

THE ASSOCIATION OF CORPORATE COUNSEL'S

TOP 10 30 somethings

The 2020 Top 10 30-Somethings embody the best traits of the in-house profession. These trailblazers bring innovative solutions and a global perspective to every challenge, proactively serving their organizations and communities.



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Barry F. Levin,
Managing Partner

Each year, ACC's volunteer judges review hundreds of nominations to determine the world's top corporate counsel between the ages of 30 and 39. More than 90 in-house counsel have been honored as Top 30-Somethings by ACC to date. The 2020 Top 10 30-Somethings uphold the level of excellence that has defined the previous eight classes.

INNOVATION

FINDING MODERN SOLUTIONS. The 2020 honorees deftly employ technology to respond to challenges and create efficiencies within their organizations. Asaf Alkoby, senior director and executive general counsel of global corporate affairs at Teva Pharmaceuticals, modernized the organization's shared services contract management platform, improving production volumes by over 50 percent, freeing up the workloads of colleagues, and decreasing external expenses. Teck Resources Limited Corporate Counsel Andrew Buddle created the company's digital "Legal Hub," which offers online resources, training, and tools like automated contract analysis. The hub has been especially useful for Teck's lawyers during the pandemic. Bassel C. Korkor, vice president of risk management at Charles Schwab, worked with lawyers and developers to create a "compliance bot" that monitored company data — identifying information flow and access history.

LEADERSHIP

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND. As leaders in their organizations, the honorees feel a responsibility to use legal to protect and grow the business. Maggie Warren, VP and assistant general counsel of Vertafore, Inc., championed the creation of a data governance program to ensure the highest level of protection to the customer, company, and individual. Meyling Ly-Ortiz, managing counsel of employment and labor at Toyota Motor North America, led the company's efforts to make its websites more accessible to customers with disabilities. BASF Corporation Senior Litigation Counsel Vincent Montalto piloted the company's litigation finance program, a mechanism to generate revenue and remove risk from its litigation portfolio. Tyrone H. Thomas, Jr., deputy general counsel at Invenergy LLC, has been integral to establishing a comprehensive legal operations framework, including the development of diversity and inclusion component.

COMMUNITY

GIVING BACK. The honorees use their legal skills to support the in-house community and many others. UL Corporate Counsel Adam Nagorski is president-elect of the ACC Austin Chapter, volunteers as agency counsel to SAFE, his city's women's and children's shelter, and serves as outside general counsel to Austin Bold FC, a professional soccer team. Ahmed S. Mousa, SVP of corporate operations and general counsel at Pieris Pharmaceuticals, co-founded a preclinical biotechnology company to treat sickle cell disease and a Cairo-based social enterprise that creates affordable solar water heaters for energy-poor communities in Egypt. As chair of the ACC Nonprofit Network, Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust General Counsel Julisa Edwards organizes sessions for the ACC Annual Meeting, plans online programs, recruits new members and leaders, secures sponsors, and authors articles for *ACC Docket*.

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About the 2020 awards:

For the third consecutive year, nominations for the Top 10 30-Somethings reached an all-time high. ACC received 245 nominations from 15 countries for candidates from diverse backgrounds, industries, and small and large legal departments. Fifteen volunteer judges rated the candidates on their inventive legal methods, ability to confront challenges, global viewpoints, and commitment to the in-house community and pro bono field.

ACC WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE LONGTIME 2020 TOP 10 30-SOMETHINGS AWARDS SPONSOR SAUL EWING ARNSTEIN & LEHR LLP FOR THEIR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS.

Thank you also to our 2020 award judges:

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Director, Legal
The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company
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*Associate General Counsel &
Assistant Secretary*
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Lotame



Asaf Alkoby

SENIOR DIRECTOR &
EXECUTIVE GC
GLOBAL
CORPORATE AFFAIRS
TEVA PHARMACEUTICALS
INDUSTRIES LTD
RAMAT HASHARON, ISRAEL

AGE: 38

Asaf Alkoby didn't always plan to be a lawyer; he was a professional volleyball player until his mid-20s, even making Israel's national team. "Life was all about sports for me," he jokes. But once he made the decision to pursue law, he set his sights on an in-house role at Teva Pharmaceuticals. Thirteen years and four roles later, Asaf reflects on what drew him to the company: "Teva is a leader in the industry, and it serves an important purpose that I feel very attached to, which is caring for patients all around the world." The Israel-based pharmaceutical company serves 200 million patients across six continents every day.

