



# Connections



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Cover photo by Haynes Boone Partner Ken Kattner

It's our pleasure to unveil the latest issue of *HB Connections*, our sixth edition of Haynes Boone's alumni-focused magazine since we launched the publication in 2019.

This issue focuses on fun and entertainment. Our incredible alumni in this edition are a reminder that we not only provide world-class legal counsel around the globe, but also help facilitate some remarkable, lighthearted joy for people everywhere.

In the following pages, you'll find an interview with Lisa Normand, our firm's first alum to produce a feature film. She discusses her journey in the film industry and how production and law can be outlets for creativity. You'll also hear from Heidi Bundren, chief legal officer at the NHL's Nashville Predators, who wears many hats in her fast-paced job representing the team, the stadium, and the community organizations they have created. We also visit with Joe De Metro and Diana Heligman, alumni who work in house at NBCUniversal, about the possibilities of aligning personal interests with a career in law, and how Haynes Boone prepared them for a career away from a law firm. Finally, we profile current Restructuring Partner Ken Kattner, whose deep-space photography is featured on the cover, and whose telescopes in Texas and Chile capture some of the most breathtaking photos of the cosmos.

The featured profiles in this issue, alongside additional news and updates, underscore the vigor, variety, and creativity within our outstanding firm.

**TAYLOR H. WILSON**  
Managing Partner



We are looking forward to serving as your 2024 alumni committee co-chairs, and we echo Taylor's sentiments encouraging you to read the newest edition of *HB Connections*.

We are grateful that our outgoing co-chair, Purvi Albers, had the opportunity to dive further into the production of this issue of the magazine by interviewing Joe De Metro and Diana Heligman, our former colleagues who now work at NBCUniversal. We are also excited that you'll hear from Lisa Normand, who worked in our Trademarks Group and is thriving in the entertainment industry. We think you'll enjoy all their insights.

It's remarkable that our alumni community is made up of individuals pursuing such captivating, impactful, and diverse career paths. Our commitment to strengthening the bonds that connect our current and former personnel is unwavering.

A fantastic way to stay in touch is by keeping your information current in our [alumni directory](#). We encourage all of our alumni to also join our 1,000-member-strong [LinkedIn Alumni Group](#), and to consider allowing us to showcase your achievements in upcoming editions of *HB Connections*.

**BARRY BUCHMAN**  
**TIFFANY FERRIS**  
Alumni Committee Co-Chairs



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# Lisa Normand

## From Trademark Law to Feature Films

Lisa Normand’s law career started because of a passion for punk rock.

“Punk rock is very political, and that got me very interested in political science,” Normand said. “So I studied political science as an undergrad, and, of course, politics is so integral with law.”

To hear her explain the abnormal path so matter-of-factly while seated on a velvet couch in one of her film studio’s editing suites, it almost seems surprising The Ramones never opened their own practice.

Normand is now a television and film producer at Camp Lucky in Dallas and recently began running the studio’s new Long Form division.

Punk rock and a knack for analytic problem solving may have ushered her into law, but Normand says she’s also always been a proud movie nerd.

“In my first interview with [Haynes Boone Partner] Randy Brown, we were talking about David Lynch films, and I was like, ‘Oh, maybe I would fit in here,’” she said.

She touts “Wild at Heart” starring Nicolas Cage and Laura Dern as her personal Lynch favorite.

Normand worked at Haynes Boone from 2010 to 2016 in the Trademark and Copyright Practice Groups. She considers Jeff Becker, Purvi Patel Albers and David Bell her strongest mentors and still stays in touch today.

Normand sees a clear creative crossover between her work for the firm and in film.

“I think about one of the things I did best as an attorney, which was writing briefs,” she said. “You are telling a story, and it has to be compelling, and it has to have cadence. You’re telling a story to somebody who doesn’t really even want to listen to it.”

After graduating from SMU’s Dedman School of Law, Normand began working in commercial litigation at Winstead PC. Her first year, though, was 2007, and in the 2008 downturn, she and half of her first-year class were laid off. After a year-long stint at a solo practitioner’s office doing trademark law, she joined Haynes Boone.

Normand refuses to use the term “burnout” to describe why she left.

Instead, the decision had more to do with thoughts of the future and what other challenges she might find

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Lisa Normand

fulfilling. Normand decided to truly find an answer, she’d need to take a year off.

“I knew if I tried to figure out what I would do next immediately, it would still be tethered to that identity [of a lawyer],” she said. “I spent a year kind of practicing ego annihilation, so I could start from scratch.”

The year included an admittedly-cliché trip to Burning Man, a few months in Spain and a 10-day silent meditation course where she was only allowed to eat, sleep and meditate.

“It was harder than studying for the bar [exam],”

Normand said. “Anytime you are spending 10 hours a day focusing really, really hard on anything, that is hard work. That’s basically what meditation is.”

Around the end of the year, she got a text from someone she met working at a Dallas-area film festival. The person asked if she could help as a production assistant, a low-level job with menial tasks like taking out trash and getting coffee.

“I thought to myself, *That’s so funny. She doesn’t know that I’m a lawyer, and I’m like so above this,*” Normand said. “Then I thought, *Oh my God, I have been working for the last year to annihilate my ego, and I just failed that test.*”





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By the time Normand had her mini-epiphany and texted back, the spot was filled. At that moment, though, she realized film, her long-time passion, might also be the purpose she’d spent a year searching for.

She found an identical assistant job on a different low-budget film, making practically nothing. But on just her second day, after the director asked her about her background, she got an instant promotion to script supervisor. A couple of months later, she was already an associate producer working on David Lowery’s “The Old Man & the Gun,” Robert Redford’s final film.

“I’m in these meetings with David Lowery, and he’s saying, ‘Well, what do you think Lisa?’” Normand said, laughing at the surrealness. “And I’m like, ‘What are you talking about?!’”

