

Alumni@Dentons

Spring 2021

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Kudos! Congratulations to Our 2020 Lubin Award Honorees!, 2021 Promotions

We are pleased to share with our extended Dentons US family this issue of Alumni@Dentons.

Drop us a line at alumni@dentons.com and let us know what you liked about this edition and what you would like to see in the future. Also, keep us posted on what you have been up to and we will be happy to share it in our next issue.

A Message from Leadership

Dentons finished 2020 strong and has had an impressive start to 2021. Our commitment to driving progress in every area of our business has not wavered and we have continued to secure new work, win cases, close transactions, and welcome new partners and colleagues.

In this issue you will read about how we came together to ensure that the well-being of our colleagues was front and center, how we created valuable tools that helped our clients navigate an environment that was changing almost daily, and how we supported each other and took a collective stand against the racial injustice that unfolded last summer.

What we had hoped would be a sprint turned into an ultra-marathon. But as the pandemic's finish line draws closer, there's a growing sense of pride not only in having survived this dark period but, to a surprising degree, thrived in it. While the pandemic and quarantine have changed us individually and collectively in ways we won't fully understand for months or years to come, we are heartened by rising vaccinations rates, children returning to classrooms and businesses starting to reopen.

For our part, we will soon be announcing a plan of phased reentry based on vaccination progress/availability and our clients' needs. A return to greater safety, stability and connectedness is hopefully just a few months away—and I am confident we will emerge from our present moment stronger than we could have ever imagined.



Mary Wilson
Managing Partner
Dentons US
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Highlights

Staring Down Adversity in 2020

For many law firms, 2020 was a year of retrenchment and strategic rethinking. Not so at Dentons, which added 33 offices (more than any law firm, ever, in a single year), bringing our total number of locations to 198 in 77 countries. At year end, our tally of lawyers and professionals exceeded 11,900, including more than 11,400 lawyers and more women lawyers than any firm in the world, and our total headcount topped 19,900. We contributed about 115,000 hours of pro bono work in 2020 and received more than 300 awards and recognitions (making us the most awarded law in the world for the fifth consecutive year).

Our goal for the US Region is to become the preferred global firm in the US for high-value work. Our strategy is to focus on enhancing client service by leveraging our global position, investing in our people and talent, nurturing our client engagement and, through Project Golden Spike, progressing our first-mover combinations targeting the nation's top 100 markets to build the first truly national law firm in the US, exemplifying the polycentric law firm of the future.

Addressing the pandemic required an all-hands-on-deck approach. A COVID-19 US Pandemic Task Force was assembled. Led by Chief Operating Officer Mark Flanagan, the team included CEO Mike McNamara, Dentons Bingham Greenebaum COO C.W. Raines, Global Chief Security Officer Karl Hopkins, Global Travel and Physical Security Coordinator Aaron Astely, North America Chief Information Officer Jason Najacht, North America Business Technology Operations Director Arun Mathew, North America IT Support Services Director Umar Reed, General Counsel Eddie Reich, Chief Clients & Markets Officer Catherine Austin, Chief Talent Officer Inga Masjul, Project Manager Chiloh Baty, Office Administrator Iris Harris, and Regional Administrative Directors Ann Dodds, Patricia Groff and Sheryl Yetsko.

As clients looked for guidance in navigating the evolving pandemic, Dentons assembled a COVID-19 Pandemic Client Special Situations Team. Co-chairs Jennifer Park, Peter Feldman, Raja Patil and PSST Director Ashley Tenney led a group consisting of 21 practice and sector heads collaborated with our global and regional pandemic task forces to address the issues our clients were facing.

In addition, core office teams performed a range of operations and services essential to continue the Firm's critical infrastructure operations. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our essential employees who left the relative safety of lockdown at home to come into work every day, and instituted a raft of workplace controls to protect them, including health screening assessments, policies regarding physical distancing face coverings, personal hygiene and disease-spread prevention, and enhanced office cleaning.

To help clients and others address the pandemic's legal and business challenges, our [US COVID-19 50-State Tracker](#) includes summaries of state and local governmental orders, directives and financial assistance, public-gathering restrictions, industry-specific directives, school plans, and updates on court Official links are provided where possible. In addition, our [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus hub\)](#) includes a knowledge bank, sector hubs & insights, webinar hub, and useful-links page. To help in-house counsel navigate the unknown, a [New Dynamic hub](#) containing toolkits and insights, such as guidance on how to progress a digital strategy, quick pivots to consider, how to scenario-plan for the months ahead, supply chain resilience and ESG performance. "Awesome" and "very comprehensive" sums up the feedback we received on this toolkit to help clients move from "surviving to thriving."

Meanwhile, we made great strides in the areas of:

- **Growth**, most notably through project Golden Spike. Five member firms were added or announced, accounting for our entrance into seven new states (Alabama, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Utah) and bolstering our Florida presence.
- **Talent**, including initiatives to promote connectivity (Virtual Wine Tasting Happy Hour, An Evening of Magic) professional development (Associate Hackathon, Agile Working Skills Program), wellness (Calling Tree, Help at Hand) and recognitions (36 lawyers received special awards, up from 26 in 2019).
- **Efficiency**, including pivot to remote working, use of more detailed data analytics and deployment of a new app to facilitate integration of Golden Spike firms.

