

## THE 2020 D.C. RISING STARS

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT OUR 2020 D.C. RISING STARS. SELECTED FROM A COMPETITIVE POOL, OUR 40 HONOREES REPRESENT A CROSS-SECTION OF PRACTICE AREAS.



### BRENDA LEE, 38

**EMPLOYER: WILMER CUTLER  
PICKERING HALE AND DORR**

**TITLE AND PRACTICE AREA:  
PARTNER, INVESTIGATIONS AND  
CRIMINAL LITIGATION**

■ **DESCRIBE YOUR BIGGEST WIN OR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN PRACTICE.**

After months of negotiation, convincing a state's attorney to reopen post-conviction proceedings and request a disposition of nolle prosequi for a client who served 37 years in prison. He walked out of the courthouse a free man at age 66 and moved to Florida to live with his son.

■ **WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU LEARNED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR PRACTICING LAW?** You can make yourself indispensable no matter your seniority, but you have to make an effort: master the record, sweat the details, think beyond your assignment and be a good team player. And if you're the most junior person in the room, it's your job to take the notes.

■ **WHO IS YOUR GREATEST LAWYER MENTOR AND WHAT HAS HE OR SHE TAUGHT YOU?** My district court judge, Judge Richard Leon, emphasizes building and maintaining relationships (in addition to excellent lawyering, of course). As someone who primarily does investigations work, being able to make connections and build relationships, whether with clients, colleagues, witnesses, or regulators, is a critical skill.

■ **PLEASE SHARE A BRIEF KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS.** My success hinges on the work ethic instilled in me by my parents—show up, work hard and care about what you do and how you do it.