Now six years into her film career, law still hasn’t left her life. Normand claims she’ll spend as much time

ironing out actor contract agreements as the firm spent on major mergers.

Recently, she had to use her legal background to rent a filming location from a man who wanted a contract free of legal jargon.

“I wouldn’t have had time to go to my lawyer, and I don’t think she would have done it anyway. So I had to take that location agreement and go paragraph by paragraph, and it ended up being like five sentences,” Normand said. “I had to translate it from lawyer [language] to just a dude who runs a hamburger shop.”

This past June, she wrapped shooting on “Psychopomp”, her first feature film as lead producer.

“I was super excited to take it on,” Normand said. “I learned a lot, and it’s just been incredibly rewarding to be so involved creatively because all the other projects that I’ve worked on, they’ve kind of been somebody else’s baby.”

The film is still being shopped around for a wide theatrical release with no firm date yet. She describes it as both touching and terrifying.

Normand is still fond of law, saying she most misses being around a team filled with professionals all at the top of their fields, but she now lives for the moments when a creative spark becomes successful on screen.

Her love of law started with punk rock, and her pursuit of film began with a random text.

“It’s definitely been a whirlwind,” Normand said. “I wonder what’s going to be my next challenge.”



“ It’s definitely been a whirlwind. I wonder what’s going to be my next challenge. ”



# Joe De Metro and Diana Heligman

From Haynes Boone to NBCUniversal



**Joe De Metro** and **Diana Heligman** live thousands of miles apart but have the shared experience of working at both Haynes Boone and at NBCUniversal. They're born entertainers who found their home practicing law in the entertainment industry.

During his tenure at the firm, Joe focused extensively on commercial real estate leasing, gaining experience in negotiations and navigating the complexities of property law. After a short stint working in-house at Starbucks, he took on his role at NBCUniversal, where he also gets to embrace his passion for entertainment.

"It was important to me to try to find a way of marrying my interests with what I'm doing," Joe said. "It

was a little bit of a weaving path. My interest was entertainment, but I was doing real estate law. Eventually, I found a company where I could do both of those things. I think if I could go back in time, I'd tell myself, 'Stick true to your passions. You'll be able to somehow make them work within your career.'"

In his role as vice president of corporate legal affairs for NBCUniversal's global real estate division,

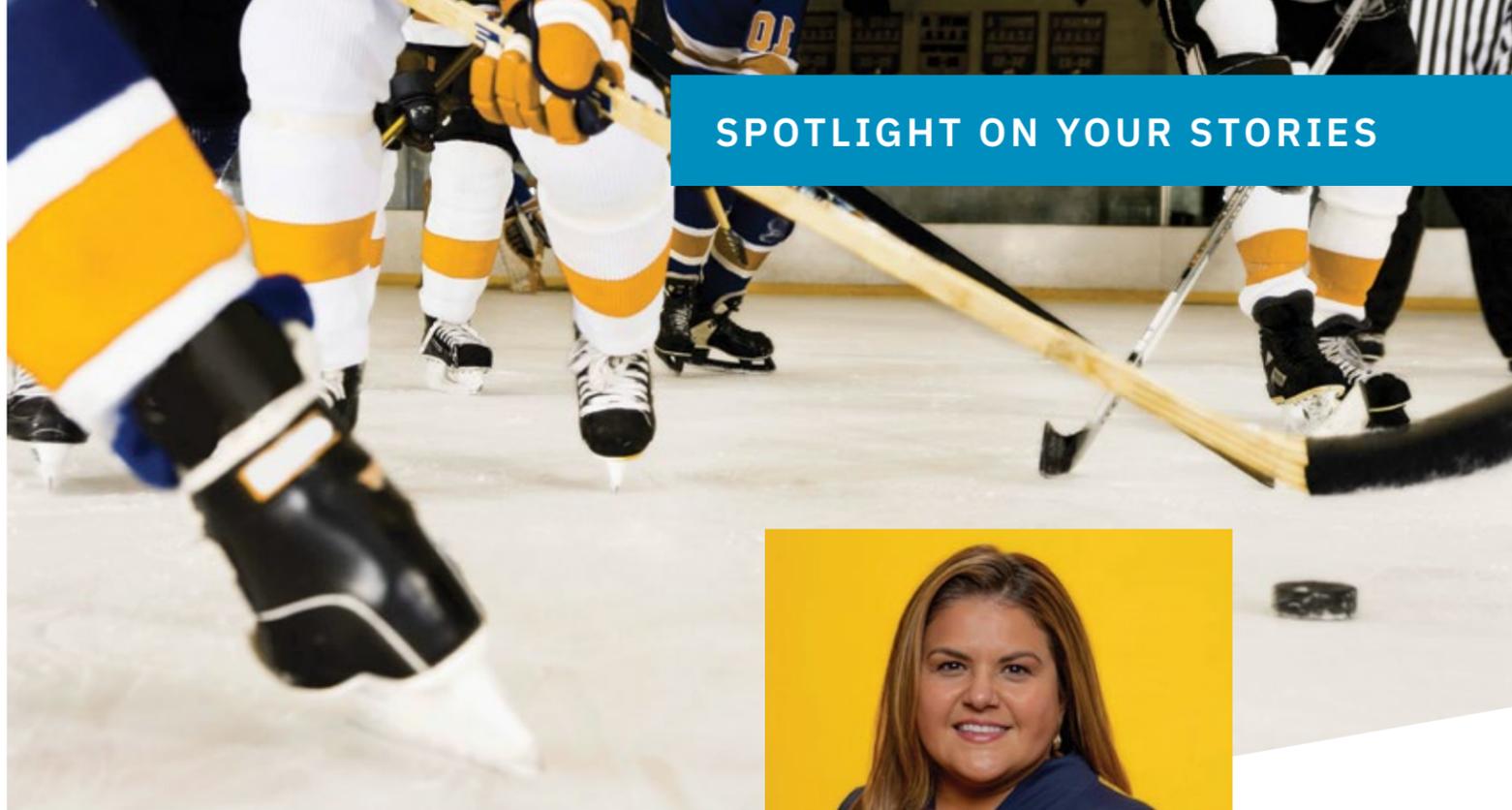
“It was important to me to try to find a way of marrying my interests with what I'm doing. I think if I could go back in time, I'd tell myself, 'Stick true to your passions. You'll be able to somehow make them work within your career.'”