As senior director and executive general counsel of global corporate affairs, Asaf is an integral part of Teva's international reach. He leverages his engagement in significant capital market transactions, IP settlements, and licensing agreements to identify new opportunities for the business. When negotiating a license agreement for a new pharmaceutical product projected for several Eastern Europe and Asia Pacific markets, Asaf recognized its potential to succeed in Latin America markets as well and collaborated with business development and commercial teams to implement this approach. The addition of the markets generated millions of dollars in sales for the company.

He notes, "The projects that I'm currently working on, when you're looking at it financially, have a much larger impact than the ones I've been exposed to in the [Teva] Israeli business," which Asaf previously oversaw in his role as GC of Teva Israel. The transition from a national, to regional, and now global focus required adjustments — in-person meetings with local businesses became videoconferences with international partners and projects went from short-term objectives with quick solutions to a long-term strategy with territory expansion goals. But Asaf has taken the challenges in stride, staying up to date on international regulations, trends, and industry norms.

In response to new securitization regulation requirements for origination of receivables, Teva was faced with restructuring a large part of its securitization program in a short timeframe. Asaf suggested the organization instead leverage a legal structure from an existing financial instrument. With two weeks until the deadline, Asaf designed the strategy, obtained buy-in from stakeholders, and liaised with local counsel and tax and accounting experts. They met the deadline, and the solution generated significant cash benefits for the organization.

Having a global overview of Teva's legal commitments allows Asaf to identify best practices that can be employed across jurisdictions — in agreements and internal processes. He created guidelines for onboarding general counsel and establishing legal departments in international markets. Dozens of new hires and existing GCs use these guidelines, which are frequently updated with new trends and requirements. Asaf also led efforts to modernize the shared services contract management platform. "The main focus for us was identifying sets of agreements and other legal areas that could be automated," he explains. "And on that, I also added a feature for monitoring and being able to see the number of requests for each lawyer. That way we would be able to identify bottlenecks and areas where we were most struggling." The system improved production volumes by over 50 percent while freeing up workloads of lawyers and decreasing external expenses.

Asaf is also involved in pro bono and volunteer work. He is a member of Teva's corporate donation committee and supports the organization's corporate social responsibility team. He is involved in a unique pro bono project with the Israeli Civic Leadership Association, where he provides assistance to nonprofits in preparing financial aid requests related to COVID-19 disruptions. He also mentors junior in-house counsel and law school graduates from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, enjoying the opportunity to build up the next generation of in-house counsel. After all, Asaf knows from personal experience that talented in-house counsel can come from any place — or any sport. **30**

What is so attractive about working in-house? According to Andrew Buddle, it's the chance to work collaboratively to solve complex problems with a long-term focus. Problems like: How can an iconic Canadian mining company with four business units — copper, zinc, metallurgical coal, and energy production, operating in Canada, the United States, Chile, and Peru — maintain operational excellence while moving quickly to finalize major contracts?

Andrew recognized that Teck tends to work with the same professional services firms and construction companies across its business lines and jurisdictions. His solution was multi-jurisdictional Master Services Agreements (MSAs), which are now used by more than 125 of Teck's partners. On average, the MSAs save Teck three weeks of negotiating time and significant corresponding labor and other costs for each major contract.

The MSAs live in the Teck Contracts system, a “plug and play” model of contract management that Andrew designed with colleagues from Teck's major projects team. “Since early 2017, we have collectively devoted hundreds of hours to the project and it has saved us thousands,” he recounts. The system contains over 200 standard forms for procurement and contracts, from RFPs to formulaic letters of regret and change order forms, in both English and Spanish. With over 100 Teck employees trained on the system, it receives more than 8,000 hits per month.

Andrew credits the close partnership with his colleagues with the system's success: “I am very fortunate to work with innovative and trustworthy professionals who have become devoted co-developers and users of these RFP and contract templates. Their input and their buy-in have been instrumental in making this successful. We have been taking a team approach to really understand what does the team actually want, what does the team actually need, and working together to mobilize resources and delegate appropriately.” He also lobbied to hire a knowledge management analyst to help manage the technical aspects of the system, whom he credits for successful user training and onboarding.

After building the tools, Andrew helped the legal department use them as a single unit. He first created a knowledge management survey that identified opportunities for innovation and collaboration. The result: the Teck Legal Hub platform debuted in 2019, offering online resources, training, and various tools, such as partially automated “smart” contract analysis and IP law infographics. With everyone working from home due to COVID-19, the hub is getting more hits than ever.

