

D.C. LITIGATION DEPARTMENTS OF THE YEAR

A SPECIAL REPORT

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT WINNER

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT A BIG LAW firm gets to play a part in a social movement. #MeToo has driven long-overdue reforms in workplaces toxic to women, and Morgan, Lewis & Bockius' labor and employment department has been on the front lines of some headline-grabbing cases.

Morgan Lewis partner Grace Speights, the Washington-based head of the firm's labor and employment group, spearheaded a two-month investigation into allegations of sexual harassment against Mike Oreskes, the former senior vice president of news at National Public Radio who stepped down last November. The resulting report revealed that women believed there were gender imbalances in pay and promotions, and recommended stronger hiring screening and additional workplace training.

The firm also conducted an assessment of workplace culture after harassment claims at Fidelity Investments. Those claims made headlines in *The Boston Globe* and *The Wall Street Journal*. A separate investigation by Morgan Lewis into sexual harassment complaints against Wayne Pacelle, then-chief executive of the Humane Society of the United States, led to his departure.

"We do not go into an investigation with a defense counsel mindset. We go in with a mindset of being a neutral fact



GRACE SPEIGHTS

finder," Speights said in an email, when asked to describe her approach.

"We go in open-minded and with empathy toward the individuals who we interview. Making a connection with the interviewees is very important."

"We tend to ask open-ended questions and do a lot of listening," she said. "It takes a lot of people skills to do this work."

Speights underscored that while the firm can make recommendations about how to make organizational change, it's up to companies to implement them and lead by example: "The good news is, we're seeing many companies embrace this opportunity to make sure their workplaces are a positive, safe, respectful and inclusive place for all."

The firm has also achieved results in labor cases that were noteworthy in other ways. Morgan Lewis senior counsel Thomas Reinert Jr. secured a rare decision at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit tossing out an arbitrator's award against Amtrak. Reinert argued for the railway operator, which was being sued by a former Amtrak police officer who was terminated after a misconduct investigation by the Amtrak inspector general.

Morgan Lewis also represented Wells Fargo in a racial discrimination suit brought on behalf of African-American financial advisers, helping to reach a \$35.5 million court-approved settlement that included changes at the bank.

—BEN HANCOCK

firm facts

Name: Morgan, Lewis & Bockius
Founded: Philadelphia
Total number of attorneys: 1,935
Litigators as percentage of firm: 47.3 percent
Litigators as percentage in D.C.: 42.9 percent
Litigation partners firmwide: 334
Litigation associates firmwide: 504
D.C. L&E partners: 11
D.C. L&E associates: 16

keys to success

- Don't look for only bet-the-company business; support and work with clients on everything that they need.
- Provide a wide range of practices that allow for a breadth of work for clients.
- Be a partner and trusted advisor to our clients and to handle all of their work, no matter how big or small. —Grace Speights