

2023 ACC Top 10 30-Somethings: Natasha Sim

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.



Natasha Sim's journey to becoming an in-house counsel and Top 10 30-Something wasn't traditional. Now the compliance and regulatory counsel for the NCRC Community Development Fund

, which has a mission to increase the flow of capital into traditionally underserved communities, she leads the legal responsibilities for the development of NCRC CDF's proprietary loan origination system. Working with a developer, NCRC CDF built an end-to-end solution to include application intake, loan origination, document management, funding, loan servicing, and loss mitigation. Interviews with technology firms, philanthropies, and community development financial institutions (CDFI) small business lenders showed that technology platforms and tools affect CDFIs' profitability, efficiency, and growth, but investing in technology remains a challenge. This is why NCRC CDF intends to eventually license its system to CDFIs nationwide.

After moving from New Zealand, her path to in-house practice began at St. Lawrence University in upstate New York, where she pursued her fascination with policy and financial matters as an economics and government major. During her time at the university, Natasha lived with a host family who were lawyers, sparking her interest in the legal profession. This experience ignited her desire to actively shape and create laws, setting the course to a legal career.

Upon graduating, Natasha grappled with the complex realities of her immigration status. "Getting a sponsorship is tricky if you don't go that normal summer associate Big Law route," she explains.

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Natasha's initial step into the legal world was working at the Humane Society's office of general counsel. However, the role didn't secure her the needed sponsorship, and she decided to enroll in an LLM program at Georgetown University. A pandemic-triggered hiring freeze left Natasha in a bind with her visa set to expire shortly. She then leveraged her connection with the Women in Housing and Finance, and within a short period, progressed from a logistics volunteer to a director of the organization and now officer. This crucial connection facilitated a solution, helping Natasha secure a job and the much-needed sponsorship.

One of her principal achievements at the NCRC Community Development Fund is the management of all drafting, negotiation, and underwriting for their Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), along with her lead role managing all legal responsibilities for NCRC CDF's regulatory and corporate governance matters. She managed the disbursement and underwriting of over US$10 million in loans between PPP and a philanthropic-funded loan program. Following her work on NCRC CDF's PPP program, she developed a more regulatory role which now includes acting as the Qualified Individual to ensure NCRC CDF's compliance with the FTC Safeguards Rule as well as advising NCRC CDF on UDAP (Unfair, Deceptive Acts and Practices) and UDAAP (Unfair, Deceptive, Abusive Acts and Practices) obligations. She also manages corporate governance matters for NCRC CDF and regularly presents to the CDFI board.

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A staunch advocate for diversity and inclusion, Natasha is greatly influenced by her experiences as a biracial immigrant. "I've seen it as a kind of asset in a lot of ways — I feel like I can act as a bridge between different communities," she explains. She has actively advocated for the Asian community, leading the development of relationships between the NCRC Community Development Fund and the

U.S. Pan-Asian Chamber of Commerce. Natasha also worked with her American Bar Association (ABA) committee to develop a CLE program and publication centering on one of the few CDFIs that includes the Asian population in its target market and that is co-led by an Asian co-founder. “I have the power to carve out space for other people,” she shares.

Today, Natasha serves as the chair of the Community Economic Development Law Committee for the ABA’s Business Law Section (BLS), where her committee grew in membership by 15 percent in close to two years, achieving a growth rate 10 percent faster than larger committees. Furthermore, Natasha was informed by the ABA BLS Council of Committees that she is the youngest leader of an ABA BLS substantive committee.

Natasha Sim's acceptance speech for ACC's 2023 Top 10 30-Somethings.

Natasha's journey from immigrant to regulatory counsel, and a leader within organizations like NCRC CDF, the ABA and Woman in Housing and Finance, is an inspiration. Her commitment to carving out spaces for marginalized communities, coupled with her efforts to effect change, positions her as a role model for aspiring legal professionals. “My hope is that seeing how my story eventually worked out, it inspires other people who have similar experiences,” Natasha shares.

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Mark Parkhomenko



Assistant Editor

Association of Corporate Counsel