As Canada's largest diversified miner, Teck builds and owns complex infrastructure, including interests in a major port in British Columbia and the Fort Hills oil sands project in the neighboring province of Alberta. Andrew, who was raised in the prairie province, leads the Teck legal team's logistics and marketing work for this new and complex business unit. Fort Hills began shipping oil sands products to other provinces and the United States in 2018, but years before that Andrew was negotiating with end buyers to ensure the project's success for Teck. “It is fascinating work because the markets are very tight, plus the scrutiny of greenhouse gas emissions, carbon pricing changes to international shipping, and constantly evolving supply chain issues provide significant opportunities and risks for the business,” he says.

Andrew's problem-solving skills are also useful at home — his calendar is a web of obligations. With four young children and a spouse who practices family medicine and surgery, he has coached over 20 youth hockey, soccer, basketball, and baseball teams since 2011 and has guest-taught classes on mining at their elementary school. In 2012, he founded a co-ed soccer team for his church that covers the costs for anyone unable to pay, such as recent Syrian refugees. The league promotes religious tolerance by organizing games between other spiritual communities. He is also a committee member for BC Children's Hospital Foundation's Mining for Miracles campaign, which has a current fundraising target of CA\$2 million to help fund specialized medical research and equipment.

With his collaborative approach to finding solutions, he'll be prepared to handle any challenge as it arises. **30**



Andrew Buddle
CORPORATE COUNSEL
TECK RESOURCES LIMITED
VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA

AGE: 39



Julisa Edwards
GENERAL COUNSEL
HUMANE SOCIETY
WILDLIFE LAND TRUST
ARLINGTON, VA, USA

AGE: 39

Julisa Edwards' in-house career has been intertwined with nonprofit conservation work for over a decade. She has lent her legal expertise to protecting the Earth's resources from the forest to the sea, and now, as general counsel at the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, for the protection of wildlife habitats around the globe. Julisa gravitated to the nonprofit sector because of the solidarity she saw within the organizations — people from different nations working together for the greater good.

Julisa approaches environmental conservation from a property law lens. "Property doesn't really entail just the right to own the land," she explains. "It's the right to use it, rent it out, divide it, and so many other aspects. It's fascinating how it's evolved from Roman law." During her time as senior attorney for the Nature Conservancy, Julisa employed this her knowledge of property law for the protection of the Costa Rican rainforest. Building upon the trust structure of the Roman-based *fideicomiso*, Julisa pioneered a public interest trust that would allow the Costa Rican government to direct funds to its park system. The mechanism, which designated the parks as its beneficiary, was the first of its kind in the country. Julisa proudly shares that it is still in place ten years later.

Also with the Nature Conservancy, Julisa worked with Costa Rican and US government officials to orchestrate the largest debt-for-nature swap in Costa Rica's history. The agreement reduced Costa Rica's foreign debt by US\$26 million in exchange for the country spending that amount on rainforest conservation. This was further augmented with funds from private funders to reach a US\$50 million endowment.

Both projects required Julisa to understand and navigate the Costa Rican civil law and US common law systems. But she was prepared for the challenge — Julisa has practiced as a civil attorney in her native Dominican Republic and a common law attorney in the United States. She also holds an LLM from the University of London.

Julisa's conservation efforts turned to the ocean when she worked as associate general counsel for the Pew Charitable Trusts. She formulated the legal framework for a software to track illegal fishing. It required drafting licensing agreements, grants, and NDAs, as well as working with technical leads, programmers, and law enforcement, leading to increased enforcement actions against illegal fishing.

Juggling different roles is a critical component of being a lawyer for an environmental nonprofit. Whether coordinating with public officials, law enforcement, or technical vendors, Julisa explains that it's pivotal to understand your role. "Are you buying or selling something? Is it going to be a long-term or short-term relationship? It's important to make sure that you have a clear understanding of what is expected from you, what's expected from them, and possible constraints that may arise while trying to find some sort of compromise."

Julisa is committed to sharing her expertise and learning from colleagues in the nonprofit sector. As chair of the ACC Nonprofit Network, she organizes sessions for the ACC Annual Meeting, plans online programs — the network recently coordinated one on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic — recruits new members and leaders, secures sponsors, and authors articles for the *ACC Docket*. Within the network, Julisa has seen a reflection of the same solidarity that first drew her to the industry: "When I want to tackle a subject that I don't know about, I can work with people on the peer group to figure out how we can produce resources that could help not only me and my own work, but help others." **30**

When it comes to risk management, it is impossible to separate legal or regulatory compliance from technology, declares Bassel C. Korkor. True to this maxim, Bassel leverages emerging technology to help businesses meet compliance obligations and manage risk effectively. It's a strategy he's employed throughout his in-house career as vice president of risk management at Charles Schwab and previously as vice president of compliance at Fidelity Investments.