- **Resilience**, including temporary compensation reductions to maintain strong financial position (since paid back in full), and proactive real estate management, resulting in considerable cost savings.
- **Diversity & inclusion**, including 20 town halls and 7 staff focus groups to discuss race, discrimination, inclusion and allyship; 7 firm-wide cultural heritage month events; a two-day summit and 5 mini-summits for women lawyers and professionals and a new, global series of webinars attended by 1,500+ women from 40+ countries; a new executive mentoring program, training programs in unconscious bias and allyship, and a D&I creditable hours policy; and improved recruitment of women and lawyers of color, resulting in Mansfield Rule 3.0 certification.

Scaling Up

January 27 marked the first anniversary of one of the most ambitious and innovative initiatives in our Firm's history—the launch of our "US Region" through Project Golden Spike. Despite initial skepticism we rapidly gained acceptance of our new model, which has bolstered our ability to serve clients across the US and strengthened our leading position in the global legal marketplace. In an environment where other law firms are standing still, contracting or withdrawing from key markets, we announced in December our fourth and fifth combinations, with Iowa-based **Davis Brown** and Alabama's **Sirote & Permutt** (Sirote).

The combination with Dentons Davis Brown, which became official on March 29, strengthened our Midwest presence and grew our US footprint to 39 offices. One of the largest law firms in the Hawkeye State, Davis Brown has close to 80 lawyers working out of three offices in Des Moines, West Des Moines and Ames. The firm provides a diverse client base services across a range of practices and sectors, including agribusiness; construction; emerging businesses; health law;

immigration; intellectual property; employment and labor; litigation and dispute resolution; mergers and acquisitions; real estate; renewable energy; tax; and wills, trusts and probate. The Iowa chapter of *Chambers USA* provides law firm rankings in five practice areas and Davis Brown is in Band 1 for all of them. And the state's preeminent business journal, the *Business Record*, has recognized Davis Brown as the "Best Law Firm in Des Moines" for the past 15 years running.

When it becomes official, the combination with Sirote, a full-service law firm with 86 lawyers across 5 locations in Alabama—Birmingham, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, the Shoals and Mobile—will mark our entry into the state, bring our total US office count to 44 and bringing us one step closer to becoming the first "truly national US law firm." Sirote will bring deep experience across 11 practice areas: alternative dispute resolution, banking and finance, bankruptcy and creditor's rights, corporate and securities, government contracts, health care, litigation, real estate, tax and tax controversy, and private clients, trusts and estates.

Connecting Through Content

Stark Law Webinar Series

Last December, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published a final rule incorporating long-awaited changes to the agency's regulations governing the federal physician self-referral law, commonly known as the Stark Law. The agency's action was the most significant Stark Law rulemaking in more than a decade. Dentons' analysis of this development is being presented in [a series of seven, CLE-accredited webinars](#) (all with companion white papers). Each webinar takes an in-depth look at group of related provisions, offers practical examples of the new rule in operation, and raises questions and issues that remain unresolved. Presenters include **Gadi Weinreich**, **Chris Janney** and **Ramy Fayed**, all of whom are widely recognized as Stark Law thought leaders. Since the Stark Law's enactment in 1989, Dentons' Health Care in the United States practitioners have assisted countless clients in navigating this unforgiving law, lectured extensively on its challenges and pitfalls, and authored multiple articles as well as two editions of *The Stark Law: A User's Guide to Achieving Compliance*. The series is designed to appeal to a broad array of industry players, including health care providers, "designated health services," in-house counsel and compliance specialists.

The Global Employment Lawyer

Dentons Global Employment and Labor group launched [The Global Employment Lawyer](#), a quarterly review of developments that impact businesses and employers across the world. Tailored to multinational businesses and employers, there will be contributions from all Dentons regions—Africa, Asia, Australasia, the Americas and Europe—and each issue will contain summaries of key employment and labor issues in those regions. In the first [issue](#), many of the reported developments, unsurprisingly, relate to wage subsidies for furloughed employees and other governmental measures to protect employment stability. Each issue will also include an "In Conversation with" section, where we shine a spotlight on a member of our team. The inaugural issue featured **Dan Beale**, co-head of the US Region Employment and Labor group. The publication will also include "Dentons news and events" of interest to employers, such as our Canadian Employment & Labor team's release of a recapping

"the year that was in Canadian employment and labor law" and preparing readers for "what's to come in 2021" and Dentons US announced future combinations with Iowa's Davis Brown and Alabama's Sirote & Permutt, a development that will expand the practice's bench strength and geographic reach.

Examining the Rise of SPACs

Although 2020 was called the "year of the SPAC," 2021 is already on track to surpass it. The Venture Technology and Corporate practices co-hosted a lively discussion with industry insiders on the rapid rise of special purpose acquisition companies in the tech sector. Venture tech partners **Ira Kotel** and **Ilan Katz** moderated the panel, which included representatives of KPMG, the New York Stock Exchange, Stifel, Big Cypress Acquisition Corp., Navigation Capital Partners and CC Neuberger Principal Holdings. Corporate partners **Don Hammett** and **Brian Lee** helped organize the event, which explored the market conditions driving the surge, why tech founders are choosing SPACs over direct listings and IPOs, how SPAC investors select a target for acquisition, increasing competition, and what the market trajectory looks like from here.

