Kelli Norfleet Profiled in Bloomberg Law: 'Bankruptcy Fresh Face Kelli Norfleet'

By Kelli Stephenson Norfleet | December 1, 2020

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Bloomberg Law featured Haynes Boone Partner Kelli S. Norfleet in its “They’ve Got Next” profile, highlighting her work helping guide Rosehill Resources Inc. through a Chapter 11 reorganization in just a month and converting about $190 million of debt to equity.

Below is an excerpt:

The nation’s most prominent corporate bankruptcy venues are increasingly seeing the name Kelli Norfleet at the bottom of legal briefs.

The 36-year-old Haynes Boone partner frequently represents creditors, and some debtors, in high-stakes Chapter 11 cases.

“When she walks into the courtroom, judges want to know what she has to say,” said Charles Beckham Jr., a senior partner in the firm’s restructuring practice group who mentored Norfleet. Within 10 years, “I think Kelli will be the most respected bankruptcy lawyer in Texas.”

In 2020 alone, Norfleet has represented parties of interest in the cases for J. C. Penney Co., Neiman Marcus Group Ltd., and McDermott International Inc.

She also served as lead attorney for a subsidiary of Williams Companies as it fought a bid by Southland Royalty Co. to amend a natural gas gathering agreement. The dispute is one of several recent fights over whether midstream oil and gas contracts can be rejected in bankruptcy.

“It’s a really heavy piece of litigation,” she said, but “it’s been fun to work on.”

Based in Houston, Norfleet is particularly familiar with judges in the Lone Star State. She was identified in a 2020 analysis by The Texas Lawbook as one of the state’s busiest bankruptcy lawyers by case assignment.

Norfleet has been at Haynes Boone since graduating from American University, Washington College of Law, in 2009. Bankruptcy law was hot at the time and presented the right opportunities, she said.

“I happened into it by chance, but I consider myself very lucky to have ended up here,” she said. “The bankruptcy code was something I found easy to understand.”

Norfleet “jumped into bankruptcy with a passion that distinguished her from any other that we had seen from the past,” Beckham said.

What stands out most is her “incredible patience,” he said, recalling Norfleet’s poise back when she

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was a second-year attorney repeatedly accepting and incorporating edits in a large project under the watchful eye of a senior partner.

“As a young lawyer, I might have been intimidated,” he said. “Kelli persevered. She never acted like she was frustrated or bothered by the work that was necessary to get the job done right.”

Now a partner, Norfleet exhibits that patience not only with senior attorneys, but with younger lawyers she supervises and with clients, he said.

To read the full article, click here.

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