In these positions, Bassel has worked with technology and business partners to develop web interfaces, surveillance and monitoring tools, process automation, and data analytics to support corporate compliance. In one instance, Bassel worked with lawyers and developers to create a bot that monitors company data — identifying information flow and access history. Automating internal controls allows for more efficient regulatory compliance oversight. In another instance, Bassel led business requirements for automated smart forms to support regulatory compliance disclosures. The enhanced forms resulted in better user experience and greater efficiency in reporting, monitoring, escalating, and remediating issues. Today, Bassel heads up Schwab's Third-Party Risk Management program, helping to manage and mitigate risks associated with outsourced services, products, supplies, and operations.

Along with managing risk and modernizing processes, Bassel stays up to date with industry regulations and helps businesses pivot accordingly. For example, the SEC's 2016 approval of FINRA Rule 2030, building upon "pay to play" regulations, had wide implications for brokerage firms regarding political contributions and activities. Bassel has played lead roles both at Fidelity and Schwab, helping develop policies, procedures, and trainings as part of a comprehensive regulatory compliance program. "An important part of being in-house is doing that 'translation,' whether it's in the context of training business partners or translating regulatory requirements, regulatory expectations, or even regulatory findings into a language that makes sense to business partners from first-line risk, financial, or operational perspectives," he reflects.

Before moving in-house, Bassel practiced political and national security law both on his own and at large DC firms. Among his most notable work has been representing political organizations and humanitarian NGOs responding to the crisis in Syria. The unrest in the country struck a personal chord for him as a Syrian American. He worked closely with nonprofit organizations and government partners to enable humanitarian aid and access to victims of the conflict. Bassel also provided diplomatic counsel on the crisis, advising on UN resolutions in New York and at UN-brokered peace negotiations in Geneva.

Bassel has also been involved in thought leadership regarding foreign policy and security, speaking at Congressional committee and embassy briefings, think tanks, policy institutes, and universities. He also serves his community in other ways. He's on the board of a national nonprofit foundation dedicated to improving education, awareness, and treatment options for mental health. Bassel was also appointed by the Keller City Council to serve on the city's Economic Development Board.

Within the legal community, Bassel has served in various leadership roles on the American Bar Association Section of International Law's Middle East Committee and is a fellow of the Texas Chapter of the American Bar Foundation. He has also engaged in cross-company working groups for in-house counsel to exchange best practices for responding to legal challenges.

Commenting on his volunteer work, Bassel shares, "I think it's important that if you have the opportunity to be involved in some way — whether it's with nonprofit organizations, public service, civic movements, whatever you can do — to take that opportunity." Whether in his community or at Charles Schwab, Bassel is committed to going above and beyond to improve what's around him. **30**



Bassel C. Korkor
VP, RISK MANAGEMENT
CHARLES SCHWAB
WESTLAKE, TX, USA

AGE: 39



Meyling Ly-Ortiz
MANAGING COUNSEL
EMPLOYMENT & LABOR
TOYOTA MOTOR
NORTH AMERICA, INC.
PLANO, TX, USA

AGE: 39

Whether at work or volunteering, Meyling Ly-Ortiz enjoys “being a small part of something bigger” than herself. She connected with Toyota Motor North America’s mission, explaining, “It’s not about just cars or transportation, it’s about mobility. It’s getting someone from point A to point B, literally, but it’s also helping people be upwardly mobile. When people have the joy and freedom to move, anything is possible. Through technology, we can help people get where they want to be.”

Respect for people is at the core of Toyota North America’s company values — and Meyling’s personal ones. As managing counsel of employment and labor, she dedicates her time to finding ways the company can better meet the needs of its employees and customers. Outside of the office, she is involved in several volunteer and community organizations.

One of Meyling’s first initiatives was designing a robust non-harassment program that went beyond “check the box” and “we do this because we have to.” The program incorporates online and in-person trainings and policies (scrubbed of “legalese”) with new formats like FAQs about the investigation process, an internal website with resources for supervisors, and videos. The two-minute videos add a personal touch, with testimonials from team members at all levels of the company. Topics include “What Respect Means to Me,” “What Happens When I Report,” and “Thank You for Reporting.”

Meyling also led the company’s efforts to make its websites more accessible to customers with disabilities. She worked with stakeholders across the organization to identify, assess, and update Toyota’s US websites for accessibility, in alignment with industry standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. Because new information is added to the websites constantly, the process is never-ending. Meyling knows this time and effort will not only help protect Toyota North America from potential lawsuits, but also help it stay true to its mission and “North Star” of respect for people. She argues, “It isn’t just about that single piece of litigation. It isn’t about that single line of risk. Yes, we have to look at risk, but more importantly, we look at it through the lens of — is this the right thing to do? Is this in line with our core values and our vision as a mobility company?”