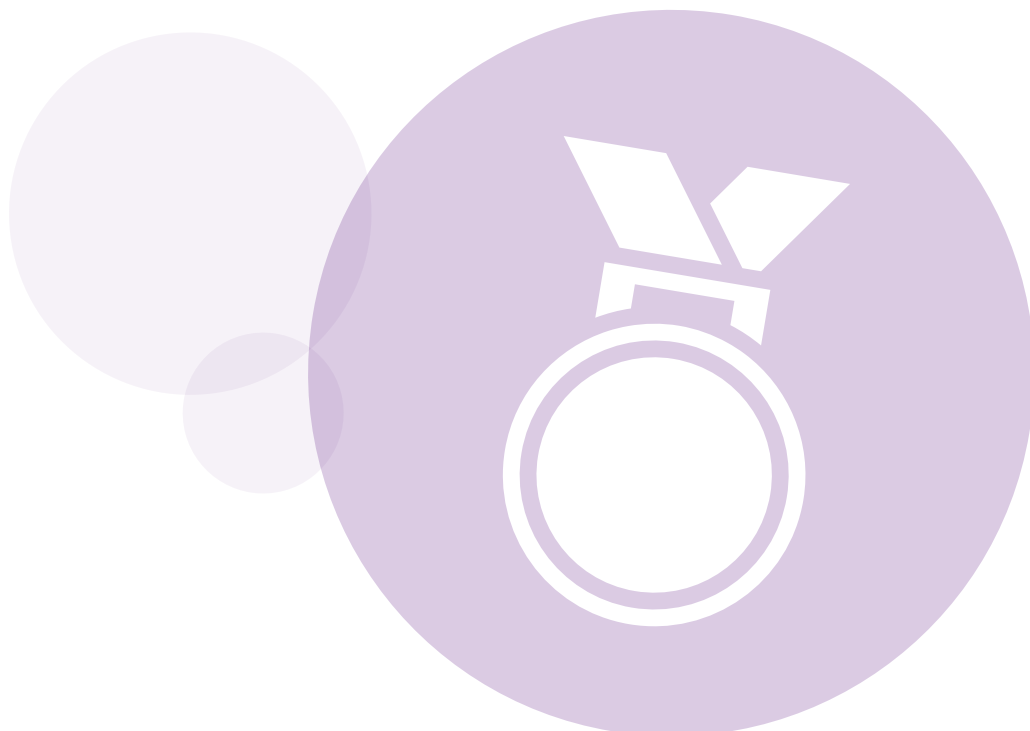
Family Office Podcast

In a new podcast series, "[Family Office Intel](#)," **Edward Marshall**, chair of Dentons' Family Office and High Net Worth sector group, is joined by colleagues from around the world to discuss recent developments shaping the industry and actionable ideas for advisors, executives and families. The podcasts are distributed via Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts. For uncommon knowledge from insiders about the modern family office, click on the above link to activate your subscription. See, also, "[Using the 'Anna Karenina Principle' to Better Understand and Operate Family Offices](#)," the first in a series of white papers. While each family office is organized and leveraged around the needs of its principals, best practices do exist and can be "fitted" to unique circumstances. This paper discusses the common characteristics possessed by the most typical family office models, and proposes a common nomenclature to support the study, development and testing of real-world best practices.

Success Stories

- In a groundbreaking and high-profile transaction, an **Atlanta** public policy partner, supported by colleagues in **Silicon Valley, Dallas** and **Washington, DC.**, helped an NBA franchise facilitate an agreement with a syndicate of Black-owned banks to refinance a \$35 million construction loan for a sports medicine complex—the first time a pro sports franchise has had a significant loan underwritten exclusively by Black banks.
- A team of lawyers from **Washington, DC, Silicon Valley, Atlanta** and **Chicago** won a multibillion-dollar trade secret dispute for a top electric car battery maker at the International Trade Commission—the largest trade secret case ever handled by the agency, and likely the largest IP case in history in terms of potential damages. The ITC upheld an ALJ decision finding the respondent competitor in default for massive destruction of evidence relating to the theft of our client’s trade secrets. The decision blocked the importation, domestic production and sale of respondent’s batteries for electric vehicles that unlawfully rely on the client’s proprietary information.
- A litigation team out of **Chicago** and **Short Hills, NJ**, secured a pre-discovery summary judgment win for an insurer in a dispute with one of its insureds, a global diversified holding company. The team successfully argued that the policy’s litigation exclusion barred coverage for an action brought by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection because the action was “substantially the same” as an administrative consent order entered in the 1980s. The court rejected the insured’s “ambiguity” arguments, enforced the policy’s choice of law provision and fully dismissed the action (bad faith damages and all) before any discovery was taken.
- A restructuring and bankruptcy team out of **New York** represented a shipping finance company in a vessel sale and related restructuring of a US\$232 million construction loan facility backed by the European Export Credit Agency. The client was a US-Norwegian joint venture that chartered and ultimately sold a specialized deepwater vessel to a marine and engineering services company. The engagement involved vessel charter enforcement, interest rate swap terminations and various rounds of loan restructuring negotiations in connection with and following the vessel owner’s Chapter 11 cases.
- A team of venture tech, corporate and capital markets lawyers from **New York** and **Washington, DC**, represented the placement agent for a New Jersey-based tech client that collects, delivers and manages high quality live video and associated data in connection with the purchase and sale of shares of its common stock and common stock warrants in a registered direct offering.
- A **Chicago** litigation team secured complete dismissal of a defamation suit against a financial publisher and a veteran financial news reporter. Following motions and oral argument, a Manhattan federal court dismissed all claims brought by a prominent securities lawyer over an online article.
- Working alongside along colleagues in Frankfurt, a US team including capital markets partners from **San Francisco** and **New York**, an **Oakland** Employment and Labor senior managing associate, and tax lawyers in **Washington, DC**, and **New York** represented a German bank and its Irish commercial conduit in funding a €150 million trade-receivables securitization for a Germany-based chemical company and its US subsidiaries.
- **Honolulu** real estate and public policy partners collaborated in representing, as its senior managing underwriter’s co-counsel, the multinational investment banking division of a global financial institution, in the city and county of Honolulu’s issuance of more than US\$273 million in wastewater system revenue bonds. Separately, the team represented the client as sole counsel in Hawai‘i’s issuance of more than US\$266.5 million in harbor system revenue bonds.
- A **New York** capital markets team represented the commercial lender in connection with a US\$500 million master loan and security agreement to finance an owner, operator and franchisor of hotels, resorts and residences’ acquisition of single-family homes for renovation and rental purposes.

