’s still my go-to advisor today. Finally, although I didn’t realize it until I had my own family, my mother was a strong role model by instilling in me the importance of providing a stable and nurturing home environment for my children.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Relax more and know that life is long. Don’t fret that you aren’t doing all you want all the time. Lead your life in stages and focus on what’s important in each stage, but don’t worry about the stages you aren’t currently living. You can work it all in in due time. But, honestly, while I could have told that to myself, I don’t know that I would have adhered to it.

What keeps you up at night?

The excitement of living the next day and the impatience for it to start.

What’s the last book you read?

I am reading “The Industries of the Future,” by Alec Ross, which incidentally was recommended to me by David Flanagan. Also, on my recent bicycling adventure in the Canadian Rockies, I read short stories about life in the Canadian prairies by Alice Munro.



Andrea Clanchette Maker, a partner at **Pierce Atwood**, says her work as a lobbyist is intended to provide policymakers with “good information that helps them make informed decisions.”

PHOTO / TIM GREENWAY

decisions,” she says. “The types of issues I work on are not particularly partisan-based. ... I never look for the differences. I always look for the common ground. That’s how I lead my team and my work. It’s worked well.”

Next phase of the journey

Three decades later, Maker has had two stints at Pierce Atwood. She returned to the firm about six years ago, saying it roughly coincided with the realization that she and her husband, Scott, were entering the “empty nester” phase of their lives.

In her years raising four children, she says, a primary focus had been providing a stable home environment. Her “community” shifted accordingly, with work she had done with the Susan Curtis Foundation or the Democratic State Committee and other statewide interests giving way to closer-to-home activities such as being a 4-H leader or filling in as a soccer coach for 11-year-old boys one year.

Maker now realizes her mother, in her own way, influenced her life as much as her father.

“It’s wonderful now that I can see that life is a matter of stages,” she says. “There was an education stage, then there was a family stage. When I came back to Pierce Atwood, my platform came back to the state level. I feel like I’m into my next phase.”

Maker sees FocusMaine as an opportunity to work strategically with others on building a stronger Maine.

“So, if you consider that there’s some ‘wisdom’ somewhere in there that I’ve acquired in my life, I’m now getting a chance now to apply it — to take all those experiences and apply all those lessons,” she says. “I’ve been working on FocusMaine for two years, but we haven’t even started our 10-year implementation phase. I still have a long horizon in front of me, to see that through and whatever else comes along.”

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