**Joe De Metro**

he provides legal advice to the business function that oversees more than 14 million square feet of property, covering traditional office spaces, intricately designed and iconic studios, retail spaces and news stations worldwide. He helps to ensure the integration of real estate and entertainment by aligning the needs of NBCUniversal's diverse portfolio like the recent partnership between Assembly Studios and Gray Media Group, where NBCUniversal will be operating several studios. Joe's role requires a keen understanding of the unique demands that arise from intertwining the entertainment industry with the vast expanse of real estate holdings.

Diana's career has come full circle. Her post-grad career started in musical theater, but noticing friends in the arts community consistently dealing with creative rights issues turned her undergrad curiosity for law into a new purpose. After she went to law school, she joined Haynes Boone as an associate in the Orange County office. She dove into trademark and copyright law, aligning her legal acumen with her passion for creative protection. The unique combination led to her current role at NBCUniversal as counsel for brands and content intellectual property.

Diana's domain focuses on safeguarding intellectual property rights across NBCUniversal's diverse brands and content. Covering a spectrum of cable networks like Oxygen, Bravo, USA and Syfy along with DreamWorks Animation television portfolios. She has



to navigate the complexities of podcast development, helping shepherd ideas into potential series. She serves as the bridge between legal protection and the world of content creation, ensuring the safeguarding of NBCUniversal's brand integrity and creative assets.

"I was always interested in copyright and trademark work because it felt closer to the artistic background that I have," Diana said. "Holding out to find that fit to make my daily work enjoyable was worth it, because I don't know if I could see myself doing anything else."

Both Diana and Joe call concise communication the key to better relationships with in-house counsel.

"One of the things that I did not realize as much when I was at Haynes Boone was how the in-house counsel that you're working with is pulled in so many different directions and is trying to pull so much different information," Joe explained. "It's very important for outside counsel to create an easily comprehensible issues list that can get forwarded to the relevant parties that need it."

"When I'm working with outside counsel, the biggest thing is brevity," Diana said. "Tell me the answer fast, and try to avoid a five-step reasoning, as we are trying to quickly reach a conclusion."

Diana and Joe most treasure the mentorship at Haynes Boone for helping shape their careers.

"Finding mentorship with a person who is going to be willing to train you and put in the time is super important," Joe said. "I joined Haynes Boone when I was finishing my second year out of law school, so it

was that pivotal time of early training where what you learn is going to dictate how you work in the future."

Diana thanked **Ken Parker** in IP Litigation for being a guiding force in her career. His willingness to nurture her interest in trademark and copyright law helped her growth at Haynes Boone and her transition to NBCUniversal.

Their stories exemplify the art of pursuing passions in law, and it may be only a matter of time before the spotlight finds them in front of the camera again.



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Diana Heligman



# Heidi Bundren

## Daring Mascot, Prowling Predators and Nashville Spirit

Meet **Heidi Bundren**, Haynes Boone alum and Chief Legal Officer (CLO) of the NHL's Nashville Predators. In the conversation below, learn about Heidi's history with the firm, how she wound up working for a hockey team with no experience in the sports industry, and the numerous hats she wears as CLO.

**Q: WHAT DID YOUR TIME WITH HAYNES BOONE LOOK LIKE? DID YOU HAVE ANY STRONG MENTORS HERE?**

**A: Marty Lundstrom** (Haynes Boone alum) helped me to get the interview at the firm, and she was naturally a wonderful mentor of mine. I started in the Finance Group, but after about six months, I realized that financial services law was not what I wanted to do long term. I voiced my concerns to Marty, and she connected me with then, HB Partner **Stan Perry**, who had a need for an associate in the Litigation section. I was able to pull from my experience with the First Court of Appeals, writing briefs and helping prep for trials and respond to discovery. After some time working in litigation, **Matthew Deffebach** reached out to me with some Labor and Employment

(L&E) matters that needed a senior associate to work on. He was willing to teach me what I needed to work on his cases. Building that experience in L&E with Matt is what ultimately led me to have the experience needed to apply for the Nashville Predators job.

**Q: SO, YOU WERE NOT EVEN A HOCKEY FAN BEFORE THE PREDATORS?**

A: The job opportunity with the Nashville Predators was very unexpected. I was fortunate enough to get my foot in the door using my L&E experience. Growing up in Houston, I didn't really watch hockey, and I never thought of a career in sports before applying to the senior counsel position with the Nashville Predators. It was never about the sports aspect of the job for me. When I moved to Nashville after having lived in Houston for 37 years, my objective was to feel connected to the community I had moved to with my husband and then, four-year-old son. The Nashville Predators organization stood out to me as having an incredibly special relationship with the residents of Middle Tennessee. The fans stepped up to keep the hockey team in Nashville in 2007 and the Predators' organization has been dedicated and committed to giving back to the community that kept the team in Nashville. The Predators' organization has such a special relationship with its fans and the Nashville community, and everyone from players and executives to arena staff is committed to community involvement. Each year, we all set a goal to volunteer (called Hearts of Gold in honor of the team's signature color) for at least 40 hours, but most people meet that easily, often exceeding it. Additionally, we are dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. For example, the organization with the support of its sponsors and the NHL has created free youth hockey and skating programs in Nashville, ensuring that different people from diverse backgrounds all have the same opportunities to give hockey and ice skating a try.