- A restructuring, insolvency and bankruptcy team led by partners in **Los Angeles** and **Washington, DC**, and including RIB, employment, capital markets, corporate and litigation lawyers from **New York, Washington, DC, San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago** and **Atlanta**, represented a large healthcare system in Washington State in obtaining confirmation of a chapter 11 plan that reorganized US\$175 million in debt, including the discharge of more than \$75 million of unsecured debt.
- A team comprised of lawyers from our **Dallas, Kansas City, Louisville** and **Los Angeles** offices advised a leading provider of on-demand cloud computing platforms and APIs on critical year-end data-center development deals, furthering its plan to rapidly scale its real estate holdings to meet immediate customer demand. The work included negotiating long-term leases for two build-to-suit data center developments in Virginia; handling the acquisition of about 100 acres of raw land near Columbus, OH, for the development of a new data center; and providing local zoning support in procuring a special-use permit on one Ohio site and the rezoning of another.
- A team of lawyers in our New York, **Washington, DC, Chicago, Short Hills, NJ**, and **Kansas City** offices represented a New York-based conglomerate in its bankruptcy acquisition of a California-based specialty pharmaceutical company with assets worth well in excess of the investment.
- A team of **Los Angeles** litigators partnered with a Minnesota-based multinational in its global efforts to stop the illegal distribution, price gouging and counterfeit sales of its respirator masks. Our work included obtaining TROs and preliminary injunctions in federal court. The court seized and froze the sellers' online accounts and ordered expedited discovery to track down the bad actors and shed light on their black-market channels.
- Lawyers in our **New York, Washington, DC, and Chicago** offices, supported by colleagues in Canada and the UK, represented a Canadian cybersecurity services provider and its founder and sole shareholder (a regular investor on Shark Tank) in negotiating and executing an agreement providing for the sale of a majority of the company's outstanding shares to a London-based private equity firm.
- A team including lawyers in our **St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco/Oakland** and **New York** offices represented a California multifamily affordable housing lender in the US\$189.5 million sale of a portfolio of loans secured by 66 multifamily affordable housing properties in the state, in connection with a Series Q securitization by Freddie Mac.



ALUMNI Q&A



Fred McClure

Executive Director, The Leadership Initiative at Texas A&M

What is The Leadership Initiative, and how did you come to work there?

The Leadership Initiative resides in the Office of the Provost. Through Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO), the office serves the land grant mission of Texas A&M University by providing services that establish and support partnerships between the University and its stakeholders. This includes on- and off-campus groups, faculty, administrators, local and regional communities, international peer institutions, industry, former students, and faculty. The University's purpose statement is "to develop leaders of character dedicated to serving the greater good."

Though numerous opportunities exist for students to participate in leadership-related activities, the Provost created the Initiative with the goal of being deliberate in the academic focus of leadership throughout the undergraduate curriculum. This resulted in the creation of a university-level leadership minor that provides students the skills and knowledge needed to become leaders. Successful completion of the minor's requirements requires the student to demonstrate the ability to apply ethical frameworks to varied settings and situations, respect others, and do what is right even if it is more difficult.

What does an average day look like for you?

Initially an average day meant bringing together the relevant parts of the university's academic community to create a learning outcome and measurable minor that would gain faculty senate approval. Since then, an average day requires increasing awareness of the minor's availability to students, faculty advisors, departments and colleges of the university. This often also includes outreach to numerous student organizations on campus where students already are engaged in leadership and service activities to market the minor. The end of the curriculum requires a three-hour capstone experience that requires a

leadership practicum which is coordinated through the Initiative. The PPO community engagement creates opportunities for students to complete this capstone experience.

How are you coping in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic?

As is the case with the rest of the world, coping with the challenges created by COVID-19 has impacted college student life, not only in terms of academic instruction delivery but also social distancing requirements limiting group activity. Fortunately, technology has helped fill the void.

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

I most enjoy having the opportunity to interact with college students. Their thirst for knowledge is palpable. Concepts such as improving critical thinking, coping with navigating change, engaging constructively in difficult dialogues, and developing an appreciation for inclusion, equity and social justice are but a few of the topics today's college students face. Interacting with college students, especially undergraduates, on these levels is both satisfying and challenging.

Do you have any favorite memories of your time at Dentons?

