2022 ACC Top 10 30-Something: Pervin R. Taleyarkhan

Interviews and Profiles

The ACC Top 10 30-Somethings awards recognize in-house counsel between the ages of 30 and 39 for their innovation, approach to challenges, well-rounded perspectives, contributions to the in-house community, and pro bono and volunteer work.

Whether as in-house counsel, active bar member, or adjunct professor, Pervin R. Taleyarkhan cultivates a learning environment around her. "Knowledge and best-practices sharing are crucial,"

she says of the legal profession.

At Whirlpool Corporation, Legal Counsel Pervin creates opportunities for idea exchanges on how to approach pressing issues. For example, when the company was looking to explore open-source usage tools, Pervin tapped into the bar associations she is a part of to organize a series of panel discussions and article publications on the topic. The talks not only facilitated solution-generation for Whirlpool but became resources for the in-house community as a whole.

Learning valuable practices from each other rather than painstakingly researching difficult (if not impossible)-to-find information allows everyone to benefit, says Pervin. "In the legal profession (particularly in-house), most everybody is willing to share best practices. We really value preventative medicine," she jokes, "making sure we're taking steps to prevent problems from occurring or spiraling."

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Pervin also contributes to knowledge sharing in the profession. She solicits and writes articles for the American Bar Association (ABA) IP (intellectual property) Law Section's flagship publication through her involvement on their editorial board, and organizes webinars as part of her role as chair of the In-house IP Committee at the ABA IP Law Section. Pervin also participates extensively on boards at other professional associations. She is on the board of the ACC Michigan Chapter and serves as communications co-chair for the ACC IP Network. She is also an IP Council Member of the State Bar of Michigan's IP Law Section.

Internally at Whirlpool, she engages her colleagues in idea and learning opportunities. As a member of the global law department's growth and development committee, Pervin supports the professional development and learning opportunities among Whirlpool's entire law department.

Outside of her work at Whirlpool, Pervin serves as adjunct professor and director of the Indiana University law school's Intellectual Property Clinic. "The best way to learn is to teach," she says. In her classes, she incorporates an in-house counsel lens into her curriculum so that her future IP practitioner-students are more well-rounded (and thus better process partners for future in-house clients). At the IP Clinic, Pervin supervises the students who work with real-life clients and small businesses that need patent and trademark legal assistance. "My students really want to learn," she says, "They are themselves self-driven, and I love working with people like that. It's a good combination."

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Despite loving her legal career, for the first 21 years of her life, Pervin wanted to be a physician. "I interned in hospitals, worked in pharmacies, shadowed doctors, and even volunteered in X-ray file rooms," she recalls. When she decided to attend law school instead of medical school, she planned to combine her interests. "I thought I wanted to go into health law, but it was too much about policy-making and the ethics. I missed the lab," she says, referring to her time in undergrad at Purdue University conducting research in cardiovascular engineering under one of the pioneers in the field,

the late Professor Leslie A. Geddes. At the recommendation of a peer, she considered patent law — and that decision led her straight in-house.

Right out of law school she worked at the Purdue Research Foundation, where she helped build the first in-house intellectual property legal practice in the Office of Technology Commercialization. "The office is still going strong with I believe seven or eight IP practitioners, so I like to feel like we established a successful business model," she says.

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When Pervin made the decision to leave Purdue for Whirlpool, she saw it as an opportunity to grow and develop new skills. That has proved true, and as she phases into a new role focusing on global strategy and transactions, she is learning more about global information systems, privacy, and procurement. “As you can imagine, supply chain issues are impacting everybody right now. So I’m helping the company work through various business-critical issues.”

As she develops her expertise, Pervin will continue sharing her learnings with others. “We're very collaborative in the law in the legal profession; we try to help make it better. I've been blessed to have mentors who never held back advice and told me to never give up an opportunity to learn. And that's my motivation for trying to pay it forward,” she says.

Q&A with Pervin Taleyarkhan

What do you find rewarding about IP and patent law?

I just generally appreciate the power of helping others get that legally-sustainable competitive advantage. Especially for people who could never have afforded this otherwise, you know? For example, one of our clients [at the IP Clinic], who we filed a patent application for, wrote us a beautiful note saying, "Thank you. It's so much more valuable to say ‘patent pending’ on my invention, and this would never have been possible if I hadn't had your help." And I enjoy having my students learn the art of practitioner-client interfacing and see the positive impact they're having on someone's life or business.

How do you practice self-care?

Finding things that make me feel good. During COVID, everybody came up with their own hobbies or picked up old hobbies. I play the violin, I'm trying to learn how to play the piano, and I've taken up cross-stitching and embroidery. During mentoring events at the law school, I do "Needlework with Pervin." I provided one of my students with a cross-stitching kit and got myself one too, and then we just sat back and talked life while I taught her how to cross-stitch. We still keep in touch, and she told me that it helped her get through the bar exam prep. She's now a full-fledged attorney in DC.

Danielle Maldonado

Assistant Editor

Association of Corporate Counsel