**Q: COULD YOU TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENT HATS YOU WEAR AS CLO?**

A: My job as CLO to the organization is to provide direction on legal and regulatory issues. The Nashville Predators' organization is comprised of four entities-which operate the hockey team, manage and operate Bridgestone Arena, several ice rinks and F&M Bank Arena in Clarksville Tennessee. We have four attorneys (including myself) in the department. We handle all legal matters including employment matters, litigation, intellectual property



“At Haynes Boone, at any point and time, I was working on five to seven client matters. Now, I have 300+ full-time employees that I provide legal and business counsel to in all of the various departments, and each department needs very different advice.”

Heidi Bundren

matters, concert agreements, agreements related to building operations, vendors and services. Our team is also responsible for insurance and risk management, accessibility, broadcasting and sponsorship agreements-the list goes on and on.

**Q: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HAVING ONE CLIENT NOW VERSUS MANY AT HAYNES BOONE?**

A: In my experience, it has been a lot more work having a “single client.” At Haynes Boone, at any point and time, I was working on five to seven client matters. Now, I have 300+ full-time employees that I provide legal and business counsel to in all of the various departments, and each department needs very different advice. I talk to them about risk mitigation and how to protect our organization while also achieving our business and growth objectives. For example, our mascot rappels from the catwalk (107 feet up) of our arena. At Haynes Boone, if a client said that to me their employee was going to rappel from the rafters of their building, I would have told

them all the risks and reasons that was not a good idea. Here, the answer is, “Yes, but let's do it this way to protect everyone involved,” with training, a rigger, a third-party company assisting, a contract, and insurance.

**Q: HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN AS A FEMALE EXECUTIVE WORKING IN SPORTS?**

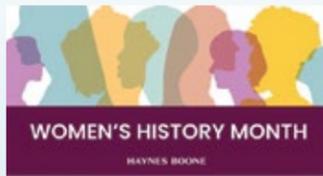
A: I was pleasantly surprised to find the number of women in sports, and specifically our organization. It was great to see Michelle Kennedy (current president and chief operating officer of the Nashville Predators) in her position as CFO and GC at the time. Michelle interviewed me and was looking to hire the right person for the role, but she was open to that being someone who had not worked in sports before. I am so grateful that she was opened minded and gave me the opportunity. It would be hard to make DEI changes within the industry if organizations don't let anyone in from the outside (no sports experience). One of the hardest parts of getting into the sports industry is getting that first industry job.

**Q. WHAT GUIDANCE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WANTING TO DO WHAT YOU DO?**

A: Be open to various kinds of work to gain experience in a variety of areas. You never know what's going to get you the opportunity to work for a professional sports team. Don't have too narrow of an opinion on what it means to work in sports because it might not look like you think it will. For example, many insurance companies and law firms represent sports teams in different ways, and many sponsors have sports divisions within their organization. If working in sports is something you really want to pursue, be open to taking a more junior position in order to use it as a way to gain different experiences and broadening your network. When I took the job with the Nashville Predators, it was technically a step down from where I was as a private practice attorney, but it was worth the sacrifice and hard work to work for such a great organization.

giving back

## Featured News



**Haynes Boone Celebrates International Women's Day**

March 2024



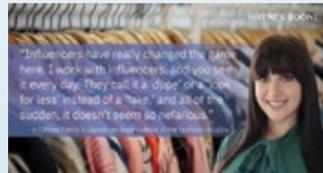
**CNN/Hollywood Reporter: Haynes Boone Lawyers Speak on New York Times Copyright Infringement Claims Against OpenAI and Microsoft**

December 2023



**Haynes Boone Wins 2024 ABA Alexander Legal Ambassador Award for Pipeline Leadership**

January 2024



**Dupe Culture Fueling Legal Battles Across the Fashion Industry**

January 2024

## Mia Nieto: On Her Second Wind



We recently spoke with **Mia Nieto**, an upcoming second-year summer associate in our San Francisco, CA office, about her experience with Haynes Boone last summer and what is calling her back for a second summer with the firm.

### Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT LAST YEAR'S SUMMER ASSOCIATE PROGRAM?

A: The San Francisco office is smaller than a lot of the firm's other locations, so I really felt I got to know every part of the office. I was able to get close with associates and partners, which is rare. Many partners invited me to lunch throughout the summer, and it was such an educational experience getting to see the different practices they all work in. I wasn't sure what to expect going into big law. The attorneys in my family all work in criminal law. I had heard big law was intense, but everyone was so welcoming and understanding. They know the expectations they should have for you and how to push you to grow and give you valuable experience. Whether you think you are ready for it or not, they are there to teach you and help you along the way.

### Q: WHO WAS A GOOD MENTOR TO YOU AT HAYNES BOONE, AND WHY WERE THEY A GOOD MENTOR?

A: That is such a hard question because I was fortunate enough to receive mentorship from

everyone in the office. If I were to single out anyone in particular as a true mentor of mine, I would say **Alfredo Amoedo** was super helpful, showing me the day-to-day work in the Labor and Employment Practice Group. Learning from him has shown me how much I enjoy working in labor and employment law. **Nora Titus** is a newer associate in the San Francisco office who also went to UC Law San Francisco, and it was great to have someone there with a similar background to me. She was a great mentor who gave me great insight into life as a new associate and how to create a work-life balance.

### Q: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THIS COMING YEAR'S PROGRAM?

A: I am most looking forward to diving deeper into the Labor and Employment practice group. In 2024, I am planning on volunteering for a Workers Right's clinic. I will be working from the plaintiff's side, which will help me see both sides of the litigation better. I will be coming into next summer's program with more experience in the field and more research and knowledge from school, so I am excited to add more value to the team.

