

Keurig Dr Pepper, MB2 Dental, Black Mountain Sand, OpTic Gaming, PepsiCo Foods, American Airlines Among Winners at 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Awards

By Mark Curriden

More than 330 North Texas general counsel, senior in-house counsel and corporate lawyers celebrated the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Awards on the last Thursday in January at the George W. Bush Institute.

The Texas Lawbook and the Association of Corporate Counsel's DFW Chapter each year host the region's premier awards ceremony for corporate counsel in North Texas. And the 2022 award recipients are among the most successful.

The Texas Lawbook published in-depth profiles of each finalist and winner. All of those articles can be found at [TexasLawbook.net](https://www.texaslawbook.net).

Here is a sneak peek at those profiles:

Debbie Bartlett's college psychological profile gave her two career options: Be a lawyer or a movie director. Texas Instruments has been the beneficiary of Bartlett deciding to go to law school. For the past 27 years, she led or played a critical role in 208 domestic and international transactions, including 54 acquisitions at TI with a combined deal value of more than \$15 billion.

ACC's DFW Chapter and The Texas Lawbook honored Bartlett with the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Lifetime Achievement.

In the four years since **Sarah Decker** joined computer security giant McAfee, she has had a few items on her plate, including an \$8.6 billion IPO amid the Covid pandemic, which meant doing all the legal work necessary for listing on the NASDAQ; a \$4 billion sale of its enterprise business; a \$450 million securities offering; and a \$14 billion take-private transaction in 2022.

Citing numerous successes last year, the Association of Corporate Counsel's DFW Chapter and *The Texas Lawbook* named Decker as the 2022 DFW General Counsel of the Year for a Large Legal Department (21 attorneys or more).

Vaishali Bhatia experienced five crazy months in 2022. As HollyFrontier's GC, she and her team closed the \$400 million acquisition of the Puget Sound Refinery, negotiated and closed the \$2.7 billion acquisition of Sinclair Oil Corporation and Sinclair Transportation, which required multiple regulatory approvals and the creation of an entirely new publicly-traded entity. That was immediately followed by a \$400 million senior notes offering and a new credit facility.

Citing those extraordinary successes, the ACC DFW Chapter and *The Texas Lawbook* named Bhatia as the 2022 DFW General Counsel of the Year for a Midsized Legal Department.

Jennyfer Gray knows what it means to take it to the limit one more time. As interim general counsel of Tuesday Morning, Gray is helping lead the Dallas-based retailer through turbulent times. Facing severe economic challenges like most retailers, Tuesday Morning and Gray went through multiple financings and credit facilities, including a \$110 million asset-based loan, and the transition to a new executive leadership team and corporate board. In recognition of Gray's achievements, she is the recipient of the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award recipient for General Counsel of the Year for a Small Legal Department.

Barry Thomas and Mark Berg have many things in common. They're both M&A lawyers by training. They've both handled multibillion-dollar deals in the oil patch together as high-ranking colleagues at Pioneer Natural Resources. Beyond their professional accolades, they're both committed to public service. Berg has helped Dallas CASA significantly grow in order to achieve its goal of serving every abused and neglected child in need on the Dallas County child welfare docket. And Thomas volunteers his free time serving as general counsel of the Permian Strategic Partnership, a coalition of 20 oil and gas companies committed to improving the roads, workforce, healthcare, schools and housing of the rural West Texas and New Mexico communities that the Permian Basin encompasses.

What else do they have in common? They were joint recipients of the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Pro Bono and Public Service Award.

Kelli Roach became Black Mountain Sand's first GC in July 2020, when the frac sand provider had closed two of its five mines and let go of half of its 500 people because of the Covid pandemic. Roach focused on how she would strategically help her new employer the fastest. She identified contract breaches and filed lawsuits, which led to \$54 million being added to Black Mountain Sand's bottom line. At the same time, she led the defense to have the company dismissed from a tragic wrongful death lawsuit, renegotiated several commercial contracts at considerably more favorable terms and implemented Black Mountain Sand's first ESG program.