I have many fond memories from my days at the firm. Having been involved in a leadership role during the firm's geographical growth from 2004 to 2012, though not without difficulties was quite exciting. This was particularly true as we began to merge cultures. My years encompassed what had been a Chicago-based organization—Sonnenschein Nath and Rosenthal—with two offices in California, two in Missouri, New York City and Washington, DC, shifting to a global focus spurred by the union with our London-based counterparts creating SNR Denton. I returned to Texas just as we added our Canadian partners to the mix. The merger

of these cultures while maintaining a client-focused commitment to service remains a fond memory. Most of all, relationships built with many former colleagues remain rewarding nearly a decade later.

Are there any aspects of working in a law firm that you miss?

The aspects of working in a law firm that I miss *least* are “working by the hour” and the annual end of the year collections process. There’s got to be a better way to run a railroad! It is a business model that may have outlasted its usefulness. Though it can be replicated in other environments, working with individuals who willingly became team members when we had to assimilate the necessary skill sets to meet a client’s needs was an aspect I enjoyed.

Pro Bono

Law Firm Antiracism Alliance

In addition to being one of the founding firms of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance (LFAA), a coalition of 291 law firms and other organizations united to identify and dismantle systemic racism, Dentons has a presence on the LFAA’s Board Of Directors (**Ben Weinberg**), Advisory Council (**Mike McNamara**), Public Relations Committee (**Lisa Sachdev**) and Technology Committee (**Michelle Gossmeier**). In addition, two Dentons lawyers are serving as co-chairs of the LFAA’s Healthcare and Voting Rights Working Groups.

Vaccine Education

Chicago senior counsel **Harold Hirshman** and pro bono staff attorney **Samantha Reed** helped produce two public service announcements about COVID-19 vaccination. One PSA, produced with Film Police and Sinai Chicago hospital, features local community leaders and health care workers encouraging everyone to “[Get the Shot](#).” Available in both English and Spanish for use anywhere in the world, it was designed to educate communities hardest hit by the virus, including people in prison. The other PSA, produced with the Number Project, is specifically aimed at helping incarcerated individuals learn more about how and why to receive the vaccine. This project continues Harold and Samantha’s extensive pro bono efforts alongside the ACLU of Illinois and Uptown People’s Law Center to protect the rights and welfare of incarcerated people in Illinois.

Do you have any advice you would give your younger self?

The advice I would give to my younger self—and advice I give to my older self—is to not be impatient but to take one step at a time. That means staying in the moment, improving and being aware of what’s going on around you. It is a constantly evolving process. The choices we make reveal the true nature of our character.

Financial Institutions Pro Bono Day

For “Financial Institutions Pro Bono Day” Pittsburgh colleagues and PNC Bank’s in-house department collaborated on a DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Renewal Clinic with the National Immigrant Justice Clinic (NIJC) in Chicago. All told, the Dentons-PNC teams, which were spread across several states, successfully represented eight DACA recipients in the first Zoom DACA clinic run in conjunction with the NIJC.

Securing Clemency for a Minor Drug Offender

Through the Firm’s Allstate-Dentons pro bono clemency project, Chicago senior managing associate **Kristine Schanbacher** and partner **Ben Weinberg** helped obtain executive clemency for a sanitation manager at a hospital and father of five who was convicted of selling a small amount of drugs in 1987. Though the transaction occurred on his own front porch, the client was sentenced to three years in prison because his home was in a “school zone.” Although the team’s petition was rejected in 2016 by the previous administration, this time it earned the support of the state’s attorney, resulting in Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker granting clemency to expunge the conviction.

Drafting a Persuasive Amicus Brief for the League of California Cities

In a case involving the limits of municipal liability and the potentially dangerous policy consequences of finding a city liable for simply renting out property when there was no evidence of the lessee’s “custom, policy or practice” of civil rights deprivations, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed summary judgment in favor of the City of Pasadena. Los Angeles counsel **Sylvia Chiu** and firm alum Justin Sarno represented the League of California Cities as amicus curiae. The appellant, Pasadena Republican Club, alleged that the Western Justice Center, a lessee of city property, selectively denied it an opportunity to rent meeting rooms and that this constituted impermissible political discrimination, which should have been imputed to the city as lessor of the subject property.

Helping Fashion Industry Founders

New York Intellectual Property and Technology associate **Mary Kate Brennan** and Meatpacking, NY, Venture Technology managing associate **Callie Pioli** participated in a “pop-up” pro bono clinic held by the Fashion Law Institute. They counseled designers seeking guidance on IP, business formation and contract issues. Mary Kate has been volunteering since 2013 with this pop-up clinic. One of the first fashion-specific pro bono legal programs in the nation, it was created by the Fashion Law Institute and the Council of Fashion Designers of America to help the many emerging and independent designers who lack access to basic legal advice tailored to the fashion industry.

Winning an Appeal for a Domestic Abuse Victim

Los Angeles Litigation senior managing associate **Kelly Graf** and partner **Michael Duvall**, working with Legal Aid Chicago, secured an important win on appeal for a petitioner seeking relief under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA). Our client sought an order of protection to prevent her abusive spouse from harassing and physically harming her. The trial court denied her petition, finding her allegations of abuse not credible because she was still married to and living with her abuser. An Illinois appellate court reversed the dismissal of our client’s petition—holding that the trial court erred by improperly considering that the petitioner was still living in the marital home—and remanded the case for a new hearing. This is Kelly and Michael’s third appellate victory in IDVA cases.



Diversity and Inclusion

Dentons Celebrates International Women's Day

Dentons proudly celebrated International Women's Day by hosting a live-streamed discussion that featured Former Prime Minister of Australia **Julia Gillard** speaking with partners and WomenLEAD Co-chairs **Maria Livanos** and **Erin Bradham** about her experiences as a world leader, an advocate for increasing women in leadership and the author of *Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons*.