### Q: WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO DO AFTER LAW SCHOOL?

A: After law school, I am hoping to continue my career with the San Francisco office. I am excited about the growth of that office in general. Getting to know everyone there and seeing the office grow has been so great, and I want to continue that journey.

## SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW

# Close Encounters with Ken Kattner

**Ken Kattner** sees more than the rest of us. He's not just a leading figure in corporate restructuring. He's also an avid astrophotographer with an observatory in Fredericksburg, Texas and a telescope in Chile.

Even his marriage is a match made staring at the heavens. His first blind date with his wife Laurie ended with the couple looking at the night sky together. Now, they own a piece of dark-sky land in the Texas hill country.

Ken and Laurie bought land just outside of Fredericksburg and oversaw construction of a cottage and the Putman Mountain Observatory, which now sits exactly on the center line of the upcoming solar eclipse for the entire 4.5-minute totality. For a passionate advocate of dark sky initiatives, there's no better setup to view the universe above.

While Ken served as president of the International Dark Sky Association for two years, he now prioritizes training and supporting new advocates around the world. He also focuses his time on operating his telescope in Chile's Atacama Desert. Space can seem a lonely place, but through Ken's lens, it's a way to build community and an experience all can share.



Haynes Boone Partner Ken Kattner at his Texas hill country observatory

## Office Moves



### AUSTIN

The Austin office moved into a new, modern space in San Jacinto Center with views overlooking Lady Bird Lake, the Hill Country and downtown Austin.



### DALLAS

The firm moved its largest of 19 global offices to a new building, Harwood No. 14, at 2801 N. Harwood St. in Dallas, Texas, where Haynes Boone is the lead tenant. The new office comprises five-and-a-half floors and 125,000 square feet.



### NORTHERN VIRGINIA

The firm opened an office in Northern Virginia in January 2023, continuing its expansion in the Washington, D.C., area.



### THE WOODLANDS

Two Hughes Landing, an eight-story class A office building with phenomenal views of Lake Woodlands is the new home of the firm's office in The Woodlands.

**JULIEN BAUBIGEAT**

(Dallas / BT / '01)  
Julien, managing partner of the Parisian law firm “Cabinet Baubigeat”, is still focusing on M&A deals in West Africa. Julien recently closed one of the largest deals in West Africa, advising an African client for the purchase of the dealership of the US brand “Caterpillar” throughout all West Africa, for an amount of approx. USD 500 Million. On a personal standpoint, Julien and his wife Laure have just finished renovating their 18 century family “manoir” in the French Countryside near Paris!! Don’t hesitate to ask for pictures, they will be happy to share and will invite you to come over!!

**KELLI BILLS**

(Denver / LIT / '10)  
Kelli is enjoying her appellate practice at Tillotson Johnson & Patton, where she works with fellow HB alum Anne Johnson. When she’s not working, you can find Kelli outdoors with her husband (Ryan) and two young daughters (Sydney and Shaelyn) exploring the beautiful state of

Utah. Much to her chagrin, Kelli predicts her children will be better skiers than her very soon, but at least she still has the edge in volleyball.

**BETH BUDNICK**

(New York / FT / '14)  
Beth is enjoying her work at Cassin & Cassin LLP representing lenders financing affordable housing properties in the NYC area and nationwide. She was thrilled to be promoted to partner in January 2024 and is tremendously thankful to her excellent HB mentors, especially Adam Feimer, for all that she learned at the HB New York City office as an associate. Her one-year-old daughter Nora keeps her laughing when not in the office!

**PRISCILLA FERGUSON CHACLIN**

(Dallas / IP / '99)  
Priscilla recently took on a new role as vice president of legal at Chobani. When she’s not busy supporting the best Greek yogurt ever made, she’s running around the pitch with her son, Rafael, or around the playhouse with

her other son, Marcel, or binge-watching something on Netflix with her husband, Norberto.

**KATIE CHATTERTON**

(Houston / LIT / '08)  
Katie recently moved companies to a new role as senior counsel - labor and employment for S&B Engineers and Constructors. While a change from the funeral and cemetery industry, she is enjoying the challenge. Katie looks forward to her upcoming travel plans with her husband, Andy Torrant and her son, Alex (9). Whether exploring the bustling city of Amsterdam or relaxing on a beach in Barbados, she won’t go anywhere without a good book.

**MATT CHESTER**

(Dallas / LIT / '04)  
Matt practices at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C. in New Orleans, where he has been for the last nine years. His practice areas include government-facing civil and criminal litigation, applying the skills he learned at the Department of Justice where he was a federal prosecutor for the

seven years before joining Baker Donelson. He is the practice group leader of the Firm’s Government Enforcement and Investigations group and was recently elected to the Firm’s Board of Directors. When not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Alana, and their three kids, Jackson (14), Will (6), and Lucy (3).

**COURTNEY CHOUINARD**

(Dallas / BT / '15)  
Courtney is still enjoying her role overseeing M&A, venture capital, and corporate governance for 7-Eleven. As an avid Michigan fan, she was thrilled to be able to watch the Wolverines win the National Championship at NRG Stadium with her husband, Joel, and her parents. Courtney also continues to enjoy lacing up her cleats every once in a while, but has found that coaching her son Julien’s soccer team makes her far less sore these days than playing soccer herself.

**HOLLY CLARKE**

(Dallas / LIT / '01)  
Holly is vice president, assistant general counsel, and head of

legal for the defense business for GKN Aerospace, a multi-national manufacturer of aircraft structural and engine components. Holly is a die-hard Oklahoma Sooners football fan who boasts being a season-ticket holder since the John Blake years (25 years!). She, along with her husband Bevan and daughters Bailey and Mackenzie love traveling to Norman to cheer on the Sooners there and of course love attending the annual OU/tx game held in Dallas every October. Boomer Sooner!

