

TEXAS LAWYER

ALM.

texaslawyer.com | June 14, 2022

Pillsbury Forms All-Woman Corporate Team in Austin

The firm hopes the group—which includes homegrown talent, a relocation, and a recent hire—will help it attract work from clients seeking diverse outside counsel teams.

BY BRENDA SAPINO JEFFREYS

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman has formed an all-woman corporate team in Austin to represent technology clients in Texas, which may give the firm a leg up when seeking work from clients that are increasingly interested in hiring diverse teams of outside counsel.

Ed Cavazos, managing partner of the 23-lawyer Austin office, said that as the firm expanded its transactional team in Austin, it began to seek out women to hire.

“There are a lot of very talented women on the market and very talented women in-house who are looking for other women to work with for diversity goals or whatever,” Cavazos said.

He said the Big Law all-woman team is unique in Austin, to his knowledge.

“I’ve been practicing in Austin for a long time. I don’t know of any other corporate group comprised of women like ours,” he said.

The start of the team dates back to the launch of the Austin office in 2014. Elizabeth Zimmer, a technology transactions and sourcing partner, is a co-founding partner of the Austin office.

But some of the expansion is recent. M&A and private equity partner Veronica Nunn, who has been at Pillsbury since 2019 and has worked on deals with lawyers in Austin, will move to Austin from New York next week. Earlier



this year, capital markets special counsel Danielle de Zorzi, a former group senior corporate counsel for AIA Group in Hong Kong, joined the firm in Austin.

Others on the team are executive compensation partner Jessica Lutrin, communications counsel Jessica Nyman and finance counsel Irina Tsvetkova.

The firm also added junior lawyers to the team including

associates Chelsea Lawson and Aya Hatori, while first-year associates Valerie Medina and Gabby Regard are expected to join the firm in October.

Zimmer wrote in a press release that when she moved to Austin 10 years ago, she noticed that few women lawyers were working in the market.

“That is why when we developed our long-term local strategy, we set building

a woman-led practice as one of our prime objectives,” she wrote.

Cavazos said that many firms in Austin are staffed by skilled lawyers, but the all-woman aspect of Pillsbury’s team can help the firm get business.

“Our team stacks up credential-wise, right with the very best of them, and if you add [diversity] on top of that, it helps our clients achieve a diversity goal,” he said,

adding that “in some situations, it gives us an edge.”

Nunn, the Pillsbury partner relocating from New York, said the makeup of the firm’s corporate team shows the firm is being responsive to the times.

“There are so many amazing women through the ecosystem, particularly in new tech companies, it’s kind of a reaction to that, but it’s just truly an amazing group of women who work together and get along,” she said.