Focusing on holistic issues — like the company’s brand — is one of the things Meyling loves about being in-house. She also relishes the chance to spend time with her two toddlers and thinks about how influential her own childhood was to her choice of career. “When you are a child of immigrants and they don’t know the English language as well, you kind of grow up advocating and speaking on behalf of others,” she says. In her case, she even translated contracts for her parents, who owned and operated a donut shop and later a gas station.

Meyling continues to be an advocate in many ways. As co-chair-elect of the Dallas Bar Association’s Equal Access to Justice campaign and social media chair for the Orchid Giving Circle, she raises funds for individuals and organizations in need. She teaches high schoolers about employment law through the ACC Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter’s Street Law Program; coaches law students in moot court at the Southern Methodist University’s School of Law; and mentors young lawyers with the Dallas Asian American Bar Association, the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers, and the Dallas Women Lawyers Association.

By centering people in her professional and personal work, Meyling brings meaningful change to every initiative she undertakes. **30**

ahmed s. mousa

2020 TOP 10 30-SOMETHING

Ahmed S. Mousa believes that the importance of scientific advancement in medicine lies not only in invention but also in accessibility. “Society does not automatically benefit from scientific discovery and innovation. These breakthroughs must advance through different business and legal structures in order to be deployed on a wider scale,” he says. This belief inspired Ahmed to focus his career at the intersection of law and science. As senior vice president of corporate operations and general counsel at Pieris Pharmaceuticals, Ahmed combines his background in molecular biology with his expertise in intellectual property and the legal framework in which biotech companies operate to support the company’s mission of developing and bringing to market next-generation therapies for cancer and respiratory diseases.

Ahmed’s father, a professor of pharmacology specializing in drug discovery and development, inspired his interest in science. Some of Ahmed’s favorite memories are visits to his father’s lab. This interest grew into a passion, and Ahmed went on to study molecular and cell biology as an undergraduate at Cornell University. While working as a student-researcher, Ahmed shares, “I discovered the potential of certain compounds in garlic to act as potent anti-angiogenics, inhibitors of blood vessel formation. The inhibition of new blood vessel formation, can, in turn, serve as a potent cancer treatment by cutting off a tumor’s nutrient supply and its ability to spread.” He applied for a patent on his discoveries and through this experience came to understand the importance of intellectual property protection to enable the impact of scientific research. He subsequently decided to pursue law school in order to combine his scientific background with a legal education. After graduating, Ahmed specialized in intellectual property litigation and transactions, representing biotech and pharmaceutical companies at a law firm. He reflects, “I learned a great deal from these experiences, and ultimately wanted to be more directly involved in helping to build new drugs.”

At Pieris, Ahmed has helped structure and negotiate collaborations with other pharmaceutical companies to accelerate and expand the company’s drug-development efforts. For example, he helped to facilitate a license and collaboration agreement with AstraZeneca in respiratory diseases — a partnership that could ultimately be worth up to US\$2.1 billion. Ahmed led the effort to craft unique and complex licensing structures for this deal, including provisions allowing Pieris to co-develop programs, co-commercialize them in the United States, and manage and oversee pre-clinical development, clinical studies, and regulatory interactions. In structuring this agreement, Ahmed sought to balance clarity with the need for flexibility in a complex, potentially multi-decade alliance.

In Ahmed’s litigation experience, he saw firsthand the impact courtroom disputes can have on small companies and legal departments, taking focus away from a company’s core functions. He cautions, “Make sure that you have a clear understanding of the potential costs and benefits of litigation.” Heeding his own advice, Ahmed generally seeks to include alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in significant company agreements and believes that these provisions have the potential to avoid costly litigation.

Ahmed also emphasizes the need to understand the relevant laws and regulations of the countries where Pieris has offices and conducts clinical trials. When possible, he travels to the company’s research and development hub in Germany. The trips are an opportunity to gain a global perspective on Pieris’ work and interact directly with the R&D team. “It’s essential to know and understand the activities at Pieris because it allows me to support our science and researchers’ efforts,” he says.