**DOUG CLAYTON**

(Dallas / BT / '98)  
Doug is chairman of the Business Transactions Practice Group at Cantey Hanger LLP in Fort Worth. Doug and his wife, Alicia, will become empty nesters in the fall when his daughter, Gracie, enrolls in the University of Alabama. Their other daughter, Avery, is a sophomore at the University of Oklahoma.

**STEVE CORSO**

(Houston / Lit / '95)  
Steve enjoys serving as the appellate chief for the US

Attorney’s Office in Alaska, where he leads the office’s practice in the Ninth Circuit US Court of Appeals. Steve, with his wife Barbara and their three children, Caroline, John, and Lauren, are thriving in the natural beauty, adventure, and open spaces of Alaska. They spend winters on the ski slopes; crisp summers on the mountain hiking trails and at the soccer fields; and football Saturdays rooting on the Georgia Bulldogs. They never tire of the moose and black bears that amble through their suburban Anchorage yard and the bald eagles overhead. Steve is always glad to hear about the success of the firm and the endeavors and growth of former colleagues.

**RABECA CROSS**

(Houston / LIT / '03)  
Rabeca recently joined St. David’s Foundation as Assistant General Counsel. She lives in southwest Austin with her three teenagers, Zach (16), Charlie (14) and Aaliyah (13).

THE FUN NEVER ENDS



DALLAS OFFICE OPEN HOUSE – FEBRUARY 2024



HOLIDAY SHOPPING EVENT – DALLAS – NOVEMBER 2023



**ASHLEY DUFFIE**

(Dallas / LIT / '99)  
After an expat assignment in Shanghai, China during Covid and nearly three years leading global procurement during a supply chain crisis, Ashley is enjoying being back in Dallas and back in legal as the general counsel of Celanese Corporation. Ashley and her husband Chip enjoy traveling with their two daughters, Kate (17) and Emma (14), with Greece, the Netherlands, and Mexico being the most recent trips. At home, you can find the Duffie's watching Kate cheer and Emma play soccer, and (gulp) planning college visits.

**MIKE ERTEL**

(New York / LIT / '01)  
Mike works with attorneys to assess their pain points and create solutions that help attorneys create better work product, increase realization, and reduce write-downs. Mike is a thought leader, frequent lecturer, and author in all things Knowledge Management and Innovation. As a lifelong New York Jets fan, football has never been too kind

to Mike. Nowadays, his sporting life consists of hiking, camping, boating, and other outdoor activities with his wife, Nita, and their three children Bella (15), Roman (13), and Dylan (11).

**YVETTE FERRER**

(New York / BT / '14)  
Yvette is working in Dallas in Mass Torts. She recently welcomed her first child, Elise Ferrer on August 14, 2023.

**KATIE FLEMING**

(London / FT / '17)  
Katie is enjoying her role as an associate in the finance team at Walkers in the Cayman Islands. She recently moved back to Cayman and spends most of her free time scuba-diving. She is very much looking forward to her trip to the Philippines in June with her husband John to dive the Tubbataha Reef which is only open to divers for three months a year! She also enjoys long walks on the beach with her fur babies Milo and Sprite.

**LAYNE GRINDAL**

(Houston / BT / '98)  
Layne is still living in the Northeast after leaving Haynes Boone more than 15 years ago to join HB client Atlas Air in New York. He is now a Partner and Managing Director of Seabury Aviation Partners in New York, NY, where he provides restructuring advisory and investment banking services to airlines globally. Layne and his wife, Stacy, an executive compensation lawyer with PepsiCo, live in Greenwich, CT with their two daughters, Sara Belle (9) and Adeline (7).

**JOHN GUNTER**

(Dallas / LIT / '14)  
John still enjoys working at McLane Company as a Legal Director focusing on technology transactions and data privacy. He was overjoyed that the Rangers won the World Series (finally) and got to attend both the World Series and ALCS in person. Fortunately, this made the Cowboys' latest playoff loss to the Packers slightly more bearable for him.

**CHAD HAMMERLIND**

(Austin / IP / '11)  
Chad is enjoying his time as counsel on the IP team at Pillsbury. In his free time, he has been busy carting four of his boys to t-ball and baseball practices and games. Chad and his wife, Megan, are still running an equestrian facility in Georgetown, TX where his daughter has been competing in the sport of 3-day eventing and has made several trips to Kentucky Horse Park this past year.

**EARL HENDERSON**

(Dallas / BT / '17)  
Earl is thoroughly enjoying his time at Kastner Gravelle in Austin, representing startups from formation to exit. Some might not call it a "sport," but when he's not working, Earl enjoys watching F1 races with his wife Olivia and their adorable co-pilot, Levi. It seems Levi inherited his dad's knack for excitement, as he's already a connoisseur of F1 crashes!

**SUSIE HOELLER**

(Dallas / IP / '76)  
Susie continues to practice business law in Tampa, Florida.

Her alma mater, Colby College in Maine, recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the women's ice hockey program which Susie founded and served as the first team captain. Susie and her husband Ted are fans of the Tampa Bay Lightning NHL team and also hope that someday soon the Dallas Cowboys will return to their former glory.

**JONATHAN HOROWITZ**

(Houston / LIT / '04)  
In October 2023, Jonathan began a new role as President of the Houston Hospitality Alliance, f/k/a the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, leading the HHA as it connects, promotes, and advocates for the entire Houston hospitality industry.

**HOPE HUGHES**

(Dallas / IP / '09)  
Hope joined Polsinelli in its Real Estate Finance section in late 2021 and is enjoying this complex and rewarding practice. She is currently putting together a new band and is looking forward to making a lot of noise and kicking over mic stands.