Citing these accomplishments, the Association of Corporate Counsel's DFW Chapter and *The Texas Lawbook* have named Roach as the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for General Counsel of the Year for a Solo Legal Department.

Jonathan Koh won his first court case in the sixth grade when he was the prosecutor in a mock trial in a speeding case. He was hooked on becoming a lawyer. Two decades later, Koh is the assistant GC at MB2 Dental, which provides support to more than 500

dental practices in 41 states. His mornings start with questions from dentists on the East Coast offices on payroll taxes and the day ends with doctors in California asking about California's Covid paid sick leave law. Plus, he implemented a process that allows him to get involved early when conflicts arise between the dentists and patients and insurance providers, which helped avoid scores of lawsuits.

"I'm the fixer of the legal department, so I usually hear from people on their bad days," Koh said. He was the winner of the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Senior Counsel of the Year for a Small Legal Department.

General Motors counsel **Juli Greenberg** was sitting in a conference room in 2018 getting CLE ethics credit when everything changed. What she learned sent her on a quest to create DEI initiatives and do her part to improve the diversity pipeline in the legal profession.

Fast forward nearly five years, and the product of Greenberg's work has reached hundreds of people from every stage of the pipeline. She's also the recipient of the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Achievement in Diversity and Inclusion.

Back in middle school, **Johnathan Jordan** played Halo, a military science fiction game set in the 26th century in which the player controls a technologically created super soldier to battle evil aliens. But young Jordan also knew he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and become a lawyer. Never did he think the two passions — law and gaming — would come together.

Last year, Jordan became the first GC in Texas of an esports and gaming business, OpTic Gaming. The legal work he has done since has been groundbreaking and the reason he is a finalist for the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Rookie of the Year. This is his call to duty.

American Airlines Deputy GC **Bruce Wark** has had a three-decade complex, love-hate relationship with sometimes business partner, many times courtroom opponent online ticket distributor Sabre, including two vigorously fought litigation matters last year.

American Senior Counsel **Charlene Wandrisco**, whose office is a 90-second walk down the hall from Wark, spent 2022 helping redesign the airline's loyalty program, implementing a new partnership with Microsoft that streamlined American's internal operations and improved customer travel experiences for customers and worked to strengthen collaboration with TSA to create a mobile identification pre-check.

The legal work of the two lawyers, a litigator and a dealmaker, achieved major successes that made American into a better global airline. The result is that Wandrisco

and Wark are recipients of the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Senior Counsel of the Year for a Large Legal Department.

Adrienne Brown Mosley's mother did not have money for a present for her 18th birthday. Instead, she convinced a lawyer in Vicksburg, Mississippi, to allow young Adrienne to follow her for the day. "This shadowing day changed the entire trajectory of my life," Mosley said.

Mosley is now the deputy GC of PepsiCo Foods North America, where she has developed initiatives to build a culture of compliance in a more stringent antitrust regulatory environment, helped enact innovative product partnerships to address supply chain challenges and worked to reinvigorate the corporate giant's diversity and inclusion efforts through innovative mentoring programs.

The Association of Corporate Counsel's DFW Chapter and *The Texas Lawbook* have named Mosley the recipient of the 2022 DFW Corporate Counsel Award for Senior Counsel of the Year for a Midsized Legal Department.

Three lawyers at Keurig Dr Pepper — **Jim Baldwin, Anthony Shoemaker and Stephen Cole** — took a huge risk in leading a normally conservative, litigation-adverse company in suing a business partner, the business partner's profanity-spewing founder and Dr Pepper's biggest and universally feared competitor, Coca-Cola. Along with outside counsel at Gibson Dunn, they took a highly complex dispute and boiled it down to one sentence in a contract. By the end, they had opposing counsel pleading with the judge to push for a settlement weeks before trial. The result: a \$925 million victory and a finalist for the 2022 DFW Outstanding Corporate Counsel Award for Business Litigation of the Year.