

HEATHER J. DiPIETRANTONIO

Shareholder, Wolf Greenfield, Boston
Suffolk University Law School

Heather J. DiPietrantonio was having trouble deciding on a career path. “My love for science won out, so I started my career as a bench lab scientist on the expected academic path,” she says. “When I learned about the ‘alternative’ path of patent law, I seized the opportunity to marry my two passions. It is the perfect mix of technology, law and innovation.”

Today, as a shareholder in the biotechnology practice at Wolf Greenfield, DiPietrantonio focuses her professional passion on patent prosecution, due diligence, licensing and opinion work in the life sciences space.

She counsels clients ranging from startups to mid-sized biotech companies and nonprofit institutions, with vast experience in strategic counseling on the development and life cycle management of IP rights relating to gene editing, gene therapy, adoptive cell therapy, nucleic acid vaccines and transgenic mouse models.

“My favorite part of the job is connecting with people — clients, colleagues, mentees, staff,” she says. “I’m a people person, and I love the people with whom I work.”

DiPietrantonio chairs the firm’s Hiring Committee and sits on the Risk Management Committee as well. In addition, she oversees training for junior members as part of the Biotechnology



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Practice’s Business Development Subcommittee. She also launched the Women’s Leadership Initiative at the firm.

“It is incredibly important that the junior practitioners have mentors and sponsors to navigate their careers over the next few, critical years, and that they form connections with each other,” she says.

A member of the Boston Intellectual Property Law Association, DiPietrantonio is also active in Women Entrepreneurs in Science and Technology and Women in Bio.

— Correy E. Stephenson

AMANDA S. ECKHOFF

Partner, Robinson & Cole, Boston
Boston College Law School

The real estate finance practice isn’t for everyone.

“If you want a practice where you have a lot of time to think about things and the deadlines don’t change, this is not the practice for you,” explains Amanda S. Eckhoff. “Some people like a work environment that operates more like a battleship or an ocean liner, but my practice is more like a speedboat.”

Although she initially began her legal career in land use, Eckhoff pivoted after she found it wasn’t the right fit. Her work in the Real Estate & Development Group has her assisting regional and national institutional lenders with all types of real estate financing including acquisitions, construction loans, syndication participations and workouts, from the initial permitting and development of a project through acquisition and all types of finance.

Most recently, she represented a lender in a \$14.3 million loan transaction for the rehabilitation and construction of a hotel, tennis club, restaurant and beach club on Cape Cod. She also assisted a lender with a \$29 million loan to finance the construction of a two-story retail project in New York.

“In most cases, when I’m done with a matter everyone is happy — the bank is happy because they made a loan, the borrower is happy because they got money and it feels good to be part of something



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like that,” she says. “Plus, in the real estate world, I can actually point to buildings that I worked on. I can go to the Hingham Shipyard and say, ‘I worked on that financing.’”

A board member of the Real Estate Finance Association, Eckhoff is a fellow of the American College of Mortgage Attorneys and has done pro bono work on asylum cases with PAIR. She also serves on the board for the New England Center and Home for Veterans, the Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston and the Lyric Stage Company of Boston.

— Correy E. Stephenson

SARAH H. FAY

Partner, Schwartz Hannum, Andover
New England Law | Boston

Almost 10 years ago, Sarah H. Fay started as a law clerk at Schwartz Hannum, intrigued by the practice of education law. She found her niche, and a decade later is a partner in the practice group, which has grown and expanded.

“The issues are so interesting and ever-changing,” she says. “Plus, I really love the clients.”

The firm represents nearly 300 independent schools nationwide, and Fay addresses their legal needs, whether independent primary and secondary schools, early child care programs, camps, colleges or universities. Her guidance covers all aspects of school operations from employment matters to governance issues to crisis management and all manner of student and parent issues.

Fay advises clients on the full range of student and employee disabilities, has successfully negotiated numerous settlements for clients in prelitigation disputes with employees based on allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment, routinely assists when allegations surface that former students were sexually assaulted by a past employee, and during the COVID-19 pandemic was in constant contact with her clients in an effort to help them navigate the unprecedented situation of closing and reopening.

While the practice has some cyclical



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matters based on the academic year, the frequent need for crisis management results in a day-to-day attempt to balance compliance work with the pressing need of a client with an emergency on campus.

“We are there for legal guidance, but we are also a thought partner in a really collaborative, creative space for problem solving,” she says.

A frequent speaker and presenter, Fay is a member of The National Association of Minority & Women Owned Law Firms, where she serves on the organization’s Labor and Employment Committee.

— Correy E. Stephenson

KRISTEN FERRIS

Director, Goulston & Storrs, Boston
Suffolk University Law School

While she initially wanted to focus her legal career on litigation, Kristen Ferris realized that she wanted a less adversarial practice. Bitten by the M&A bug, she found the collaborative nature she was looking for in mergers and acquisitions, enjoying the transactional work and different types of deals.

“There is a collaborative effort so that you can achieve the outcome both sides want,” she says. “I am a deal fanatic. I’m industry agnostic, so life sciences to sports deals, you name it, but this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

Ferris represents both public and private companies, in addition to financial sponsors and family services and their respective portfolio companies, focusing her practice on M&A, private equity, growth equity, recapitalization, venture capital transactions and general operating company representation. She leads deals across a broad range of industries, including life sciences and sports, as well as technology, energy, consumer retail and automotive, and her work covers a company’s entire lifecycle, from formation to financing and growth and exit.

“Every day is different and every transaction is different,” she says. “I have been doing this for a long time, but I still learn something new every day.”

As a director at Goulston & Storrs,



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Ferris prioritizes being a good mentor and helping junior associates on their career paths. She is co-chair of the firm’s Strategic Growth Committee (and serves as a team mentor), and member of the Women’s Bar Association, Boston Bar Association and Massachusetts Bar Association. Additionally, she has volunteered with Election Protection since 2008 and is an active supporter of Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center. She also served on the board of directors of Health Care Without Walls and as a volunteer with the EdLaw Project.

— Correy E. Stephenson