**WILL O'NEILL**

(Orange County / LIT / '07)  
Will is now the Mayor of Newport Beach, CA. He is also the immediate past President of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers (Orange County) and was recently sworn in to the Orange County Bar Association Board of Directors.

**DANIEL PEEL**

(Dallas / LIT / '89)  
After practicing law in Tennessee for more than twenty years, Dan moved back to Texas in 2021 and currently works as Senior Counsel at Lovein Ribman, P.C., a construction litigation firm in Grapevine. He and his wife, Karen, live in Flower Mound, and Karen works with special needs children at their neighborhood school, Bridlewood Elementary. Their oldest daughter, Jessica, practices data privacy and cybersecurity law in Kansas City with the Polsinelli firm, and their youngest daughter, Erin, is in graduate school at the University of North Texas working on her master's degree in psychology. Both Jessica and



AUSTIN OFFICE OPEN HOUSE – FEBRUARY 2024

Erin graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville - the original UT.

**LUIS ALBERTO PÉREZ**  
(Mexico City / BT / '08)

Luis moved a couple of years ago from Mexico City to Los Cabos as a part of his firm's opening of a new office in Baja. He continues to be the founding and co-managing partner of Caype Abogados (caype.com.mx). He recently ran with his wife a three-day and 110 km ultra race in Baja that crosses the peninsula from the Pacific Ocean to the Sea of Cortez through the mountains, where their four kids were waiting at the finish line.

**JENNIFER (BRANDT) REECE AND DAVID REECE**  
(Dallas / LIT / '96)

Jennifer continues to serve as a senior trial attorney in the Securities and Exchange Commission's Fort Worth Regional Office, where she litigates securities enforcement actions. Her husband, David Reece, after almost 20 years at the SEC, recently joined the legal

department of AT&T at its Dallas headquarters as an assistant vice president – senior legal counsel. Jennifer and David, who married in 2017, recently moved to downtown Dallas, where they are adjusting to life in a high-rise apartment and stay busy with their family of five children, two of whom play collegiate sports.

**WILLIAM REICHERT**  
(Moscow / BT / '96)

Based in Dubai, Bill leads the Middle East Corporate Practice for Charles Russell Speechlys' three offices in the region. He spends most of his spare time with his three year and nine month old boys, and enjoys working out and reading (when he's not too exhausted from chasing them around!).

**MARK ROBINSON**  
(Dallas / BT / '09)

Mark is continuing to enjoy life as an M&A attorney at Ericsson. This year was big one for checking off travel bucket lists. Mark and his family (Jennifer and MJ) completed their goals of staying overnight on every continent with

a camp out in Antarctica, visited their last state of North Dakota (seems to be everyone's last state) and took in a game at their last baseball park in Toronto. Mark is open to any ideas on new travel checklist options.

**PETER RUGGERO**  
(Houston / FT / '04)

Peter continues serving as a court-appointed post-judgment turnover receiver. When not chasing judgment debtor's assets, he can be found jogging or biking around Austin. He is most proud, however, of his 12-year old that now keeps up with him on the black ski slopes. Peter has two more children - age six and nine - that are still in ski training to match their siblings skill.

**PAUL RUSSELL**  
(Houston / FT / '12)

Paul is riding the solar coaster with Silicon Ranch Corporation in Nashville, TN where he oversees the procurement and contracting team. With three kids (10, nine and one), three dogs, four hens and one rooster, Paul and his wife, Nicole, stay busy but Paul

still finds time to supports his Kentucky Wildcats even though he's had to wear his "All I want for Christmas is Championship #9" sweatshirt for far more Christmases than he'd care to admit.

**GABOR SZECSEI**  
(Palo Alto / BT / '07)

Gabor has recently advised a book publishing startup, <https://marblepress.com/>, on acquiring over a million dollar worth of copyrights so far. The first books were published in October. Two books already have book-to-screen deals. One movie is planned to come out in 2025. The company's long term objective is to evolve into a prominent media company.

**ANDREW THURMOND**  
(Washington / FT / '11)

Andrew was elected to the partnership of Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders in 2024, where he focuses on renewable energy project development and finance. Andrew, his wife, Sarah, and their two boys, Carter (five) and Warren (three), still love cheering for the Georgia Bulldogs even though they

could not pull off the three-peat.

**SASHA VAIKHMAN**  
(Houston / LIT / '02)

Sasha just celebrated the one-year anniversary of starting her own practice where she serves as a neutral in both mediations and workplace investigations. Sasha loves working with Haynes Boone attorneys and alums! You can check out her website at [www.mediationmaven.com](http://www.mediationmaven.com). Sasha also just completed her 16th Houston Half Marathon and was able to share her love of running with her two teens (who run much faster than she does!).

**BIANCA VALENCIA**  
(Orange County / LIT / '19)

Bianca is enjoying her role as a litigator with Sheppard Mullin. She joined their dynamic labor and employment team known for its innovative approach and commitment to excellence. Bianca had the rare opportunity to tour the new SoFi stadium, where she walked through the Rams's locker room, threw a football on the field, and had an exclusive tour into the C-level executive suites. Although

she is not huge on sports, being able to watch the Rams playoff game that got them into the 2022 Superbowl, in an executive suite, made her a sports fan!

**VICTOR WRIGHT**  
(Houston / LIT / '98)

Victor recently completed his first year and a half at Baker Hughes in his role as vice president, global labor and employment law, and was tapped by senior leadership to lead the standing up of a newly created Labor and Employee Relations Center of Excellence charged with managing global labor union and employee relations legal risks across the company's business operations. Even though the desired outcome was not achieved, he was thrilled to attend the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans to see the Longhorns play the Huskies with his daughter Jasmine, who is now in the last semester of her senior year at UT, his son Justin, who is a junior in high school, and his wife, Lynell. Time has certainly flown by since Justin was born in 2006 while Victor was an associate at the firm!