In his spare time, Ahmed’s efforts are focused on the two enterprises he co-founded with his sister and father, respectively. Shamsina, a Cairo-based social enterprise, creates affordable solar water heaters for energy-poor communities in Egypt. Ichorx Pharmaceuticals, a preclinical biotechnology company, focuses on treating sickle cell disease. Ahmed’s desire to improve health and quality of life has driven him — and it will take him far at Pieris. **30**



Ahmed S. Mousa
SVP CORPORATE OPERATIONS &
GENERAL COUNSEL
PIERIS PHARMACEUTICALS
BOSTON, MA, USA

AGE: 36



Vincent Montalto
SENIOR LITIGATION
COUNSEL
BASF CORPORATION
FLORHAM PARK, NJ, USA

AGE: 38

Vincent Montalto appreciates the cerebral, collegiate character of law, where it's possible to smile and shake hands (when pandemics permit) with an adversary. "As shocking as it's going to sound, practicing law should be fun," Vincent says. It does not have to be a daily adversarial slog. "And that thinking allows you to reach a compromise, which often is going to be the best case for all parties."

When Vincent first arrived at BASF, the 155-year-old German chemical giant, he embraced the new legal department initiatives addressing a recurrent legal problem — the billable hour. At the end of the day, it's a mindset issue, he explains. If bonuses and compensation are based off the billable hour, it's a natural human tendency to want to bill as many hours as possible. "If you take that incentive away and say the goal is to simply win the case in the most efficient way possible and make the client happy, then magically things take less time to get done — it's just a fact."

Using a data analytics approach, Vincent took commoditized litigation cases, like a toxic tort, where all the facts and allegations are similar, and compared outcomes between firms, adjusting for geography, billable rates, law firm size, and court system to find the most efficient firms. From this project, the BASF legal team created alternative fee arrangements (AFAs) with predictable, flat fees that are still in use five years later.

Getting law firms to adopt the AFAs wasn't the only hurdle; Vincent also had to demonstrate to the company's insurers that AFAs wouldn't diminish the quality of legal defense. He approached them in his typical friendly manner: "One of the best things to do is meeting them personally. Bring them in as part of the team. There's no need to be on different sides of the aisle." The improved relationship led to better protocols for timely defense and indemnification reimbursements, providing valuable money that could be reinvested in the company.

He is piloting BASF's litigation finance program, a mechanism for the company to generate revenue and remove some risk from its litigation portfolio. Big companies like BASF may refrain from taking legal action because law firm and vendor costs disincentivize pursuit of certain claims. Partnering with a litigation finance firm, Vincent developed a proprietary structure to grade the viability of each potential claim based on identified parties, relationship to the company, damages, and substantive liability points. "Mixing mid-level cases with some million-dollar anchor cases makes the portfolio work together," he explains. "If you win one anchor case, you fund a bunch of smaller cases, creating a cycle of investment where the company doesn't leave funds on the table." Savings generated from the legal department could be used to drive innovation or to increase or maintain headcount. Additionally, he could envision litigation finance becoming an integral part of the forecasting, planning, and structure of corporate legal departments in the near future.

Another pillar of Vincent's legal philosophy is advancing diversity and inclusion. As a leader of BASF's in-house legal diversity team, he helped to design a propriety scorecard that measures law firms' diversity performance. BASF analyzes the scorecard each year, communicating feedback to the firms. As part of the outside counsel diversity program, BASF demands diverse staffing for all RFPs and for all teams doing BASF legal work. Diversity is in fact a standalone evaluative factor in each RFP BASF creates. Vincent also leads BASF's Summer Legal Intern program, which hires a diverse first-year law student to split time between BASF's Florham Park campus and its outside law firm.

From cutting costs to advancing diversity, Vincent brings an analytical approach to all he does to improve the legal function of BASF — and the in-house practice in general. **30**

Adam Nagorski was a day into his GC role when his new boss asked him to help the company resolve an immigration matter, something he had no prior experience handling. He quickly realized more novel questions were coming, and within the first week of moving in-house, had joined his local ACC chapter to build a network.

Adam recalls that frenzied first week in-house: “Suddenly I got thrust into this job where not only am I the only lawyer but I’m expected to know everything there is to know about any aspect of law, which of course nobody can do. It was quite an overwhelming feeling.”

As general counsel of Emergo, he oversaw nearly 30 subsidiaries stretched across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas. Before a medical device can go to market, it needs to clear regulatory hurdles in whatever jurisdiction it will be sold. Emergo helps medical device manufacturers — an expansive category of companies creating products as varied as a dentist’s simple metal pick to a complex bionic eye — access almost the entire world’s medical marketplace.

“It’s really nice to have that core set of people who understood the sort of challenges I was going through,” Adam says about attending his first ACC events. He learned that being in-house meant operating from experience and moving quickly. He took the lesson to heart and searched for ways to build a legal department that protected the company while helping the business remain nimble and customer-focused.