The first and only woman to date to hold the role of prime minister, Gillard spoke about her career-defining [misogyny speech](#) in the combative Australian parliament and how traditional gender expectations impacted her work and permeate society as a whole. She also offered advice on our own global effort to hire and elevate more women, noting that family responsibilities disproportionately affect women in the workplace and citing other examples of conscious and unconscious bias, such as the fact that people think the best types of leadership qualities are masculine, even though research shows that that's not true.

Our International Women's Day celebration culminated with the presentation of our annual WomenLEAD Excellence Awards, expanded this year with two new categories: change-making ally and exemplary staff. Following are this year's winners:

Above & Beyond, for going outside the scope of one's normal role to assist women colleagues: **TONI WEINSTEIN**, partner, Dallas

Emerging Leader, for demonstrating outstanding leadership potential: **JASMINE FISHER**, managing associate, Washington, DC

Mentor/Sponsor, for making a positive impact on the experience of women peers: **SANDY MCCANDLESS**, partner, San Francisco

Change-Making Ally, for taking significant action to support women: **NICK PUJJI**, partner, Los Angeles

Exemplary Staff, for demonstrating commitment to diversity and equality: **CINA GRAYSON**, financial systems administrator, Chicago, and **SUE DELEVA**, senior events manager, New York



Celebrating Black History Month

Our Recent National Reckoning Around Race

We welcomed Princeton Professor **Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.**, to speak to our community as part of our Black History Month recognition. In conversation with Black Professional Alliance co-chairs **Claude Montgomery** and **Uchenna Ekuma-Nkama**, Professor Glaude provided his analysis of our recent national reckoning around race and how this moment differs from others in history. He offered important context from his most recent book, *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own*, drawing parallels between our current political moment and the times and works of Baldwin and his contemporaries. Professor Glaude also shared his thoughts on allyship without alienating others.

Promoting Equity in the Legal Profession

As part of Dentons' commitment to continuing a dialogue around equity in the legal profession, Dentons sponsored *Chief Legal Executive LLC's Black In-House Counsel Annual Report*, a timely publication that provides a comprehensive look at the state of Black leadership in corporations and law firms. The report chronicles the growing influence of Black general counsel, as well as the progress made by law firm partners to commit to and measure change. Eleven of our partners—**Thurbert Baker, Ashley Bell, Wendell Faria, Lynn Harrison, III, Karen Jordan, Cesar Mitchell, Jr., Claude Montgomery, Rodney Moore, Presley Reed, Jr., Helen Ogbara Reeves** and **Marlo Young**—are featured in the report.



The Push to Diversify the Cannabis Industry

Our Cannabis practice teamed with clients Simply Pure and Spur Bridges in hosting an important and timely webinar, "[Defining 'Social Equity' and Providing Solutions in the Cannabis Industry](#)." A panel including Chicago partner **Eric Berlin**, Atlanta partner **Ashley Bell** and Firm alum Lorine Pendleton discussed how cannabis legalization has often been tied to efforts to prioritize business ownership and economic development in communities of color, and analyzed the success of social equity programs and ways in which they can be improved.



BHM: Featured Colleagues

How has being diverse contributed to your success—or interfered with your progress?



Cina Grayson
Financial Systems
Administrator,
Chicago

In my experience, being diverse has been a double-edged sword. In my youth I was determined to be seen as Cina, just as good and hardworking as everyone else. I believed that was enough, and when it wasn't, it made me very angry, bitter and rebellious. As I've grown as a woman, a mother, a person with many friends and family members from diverse backgrounds and, most importantly, as a Christian, I've learned I don't have to "fight" but just be who I am and God will handle the rest. Oh, I still fight, but subtly, and while this has interfered with my success many, many times, I don't regret those times because those experiences made me who I am today. My previous firm was against free expression, and because I am totally expressive to a fault, I was never promoted despite having trained five people who all went on to receive many promotions. Fortunately, God moved me to a firm that has let me be me. Everything in His time.



Lynn Harrison III
Partner,
Restructuring,
Insolvency and
Bankruptcy,
New York.

By knowing my history and facing throughout my lifetime the challenges that Black Americans face each and every day, I have learned to gain an appreciation of what other ethnic and religious groups and cultures have been able to overcome in world history. Being sensitive to cultural and ethnic differences is becoming more important in the legal profession as the practice of law expands globally.



Ashley Lawrence
Managing Director,
Public Policy,
Washington, DC

While I am aware that some of the spaces I walk into weren't built for me, neither the color of my skin nor my cultural heritage feels like a roadblock or hindrance. Sometimes, I do feel that it is challenging to navigate the professional world due to a lack of cultural understanding. However, my diversity motivates me to acquire as much knowledge as I can out of each opportunity and then to pay it forward. I'm focused on learning as much as I can and doing great work, and I've enjoyed seeing firsthand how truly valuable my Howard Law training really was. If I were to think of a specific individual who has inspired me to embrace my diversity, it would be Vice President Kamala Harris. As the first Black and South Asian woman to hold that position, her career is proof that she has shattered glass ceilings that she has come up against, and I hope to do the same in my career.



