

## Meet the New Associates

APRIL 7, 2010

This winter, WilmerHale welcomed 63 new associates to our US offices, and another 32 of their peers will start in the fall. In the series of interviews below, you'll meet associates from the Securities, Litigation and IP Departments who share an interest in everything from pro bono work to traveling the world.



*(Chehardy at the Samaria Gorge in Crete.)*

**Name:** Kimberly Chehardy

**Office:** New York

**Practice:** Securities Litigation and Enforcement

**School:** Vermont Law School

**WH:** What is it about WilmerHale that made you want to practice here?

**Chehardy:** It was the type of work, as I was interested in securities, and of course the reputation of the firm and its commitment to pro bono work.

**WH:** What are you most looking forward to as you begin your practice at WilmerHale?

**Chehardy:** I'm interested in becoming integrated in the firm, becoming active in the Diversity Committee and beginning my career as a securities lawyer.

**WH:** What did you do during your deferral period?

**Chehardy:** I volunteered as a fulltime fellow at the [National Advocates for Pregnant Women](#) from early September to late November. The organization is a reproductive rights nonprofit that focuses on the rights of pregnant women, and is working toward broadening the reproductive rights movement's focus from abortion to all pregnant women, including those who wish to carry to term. It was an interesting organization based in New York City, with a staff of five people who worked on cases throughout the country. We were constantly inundated with new cases, so it was a good learning experience and a nice introduction to the legal world. At the time, I thought it was important to get out of the law school mindset and into the professional mindset, and this did that for me. It was also the first time I'd done advocacy work and impact litigation. I found it very interesting to be on that side; it's a different take on strategy as well as presenting the facts.

**WH:** Tell us a fun fact about yourself...

**Chehardy:** I was in the Navy for six years prior to law school, serving for two years in Iceland and 15 months in Japan. For my bar trip, I went to Greece and hiked the Samaria Gorge in Crete.



*(Saji on his trip to China.)*

**Name:** Michael Saji

**Office:** Boston

**Practice:** Intellectual Property

**School:** Boston College Law School

**WH:** What is it about WilmerHale that made you want to practice here?

**Saji:** I interviewed at a few patent boutiques, but I got the sense here that I'd be able to participate not only in prosecuting patents, but also in seeing how they're used in the real world, both through the litigation and technology transactions and licensing groups. That was appealing to me. From what I can tell, the emphasis at WilmerHale is on having people extend their skills in both areas, which is really cool. Also, I was drawn to the people and the culture at the firm. Everyone here is very genuine and honorable; this is a place where I can be proud to work and be among people who trust each other to do good work and to do the right thing. I've been blessed to work at a number of great places, and each had one singular characteristic—a high level of trust in their employees.

**WH:** What are you most looking forward to as you begin your practice at WilmerHale?

**Saji:** There are a lot of world-class clients and matters we're handling here, and it's always exciting. I read the New Business emails each day, and I'm always excited by what I see, as they are all things I've heard about in the business press. I'm looking forward to the chance to work with exciting clients.

**WH:** What did you do during your deferral period?

**Saji:** The past six months have involved a lot of transitioning. In addition to preparing for WilmerHale, I got engaged, and my fiancé and I spent some time in California, where we're both from. I had never been to China, but had the opportunity to go there for a month as well. I went partly on my own, partly with my church, and partly with my fiancé and her parents. It was really eye-opening. China is going to have a huge impact on the world economic scene, and I got to see that. Also, my fiancé's family is from Hong Kong, so we had an engagement party there, and I stopped by Japan to see family there as well, so it was quite a tour. Since returning, it's been all about wedding planning and purchasing our first home in Brookline, Massachusetts. I was also able to study for and take the patent bar.

**WH:** Tell us a fun fact about yourself...

**Saji:** In addition to being a lawyer, I'm also an amateur wedding photographer. And I like coffee, so I've been having a lot of fun with the options at the firm.