WOMEN'S FASHION EVENT – DALLAS – OCTOBER 2023

**JAMES ZHANG**

(Shanghai / BT / '05)

James returned to private practice from his regional legal head role of Starr Investment three years ago. As a partner of a top Chinese law firm “GLO”, he enjoys his practice of corporate transactions. His team is also offering a strong data privacy and ESG compliance service for Chinese and international clients. One great surprise to him, James and his wife Weijia (who is also his Argentina tango partner in Shanghai) are now expecting their first kid. James used to play basketball and boxing (when he was younger ...). But now, he is seriously considering how to tutor his soon-to-be-born kid to be a tango danzarín/ danzarina – to enjoy the most beautiful melody and rhythms in the world.

*The firm is grateful to our Cristo Rey student workers, Lucero Adame and Sam Hernandez who personally reached out to our alumni for their news and notes updates!*

# In Memoriam

We remember our friends and colleagues who have passed away – they will be missed. We send our condolences to their families.



**TERRY S. BOONE**  
(Fort Worth / LIT)  
September 11, 1955 –  
January 22, 2024



**MELVIN A. DOW**  
(Houston / FT)  
February 28, 1928 –  
October 18, 2023



**MELISSA M. GOODMAN**  
(Dallas / LIT)  
March 13, 1969 –  
October 27, 2023



**THOMAS E. KURTH**  
(Dallas / LIT)  
March 15, 1948 –  
January 29, 2024



**JASON ZACHARY**  
(Denver / BT)  
April 11, 1972 –  
November 21, 2023

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## Autumn Highsmith Returns Home

**Autumn Highsmith** was a restructuring associate and partner for over 13 years at Haynes Boone. After leaving in 2018 to pursue opportunities outside of the law and spend time with her family, she rejoined the firm briefly in the attorney development department. Subsequently, she joined the Texas Attorney General’s office as an assistant attorney general in the bankruptcy regulatory department. She returned to Haynes Boone to work with **Stacy Brainin** and the firm’s general counsel office in September of this year. Learn about what keeps drawing her back home below.



### WHAT DID YOU MISS MOST ABOUT HAYNES BOONE WHILE YOU WERE GONE?

While I really enjoyed my time at the Texas Attorney General’s office, I missed the depth of knowledge that you get at a place like Haynes Boone. The ability to pick up the phone and call someone who is going to know the answer to questions I might have in any area of the law – nowhere else can match that. I missed the amazing staff at the firm equally as much. To be here where our many non-attorney professionals take on so much of the non-legal heavy lifting is such a blessing.

### WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO COME BACK TO THE FIRM?

It is a little like the “Cheers” theme song: I wanted to be somewhere where everybody knows my name. Haynes Boone is my family. While I could watch the successes and achievements of all these people I care about as an alumnus, there’s something special about being a part of it. I now have the opportunity to work with **Stacy Brainin**, **Odean Volker**, **David Dodds**, and Rich Clark, people who I have known and respected for so long. Plus, knowing my former restructuring practice family is just two floors away is the cherry on top. I just couldn’t let that opportunity pass.

### WHAT HAS SURPRISED YOU MOST UPON YOUR RETURN?

I am shocked at how much the firm has grown but how little the culture has changed. It is obvious how much work has been done to keep up with the tremendous growth, but somehow, there is continuity and consistency in the way things are done. On a bit of a less serious note, I was surprised to learn my first day would be in the wonderful new Dallas office!

### IF SOMEONE ASKED YOU TO DESCRIBE HAYNES BOONE, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

That’s easy: Haynes Boone is a firm where great people do great work for great clients.

### WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FIRM’S FUTURE?

I hope that as we grow, the firm can continue maintaining the high ethical and quality standards that have historically set us apart from other firms. I hope that we keep growing our presence and nurturing our young attorneys so we can continue to meet our client’s high expectations.

### IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO MENTION ABOUT THE FIRM?

It’s just nice to be home.

I always say when we come together as a community, we push the limits of what is possible individually. This is also true for fun and entertainment! We can take the things that we liked best about our firm culture and bring them with us into our new communities. Conversely, our new experiences provide us the opportunity to bring a new excitement back to our alumni community. I see this when I get to talk to a group of attorneys who were summer associates together, when former colleagues share pictures of their new babies (fur or otherwise) or even recent trips they have taken. When you are a Haynes Boone alum, the fun truly never ends!

As always, please don’t hesitate to take advantage of our alumni benefits and resources listed below. Let’s continue the fun and meet in person! The alumni committee is taking a roadshow to the following offices in 2024. Please reach out if you’d like to join us for dinner in your locale.

The 2024 **alumni roadshow** stops in Charlotte, Denver, Houston/The Woodlands, Mexico City, New York, Northern Virginia/Washington D.C., Orange County and San Francisco.

We offer a **job board** and counseling to help alumni and friends of the firm who are interested in moving in-house.

Our **LinkedIn alumni group** is a place to connect with over 1,000 lawyers with whom you share a common experience.

To celebrate the transition from departing attorney to alumni, we host farewell receptions as part of the departure process.

The **HB Alumni directory** is available to help you stay in touch with your former colleagues and friends.

**On demand** CLE and specific course are available upon request.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Cheers,  
Laura Higgins

**LAURA HIGGINS**  
Director of Alumni and Client Relations



### CONNECT

Get connected to your next job opportunity with our alumni job board at [haynesboone.com/alumni](https://haynesboone.com/alumni).

### GROW

We offer regular CLE opportunities, both live and pre-recorded. For more information, contact [AlumniCLE@haynesboone.com](mailto:AlumniCLE@haynesboone.com).

### SHARE

Join our LinkedIn Alumni Group and share your story about why giving back to the community is important to you.

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