



presents....*The Update*

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EWNJ Member Spotlight



Our second profile this issue is **Kirsten Branigan**, a self-employed attorney who recently opened the Law Office of Kirsten Scheurer Branigan, P.C. in Newark. It all started during her second year in college when Kirsten was taking a Women's History class and she had an epiphany. She suddenly realized that women have never had legal rights until the modern era. Considering the implications of this, she felt an obligation to learn the law and help others, most especially disenfranchised women. Kirsten went on to law school, graduating with high honors and as a Henry Rutgers scholar. She joined Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer, one of largest and most highly regarded law firms in New Jersey where her experience as an intern for U.S. Magistrate (Federal) Judge Ronald J. Hedges and as a law clerk for the Jersey City Office of the Corporation Counsel, as well as her energy and academic success, served her well. Throughout her ten years with the firm, Kirsten was recognized as a leader, substantiated by the fact that, for a period of time, she was the only Associate with a role on the Hiring Committee. She also participated in the firm's mentoring program and was an advisor with the firm's Summer Associate Program. As she grew in stature and experience, Kirsten was eager to become a partner in a law firm. She left Wilentz and became a part-time partner at Fischer, Porter & Thomas (FPT), a Bergen county firm with an office in Englewood Cliffs. This provided her with an exciting opportunity to grow an employment practice. At the same time she was working as an assistant counsel at the Office of the Essex County Counsel and getting more experience in labor and employment cases.

Fortified with the confidence that she had enough experience to open her own practice, Kirsten left FPT to launch her own firm. This enabled her to build her own practice, focus on the cases that had a priority for her and allow her the flexibility to enjoy her young family. Kirsten opened the firm with 10 clients and grew it to 36 active clients in the first eight months. Her employment law work has put Kirsten at the forefront of the fight for a fair work environment. She has handled cases where women have been retaliated against for pregnancy and other gender related issues. She has been involved in the public sector handling whistleblower cases dealing with fraud and corruption. Additionally, she has been asked to review severance and employment contracts and has helped companies develop policies, perform internal investigations, and establish effective preventative remedial measures.

Somewhere along the way she also has time to be a wife and mom. And beyond that, Kirsten is a member of the Women's Political Caucus of NJ, the Essex County Democratic Women's Caucus and Women in the Profession section of the NJ State Bar Association along with numerous professional organizations for labor attorneys. Most significantly of all, she has almost single handedly rejuvenated the New Jersey Women Lawyers Association, taking it from a group that had dwindled to less than ten members to a thriving organization with well over 275 members today. We are also thrilled to have Kirsten as EWNJ's Bylaws committee chair.

Learn more about Kirsten and her firm at www.ksbraniganlaw.com.