*(Harper in a hilltop Laotian village.)*

**Name:** Julianne Harper

**Office:** Palo Alto

**Practice:** Litigation/Controversy

**School:** Santa Clara University School of Law

**WH:** What is it about WilmerHale that made you want to practice here?

**Harper:** This firm has a wealth of history and resources spanning across many practice areas and with such diversity that I knew I could really find my niche and sink into it. WilmerHale is so clearly community-focused, reaching out into different areas of society that critically need assistance, reflecting a commitment that inspired me to go to law school in the first place. Finally, the Palo Alto office in particular is very inviting because it provides the large firm experience packaged into a

smaller office. I feel very comfortable here.

**WH:** What are you most looking forward to as you begin your practice at WilmerHale?

**Harper:** I am most excited to learn about the process of bringing a litigation matter full circle and to be able to participate at every level throughout the process. I also really look forward to becoming more integrated into the firm community.

**WH:** What did you do during your deferral period?

**Harper:** I backpacked for about two months through Southeast Asia with friends who had also just taken the California bar exam. With a Lonely Planet guide and a lot of bug repellent, we travelled through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Bali. One of my favorite places was Siem Reap in Cambodia. It is a main hub and spiritual center filled with beautiful art, ancient temples and great noodle bowls. The people are incredibly gracious and wanted to talk to us despite the fact that we had only gathered how to say “hello,” “thank you,” and a few other poorly pronounced travelling phrases. After being so regimented while studying for the bar in the previous months, we had so much fun inventing the plan as we went along—it was the perfect grand adventure before beginning our legal careers.

**WH:** Tell us a fun fact about yourself...

**Harper:** When I have spare time, I love painting, refinishing furniture and making odd-ball crafts. My friends and family have had to endure more than a decade of my homemade gifts.



*(Upreti at the Iguazu Falls in Argentina.)*

**Name:** Ash Upreti

**Office:** Washington DC

**Practice:** Intellectual Property Litigation

**School:** The George Washington University Law School

**WH:** What is it about WilmerHale that made you want to practice here?

**Upreti:** I went into law school knowing I wanted a career in patent litigation, so it was the prominence of WilmerHale's patent litigation practice that initially drew me to the firm. The firm's breadth of practice areas was also a draw. The broad litigation practice meant that in addition to

working on cases involving patent issues, I might also get to work on cases involving antitrust issues (an area I developed an interest in as a summer associate). The firm's pro bono commitment was also rather appealing, since I had previously been active in the promotion of civil liberties and had worked for a criminal defense clinic. To top it all off, I really enjoyed working with a number of great lawyers when I was a summer associate at the firm.

**WH:** What are you most looking forward to as you begin your practice at WilmerHale?

**Upreti:** I'm looking forward to working on some really interesting and challenging cases, and learning from other people on those case teams.

**WH:** What did you do during your deferral period?

**Upreti:** For the first part of my deferral period, I spent one and a half months backpacking in Africa. I traveled solo during my entire deferral period, and in Africa this involved going overland in a truck full of backpackers who I had never met. We camped in tents most of the time and shared a variety of amazing experiences, including a safari in the Serengeti, snorkeling off the coast of Zanzibar, eating environmentally culled hippo meat in Zambia, and whitewater rafting on the Zambezi river. We traveled through Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Malawi and Zambia together. After Zambia, I left the truck and flew to South Africa to spend some time in Cape Town. After Africa, I lived in Buenos Aires for two and a half months. Although I spent some time trying to learn Spanish, the primary focus of my stay was to study Wing Chun Kung Fu. I did some side trips to Iguazu Falls, Uruguay and Peru, but the kung fu training kept me in Buenos Aires most of the time. Traveling has always been one of my passions, and to date I've traveled to 41 countries.

**WH:** Tell us a fun fact about yourself...

**Upreti:** I've been practicing martial arts since I was 13. After earning a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, I practiced Kenpo and then Wing Chun Kung Fu. I stopped kung fu training six years ago, when I migrated from New Zealand to the United States. I didn't have a car at the time, so I was unable to drive to the kung fu schools that taught my preferred style. Now that I have a car in DC, I drive out to Virginia for private Wing Chun Kung Fu lessons every weekend.