2023 ACC Top 10 30-Somethings: Tanja Olano

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.

When the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles get underway, the world will have Tanja Olano to thank. As chief legal officer of LA28, the organizing nonprofit for the Games, her

fingerprints are everywhere, from commercial contracts to real estate negotiations.

Tanja has brought a “think different” approach to commercial partnerships. By encouraging open conversations and collaboration, she helped develop the first-ever Olympic and Paralympic Games logo with Delta Airlines. It was a major milestone for an organization that, historically, was known for its “closed loop” approach to marketing rights. Her ability to move partnerships forward has resulted in over US$1 billion in deal value with companies like Hershey, Comcast, Deloitte, and Salesforce.

Being a force for change at an established institution like the Games can be difficult. Yet Tanja continues to push for change. She led a complex contractual process that brought together stakeholders like the International Olympic Committee, International Paralympic Committee, more than 200 National Organizing Committees, and the other host cities, Paris 2024 and Milano-Cortina 2026, to implement a new global ticketing model with Endeavor’s OnLocation.

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As LA28 moves closer to reality, the organization is staffing up. No stranger to juggling multiple responsibilities, Tanja recently added Chief People Officer to her title, overseeing LA28 human resources. The HR team expanded its department to include a head of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, who in turn has introduced culture-building programs, such as “LA28 Conversations,” an organization-wide space for cultural conversation and education.

Tanja, a San Diego native, is thrilled to see the Games come back to the West Coast. As a child, she fell in love with martial arts, earning a black belt by age nine. Her early discipline, and her love of sports, has not abated. As part of LA28’s impact efforts, US$160 million will be funneled to Los Angeles’ Department of Recreation and Parks to increase youth participation.

Reflecting on her career so far, she says she encourages up-and-coming in-house lawyers to remember that “hard work really does pay off.”

Despite the complex challenges Tanja faces in her multiple roles, she always makes time to give back to her community, whether by volunteering in the community or mentoring law students. Her advice to other female attorneys is to keep an elite peer group. “It is one of the best investments a rising, ambitious female attorney can make,” she affirms. “The support and guidance that comes from having a circle of mentors you can learn from will take you far in your career.”

As the Los Angeles Games come to fruition, Tanja will be there, helping to deliver a respectful, on-budget event.

Tanja Olano's acceptance speech for ACC's 2023 Top 10 30-Somethings.

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