Claude Montgomery
Partner,
Restructuring,
Insolvency and
Bankruptcy,
New York

Being African American has contributed a necessary edge to my ability to pick up certain cultural differences among different groups of professionals as a survival trait, but it also has frequently caused certain judges and counterparties to initially discount or underestimate my position on behalf of clients. My race has also cost me money, and influenced the available housing choices for my parents and for me as a law student and adult.



David Tandy,
Partner, Economic
Development,
Louisville

From an early age, I was raised to be proud of who I am as an African American. Additionally, I was taught to learn from and embrace the history of our people here in the United States and abroad. These personal lessons have helped to drive my ambition to be the best attorney I can be and achieve at the highest levels of this industry. It has been through this study and reflection, not only on the Black experience in America but also on those of other people in this country, that I have come to value, and attempt to employ myself on a consistent basis, the ability to empathize or to see the world through the lens of another as a means to come to the best solution for my clients or the community that I serve.



Lisette Washington
Associate,
Government
Contracts, Denver

The research has been performed on the power of diverse teams, and the studies show that when we embrace diversity, we get the benefit of learning from people with different backgrounds, perspectives and worldviews. This contributes to our ability to create new solutions for new problems and ultimately achieve great success. On a personal level, my diversity has always allowed me to share a unique viewpoint and a compelling story. Overall, I have focused less on diversity interfering with my progress and more on connecting with people who genuinely care to work with me and help me to succeed.



Shani Watkins
Legal Secretary,
New York

Diversity, inclusion, equality and equity are important to me because when I look in the mirror, I am reminded daily that I am a minority. I embrace my diversity fully because it allows me to bring different perspectives and ideas to the table. It is in my core values to work at places like Dentons that embrace differences, take inclusion seriously and approach diversity with humility, authenticity and vulnerability.

Recent Laterals



John Nelson Chrisman joined our Corporate practice as partner in Dallas. John has experience advising governments and multinational companies and financial institutions on M&A, capital markets (equity and debt), private equity and venture capital transactions, such as his representation of an Indian reinsurance company on a \$1.8 billion IPO, the second-largest first sale of a company's stock to public investors in that country's history.



Douglas Everett joined our Energy practice in our Indianapolis office. He concentrates his practice on the representation of a wide variety of entities within the energy sector, including counseling electric utilities, cooperatives and power marketers on compliance with the Dodd-Frank Act. Along with his energy work, Douglas represents telecommunications providers on transactional and regulatory matters.



Our Health Care practice welcomed **Mark Folk** as partner in Miami. With more than 30 years' experience in the healthcare industry, Mark represents investor-owned and faith-based healthcare providers in connection with the formation of strategic partnerships, the restructuring of lines of service and the securing of capital for operations and expansion. He also advises clients on changes in laws, regulations, and government policies and procedures relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Andrew Helman is a recent addition to our Restructuring, Insolvency and Bankruptcy practice. Resident in our Boston office, his experience includes serving as lead counsel to debtors, trustees, secured parties and others in chapter 11 cases, including serving as independent counsel to a state attorney general in several such cases in New England and Delaware. He recently obtained three temporary restraining orders and a permanent injunction against the Small Business Administration after it excluded debtors from participating in the federal Paycheck Protection Program.



Elizabeth Manno joined our Intellectual Property and Technology practice. Resident in our Denver office, she has served as a core member of patent litigation teams that have won preliminary injunctions for clients against their infringing competitors in various jurisdictions nationwide. She is an active member of the National Association of Women Lawyers and in 2019 received NAWL's Virginia S. Mueller Outstanding Member award.



Edward Marshall has joined the Firm as global head of our Family Office and High Net Worth group. Resident in the New York office, Edward will direct the strategy and implementation in building an innovative program of insights, advice and access to better serve the group's clients. His previous positions include managing director at Boston Private and director of the global family office group at Citi Private Bank.



John Oberdorf III joined our Global Venture Technology and Banking and Finance practices as a partner in our New York office where he handles commercial finance transactions; corporate law matters and transactions, including M&A; and intellectual property matters and transactions. Much of his work involves representing banks and other providers of credit and debt products in private banking and commercial lending transactions.



Our Public Policy practice welcomed **Brad Queisser** as principal, resident in Washington, DC. He has more than 30 years' experience and an extensive network of contacts, including working relationships with many members of the Biden administration. Prior to joining us, he was director of government relations at another law firm, where he managed federal, state and local government advocacy on issues including transportation, energy, engineering, construction, procurement and real estate.



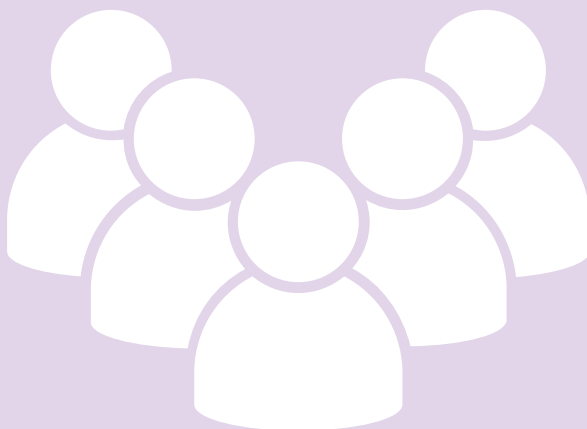
Amit Singh joined us as a partner and co-head of our Venture Technology and Emerging Growth group in Southern California. As outside general counsel to life sciences and technology companies he has led hundreds of M&A, venture capital and other sophisticated business transactions. He also represents managers and investors in the formation of venture capital, private equity and hedge funds.



