They've Got Next: 40 Under 40- Lauren Moore of WilmerHale

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Lauren Moore

Age: 35

Firm: Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

Practice Area: White Collar, Investigations and Crisis Leadership

Title: Partner

Location: Washington, D.C.

Law School: Harvard Law School

Please describe two of your most substantial, recent wins in practice.

I've recently served in government roles at the intersection of law and policy—and it takes quite a bit of persistence and strategy to move the levers of government to pass legislation or otherwise shift public policy. It is rarely a forum for quick wins. But I'm proud that I was able to contribute to important dialogue and some progress on racial equity issues.

In the Senate, I was part of a small team that drafted the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, a Democratic police reform bill to address excessive force and racial bias in policing. In the White House Counsel's Office, I helped design and launch President Biden's clemency program, which has now resulted in nine pardons and more than 100 sentence commutations for people serving unduly long sentences for non-violent drug offenses. And I was proud to work alongside the White House Domestic Policy Council to prepare President Biden's first slate of executive orders on racial equity, which have been instrumental in helping federal agencies promote equity and expand opportunity within the bounds of the law.

What is the most important lesson you learned as a first-year attorney and how does it inform your practice today?

Early in my career, I learned the importance of giving your best effort in everything you do— no matter how small or insignificant it may appear to be. As a first-year lawyer, I was given small and discrete projects, like drafting internal memoranda and preparing research in advance of client meetings and government presentations,

Even though some of those assignments were not client-facing and did not go directly to the most senior lawyers on the team, I gave those projects my all and invested great time, care, and attention to making them the strongest pieces of work product that I could offer. Those early efforts helped me earn the trust of senior lawyers, who were then willing to give me more significant opportunities—including drafting high-profile briefs and motions, arguing motions in federal court, first-chairing interviews, and participating in high-stakes government presentations.

If you manage small things well and with great care, people are willing to entrust you with larger things and expand the range of opportunities available to you. That lesson proved instructive throughout my time in government, and it has even borne out in my experience with clients and senior partners in my return to private practice.

How do you define success in your practice?

I define success quite simply—I want to serve as a steady guide and problem solver for clients in difficult situations. Most recently, I've been focused on helping clients navigate challenges at the intersection of law, government, and public policy.

Throughout federal government, we've experienced significant political and policy shifts in relatively short periods of time—including newly divided government composed of a Republican House of Representatives and a Democratic Senate and White House. That political dynamic creates unique challenges for corporations, nonprofits, and other entities that need to engage with stakeholders on both sides of a deep partisan divide.

I'm grateful that clients have trusted me to help navigate these dynamics on a range of matters—including anti-discrimination and civil rights reviews, congressional investigations, and government enforcement work—in ways that help them identify opportunities, mitigate risks, and produce sound decisions that can withstand political shifts.

What are you most proud of as a lawyer?

I'm most grateful for the opportunities I've had to work on matters that have made a tangible and direct impact on people's lives. On Capitol Hill and in the White House, we were often met with crisis situations and interacted with people in the most challenging moments of their lives.

I appreciated the opportunity to provide some assistance and comfort in those situations and help people feel seen by their government and within the law—including by working on federal police reform legislation, providing legal advice to support the delivery of Covid-19 funding to underserved communities, and helping to identify and prepare diverse nominees to serve in the federal judiciary.

Who is your greatest mentor in the law and what have they taught you?

It's hard to pick one great mentor because I've benefited from the investment of so many lawyers who have reached enormous heights in politics and in the law. But I've been reflecting recently on the career and legacy of Charles Ogletree, one of my professors at Harvard Law School.

I learned so many lessons from Professor Ogletree —including what it means to be a fearless advocate, the important role of empathy in the practice of law, and how to mentor young lawyers in ways that have an enduring impact on their careers, lives, and the profession at large. Professor Ogletree played an outsized role in helping to diversify the legal profession—

and personally, he was one of the first titans of the bar who made me feel like I truly belonged in the profession and could help make real and meaningful contributions. One of my goals is to carry that legacy forward and help nurture young, diverse lawyers in the same way.

Tell us your two favorite songs on your summer music playlist.

Beyoncé is on tour this summer, and I was lucky enough to get tickets, so I'm getting ready for her show and listening to two of her songs—"Cuff It" and "Before I Let Go"—on repeat this summer.

Lauren Moore served as general counsel to then-Sen. Kamala D. Harris on the US Senate Judiciary Committee, leading Harris's work on judicial nominations, congressional oversight and civil rights policy. Later, she was associate counsel in the White House Counsel's Office, where she worked with the US Justice Department to provide strategic guidance in challenges to race-conscious provisions of federal legislation to address the Covid-19 pandemic. At WilmerHale, she represents clients in congressional investigations, False Claims Act litigation and in racial equity audits.

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