



2020 RISING STAR

Nicole Washington

Kirkland & Ellis LLP partner Nicole Washington has steered flagship funds like Clearlake Capital's \$7 billion vehicle while corralling investors from across the globe, earning her a spot on this year's list of fund formation practitioners under age 40 honored as Law360 Rising Stars.

Her biggest deal:

Washington's biggest recent career highlight is serving as lead counsel advising Clearlake Capital's sixth flagship private equity fund, which plans to target \$7 billion in investments in the technology, industrial and consumer sectors.

Washington says the deal, which involved 220 investors on almost every continent, was challenging not only because of the jurisdictional divergences, but also the "crunch timing" and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There were a lot of things to juggle at the same time, which made it demanding but also incredibly rewarding when we were able to get it closed," she said.

Her proudest moment:

Washington's work helped her team secure a nod as a Law360 Practice Group of the Year in the fund formation category.

But accolades and titles aside, the Kirkland investment funds group partner counts the first time she helped successfully

pitch a deal as the proudest moment in her legal career.

"It was a moment where I felt grown up, [in the sense] that I not only contributed to getting the legal work done but that I had a voice and things to offer that a client recognized," Washington said.

What motivates her:

Washington said the most rewarding part of her job is working with clients to help solve their legal problems.

She says her goal as an attorney is having various parties "come to the table with different problems, and having them walk away feeling like everyone has gained something and been heard."

"I like the communication and negotiation aspect of being an attorney," she said. "I really like being

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What she’s watching for:

Like many attorneys, Washington expects the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic to have lasting impacts on her practice area.

The Kirkland partner expects to

see an increase in the formation of so-called ESG impact funds aimed at helping address environmental, social and governance issues through investment.

“They’re just getting hotter given what’s going on in the U.S. and in the world right now,” Washington said. “So I think we’ll see more of private equity doing good.”

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