

Bisnow Names Privacy Partner Heather Zachary Among Top 40 Under 40

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Bisnow named WilmerHale Partner [Heather Zachary](#) to its Top 40 Under 40 Attorneys list, a selection of Washington DC-area lawyers under 40 who have distinguished themselves within the industry. The following Q&A featuring Zachary was written by [Roksana Slavinsky](#) and originally published by *Bisnow* on July 13, 2015.

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Heather Zachary, Partner, Cybersecurity, Privacy, and Communications Practice at WilmerHale, 38:

Job: I've spent the majority of my time recently on issues relating to privacy and data security, from routine compliance and transactional matters to big data breaches and regulatory investigations. I have clients in nearly every industry, from global Internet companies and financial institutions to tiny startups. I also work on communications issues for telecommunications, mobile, video and Internet providers.

Career highlights: (1) Working closely with innovators whose ideas are changing the world and helping them successfully bring those ideas to market. (2) Being in the thick of the net neutrality battles for more than a decade. (3) Helping companies grapple with, and recover from, headline-grabbing data breaches.

Why this career: I decided to go to law school late in college because I figured a law degree would be good preparation for a career in public policy. When I started practicing, I found that I enjoyed it, especially in the nation's capital, where policy and legal issues are so often inextricably intertwined.

Where you grew up: Vancouver, WA, a suburb of Portland, OR (much like Arlington is to DC). Vancouver had a small-town atmosphere with all the conveniences of a big city right across the river.

Why DC: Throughout high school and college, I was deeply involved in politics and campaigns, and I always assumed that I would end up in DC. The city is remarkably diverse, so whatever your interests, you can find folks who share them.

Community involvement: I have spent hundreds of hours on dozens of pro bono matters. Memorable projects include drafting briefs in the 4th Circuit on behalf of a death row inmate, drafting

a Supreme Court brief on search and seizure issues, helping a client bring accountability in the wake of a theft of union funds, assisting a client in lawfully designing a platform for STEM mentoring, and drafting privacy and data security policies for a range of nonprofit organizations.

First job: A short, ill-fated run as a barista at an independent coffee stand.

Family: My husband and I have been married since 2005, but we have known each other since 1993. The newest member of our family is our utterly inexhaustible Australian Shepherd puppy, who has both of us wrapped around his paw.

Free time: Gardening (we have 400 square feet dedicated to just fruits and vegetables). Hiking and camping (which is both more fun and more challenging with the dog). Reading (the more far-fetched, the better).

10 years from now: I am very bad at predicting where I'll be "10 years from now." Indeed, I've learned that although it's important to have a general plan for the future, it's more important to remain open to whatever opportunities life throws at you. That said, I do hope that I'll still be neck-deep in privacy issues because I'm really having a blast.

Favorite vacation spot: The Oregon coast, where I vacationed a lot as a kid; lots of great memories there. I also love camping; the more rural the better.

Bucket list: Hike the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, though I'll have to do it in sections. I've already completed a couple hundred miles.

Daily habit: Reading something before I go to bed (even if only for a few minutes) that has absolutely nothing to do with work. Anything from bad science fiction, to a historical biography, to the latest news.

Startling fact: I have the digital footprint of a teenager. Because of my privacy and data security work, I'm always downloading (and vetting) the hottest new apps and services. And I've always been an avid video gamer.