Among the things he identified for improvement: Emergo’s standard service agreements. Previously, contracts were negotiated on a project-by-project basis and weren’t well tailored to the business’ unique legal and business needs. Under Adam’s direction, all of the company’s contract templates were re-written from scratch, better protecting the company while being clear and fair to its clients. Emergo’s insurer called the reworked contracts “an underwriter’s dream.” Adam also developed risk management guidelines and became a resource employees could directly come to for help resolving thorny challenges to the business. In order to encourage speedy dispute resolution, the new contract agreements assigned financial risk to rejecting settlement offers.

Under Adam’s leadership, the legal department was able to help grow the business, which was coveted by UL, a 125-year-old safety certification company. And once again Adam was forced into an unfamiliar situation: negotiating the merger of Emergo with UL. But just like before, he was ready for the challenge.

Because UL has a reputation as an impartial judge of safety, Adam knew it was imperative that the combined company take care to identify and avoid any conflicts of interest (even just perceived ones). After the integration, Adam continues to support Emergo while taking on new responsibilities across the UL enterprise, including by helping UL to identify and mitigate against risks presented by new services or acquisitions.

In addition to his primary job at UL, Adam uses his in-house legal skills by volunteering as agency counsel to SAFE, his city’s women’s and children’s shelter, and by serving as outside general counsel to Austin Bold FC, a professional soccer team. He is also active in civil rights organizations, and is a longtime board member of his local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League.

And now, after nearly a decade of in-house experience, he finds himself back at his local ACC Austin Chapter, but this time, as president-elect. He is excited to pay forward the knowledge he learned when he was just starting out as an in-house lawyer. “It’s great to give back to the organization that has given me so much, helped me develop critical skills, and introduced me to so many colleagues and friends,” he reflects. **30**



Adam Nagorski
CORPORATE COUNSEL
UL
AUSTIN, TX, USA

AGE: 40*
*39 AT TIME OF
NOMINATION

tyrone h. thomas, jr.

2020 TOP 10 30-SOMETHING



Tyrone H. Thomas, Jr.
DEPUTY GC
DIRECTOR, LEGAL
INVENERGY LLC
CHICAGO, IL, USA

AGE: 34

Is Invenergy a global leader in sustainable energy solutions or a real estate developer in the sustainable energy space? Sometimes it's hard to tell, jokes Tyrone Thomas, because real estate is such a critical component of the business. Before an energy project can get off the ground, the company needs to obtain rights to the literal ground.

A typical industrial-scale wind farm requires anywhere from 25,000 to 50,000 acres (sometimes more). Given the size of their footprints, many of Invenergy's projects are in rural communities. While Tyrone enjoys partnering with rural landowners (over whose land Invenergy obtains lease and easement rights to build a project), securing title insurance (a critical risk mitigation product, and a financing imperative) on rural property can be harder than it would be for commercial or residential real estate. Tyrone cites an intestacy example: "There are communities where everyone knows each other, and two generations of a family passed away without making a will. Their kids just moved into the house because everybody knows it's their land." In that case, the chain of title will need to be cleaned up before Invenergy can close on a financing or sale. Every project will have several issues to "cure," ranging from life estates structured to create a potentially infinite number of lease signatories to incorrectly drawn property boundaries to preexisting leases for farming, timber, hunting, oil and gas exploration, or any other law school property exam question you could imagine.

To streamline the real estate work, Tyrone negotiated protocols with each of the major national title companies that outlined how they and Invenergy should collectively respond to title challenges on future projects. This framework allows project teams at Invenergy to better forecast and address potential issues, which greatly reduces the possibility that a transaction is derailed by some fatal flaw in the future. "People can run within a defined universe of authority and it makes us all more efficient," he says. Recognizing that improvement is always an option, Tyrone organized several title summits last year (inviting some of each title company's executives to Invenergy's Chicago headquarters) to start a discussion about expanding the Invenergy title guidelines, and to further strengthen the partnership between those companies and Invenergy.

With his deep knowledge of Invenergy's business, Tyrone is constantly looking for ways to contribute to the company's success. During his time at Invenergy, Tyrone has been integral to the establishment of a comprehensive legal operations framework (including a developing diversity and inclusion component), the creation of a legal onboarding and continuing education process, the roll-out of a suite of internal forms and processes for use by the legal department, and the launch of the company's affinity group for persons of African Ancestry (Black and Brown @ Invenergy). Tyrone also manages a team of 15 people, who collectively work on hundreds of projects (both operational and in development). Tyrone believes his primary focus as a leader "is to ensure that my team (1) continuously executes at a high level, (2) works in an environment where they are taught how to execute at a high level, (3) is challenged to produce great work product every day, and (4) is celebrated when they succeed, and when they fail after a well planned and executed effort."