Our Energy practice welcomed **Luis Torres** joined as a partner resident in our Washington, DC office, where he focuses on project finance and structured finance transactions. Luis has more than 20 years' experience representing investment funds, global sponsors, commercial and multilateral lenders, and sovereign entities in a variety of legal matters, including project and structured finance.



Nicholas Williams expands the Firm's Corporate practice as partner. Resident in our New York office, Nick joined Dentons after serving as co-head of a global insurance practice. He is an insurance regulatory and compliance pioneer with nearly 30 years' experience in domestic and cross-border M&A transactions.



Kudos

Congratulations to our 2020 Lubin Award honorees!

Lubin Award: TAMI AZORSKY, Litigation Partner, Washington, DC

Lubin Award (Visionary): LEAH BRUNO, Managing Partner, Chicago

Lubin Award (Community): BARBARA THRELKELD, Office Administrator, Kansas City

The Firm made contributions in each recipient's name to the charities of their choice: the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia for Tami; Cradles to Crayons/ the Greater Chicago Food Depository for Leah; and Veronica's Closet for Barbara.



Azorsky



Bruno



Threlkeld

2021 Promotions

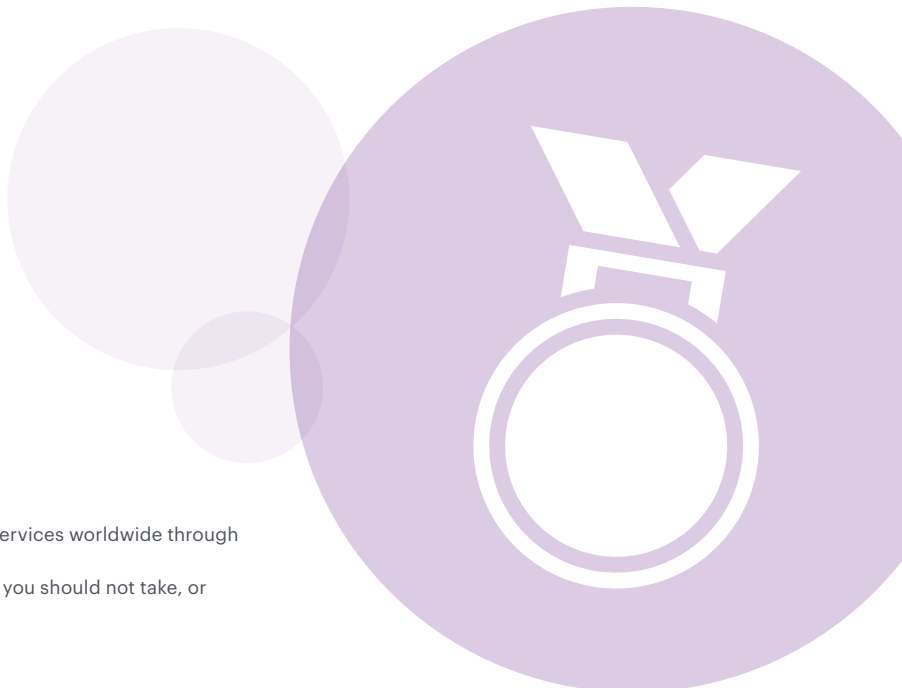
New partners

Juliet Asbury	Corporate	Pittsburgh
Robert Barbarowicz	Corporate	Los Angeles
Erin Bass	Litigation & Dispute Resolution	Phoenix
Adam Beckstrom	Intellectual Property & Technology	Salt Lake City
Jeff Berkey	Corporate	Pittsburgh
Joe Champion	Corporate	Indianapolis
Cullen Cochran	Corporate	Indianapolis
Rob Condon	Venture Technology Group	New York
Ausra Deluard	Health Care	Oakland, CA
Mike Dorelli	Litigation & Dispute Resolution	Indianapolis
Michael Dukes	Intellectual Property & Technology	Pittsburgh
Josh Fisher	Corporate	Kansas City
Steven Harris	Corporate	Pittsburgh

Elizabeth Hennessy-Spencer	Corporate	Evansville, IN
Thomas Hiesberger	Intellectual Property & Technology	Dallas
Lucy Hill	Litigation & Dispute Resolution	Pittsburgh
Brian MacKinnon	Real Estate	San Francisco
Sarah Matthews	Intellectual Property & Technology	Salt Lake City
Kathleen McCain	Corporate	Los Angeles
Michael McGee	Corporate	Louisville
Lorna McGeorge	Trusts Estates & Wealth Preservation	Naples, FL
Jessica Meylor	Capital Markets	New York
Melissa Minix	Employment & Labor	Indianapolis
Sam Olens	Public Policy & Regulation	Atlanta
Frank Paolini	Trusts, Estates & Wealth Preservation	Chicago
Julie Patter	Litigation & Dispute Resolution	Pittsburgh
Gerry Roberts	Intellectual Property & Technology	Indianapolis
David Tandy	Public Policy and Regulation	Louisville
Jacqueline Whipple	White Collar & Government Investigations	Kansas City
Anna Shiran Youssefi	Employment & Labor	Oakland

New counsel

Sylvia Chiu	Litigation and Dispute Resolution	Los Angeles
Kelly Lloyd Lankford	Litigation & Dispute Resolution	Short Hills, NJ
Amber Morris	Real Estate	Chicago
Diora Ziyaeva	International Dispute Resolution	New York



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