When he was in high school in Philadelphia, Tyrone attended a legal explorers program hosted by a large law firm in the city. During the program, he would leave school early and go downtown to attend trials, participate in moot court exercises, and observe the glamorous parts of private practice. It set the course for the next several years of his life.

As a young commercial real estate lawyer, he volunteered countless pro bono hours, including for the DC Bar Pro Bono Program (helping clients through landlord/tenant disputes), the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (helping clients apply for SSI benefits), Ayuda (helping clients apply for permanent resident status under VAWA), and Bet Tzedek (helping clients apply for ZRBG Holocaust pensions). Tyrone's pro bono work gave him deep professional satisfaction, and satiated his natural desire to dig for details and problem solve.

After a few years in private practice, Tyrone's journey led him to an in-house position, which was where he needed to be. At Invenergy, he garners industry expertise while working for a mission-driven company filled with smart, capable people who are empowered to ask "Why not?" on a daily basis. **30**

Maggie Warren's red pen was busy as she read and reread the standard terms, marking up clauses with the passion of someone who can't abide a run-on sentence. It was her first day at Vertafore, Inc., the Denver-based insurance software company and she was just getting started. The private equity owned company had grown largely by acquisition and there were more than 50 varying templates for sell-side contracts. She quickly realized her first mission: to create a contracting structure that empowered — and protected — the business and sales teams by decreasing legal reviews.

By the end of the first week, Maggie approached her general counsel with a plan to streamline the contracting process. The buy-in was immediate and she got to work pulling together all contracts and ordering documents. "There is no reason a company our size should have 50 different contracts to sell software — even if the software serves different purposes. Software — whether on premise or online, services, APIs and data can be licensed under the same model and same terms," she states simply.

Having one set of standard terms across the business is not where the work stopped. The legal team took it a step further and uploaded each contract, some more than 20 years old, into a single contract repository, looking at every clause in each contract to assign it a letter grade. Unnegotiated contracts on the standard terms scored an A. Greater risk for the company, such as increased monetary caps for liability, received points and a corresponding grade between B and D. Within months of starting at Vertafore, all sell-side contracts were integrated into the company's new contract repository which was later integrated with the CRM system. Today, any seller can access the customer contracts directly and now instantly knows the risk associated with a contract without consulting the legal department.

For her next challenge, Maggie championed the creation of the Vertafore Data Governance Program. Vertafore is doubly affected by the California Consumer Privacy Act, first as a corporate entity, and secondly as a provider of insurance software. Maggie, working alongside the risk management team, revamped the data classification system for corporate data, updated the records retention policy, created a data use and handling policy as well as an internal personal information privacy policy.

Vertafore's customers — insurance companies ranging from large carriers to mom-and-pop agencies — possess personal information, making them data processors under recently enacted data laws. Maggie, again armed with her red pen, rewrote privacy statements with worldwide privacy regulations in mind, making sure every Vertafore Solution gives the highest level of protection to the customer, the company, and the individual.

Maggie believes in paying it forward by supporting educational opportunities for and alongside other lawyers and law students. She managed an extensive internship program for law students at Vertafore wherein she directly supervises at least one, but sometimes multiple, law students during a semester — creating an "army of future in-house lawyers that are business savvy and can provide sound legal advice at the pace of the industry they serve."

Maggie's tenacity was evident early: She started law school pregnant with her second child. After graduating, she decided the best way to be present for her two toddlers was to start her own practice in order to control her workload. "A few years later, I had done about 150 divorces and it was weighing on me emotionally," she admits. So, she pivoted to in-house work.

Over the years, she's retained her early spirit of innovation and work ethic and now applies them to the daily challenges of a multi-billion-dollar software company. Now she relishes the diversity of challenges that come her way: "If you're in-house, you have to be agile, with a passion for continuous learning, and help solve business problems for your internal employee customers as well as your external customers — you have multiple stakeholders in the process and have to work quickly, efficiently, and intelligently. It's really rewarding to bring issues to resolution and see your work coming to fruition as frequently as I do — and to be recognized for it is humbling." **30**



Maggie Warren
VP, ASSISTANT GC
VERTAFORE, INC.
DENVER, CO, USA

AGE: 39

**Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP
congratulates all of the
“Top 30-Something” Honorees
and encourages attorneys who are
new to corporate legal departments to
join ACC’s New to In-House Network.**

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