Career Perspectives:

Returning To Proskauer

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Many of our lawyers have had successful careers at Proskauer, while others have gone on to achieve great things in the industries that Proskauer works so closely with. Some have even become clients of the Firm. And others return …

Diversity of Experience Benefits Everyone

In 2023 alone, 12 percent of our lateral hires were returning Proskauer lawyers – lawyers who returned after gaining invaluable experience and insight elsewhere.

In this series, we speak to returning lawyers about their journeys, including what brought them back to the Firm and how their experiences away from Proskauer impacted their professional development.

Colin Cabral is a litigation partner in our Boston office. He specializes in high-stakes intellectual property, commercial and antitrust disputes. In June 2012, Colin departed Proskauer after five years for an in-house counsel position at a biotech company. He returned to Proskauer in 2013.

Yomarie (Jo) Habenicht is a tax associate based in the Firm's Washington, D.C. office, who specializes in U.S. federal, corporate, partnership and international tax matters. Jo left Proskauer's New York office in January 2020 and relocated to Washington, D.C., to pursue an ambition outside of law. She rejoined the Firm in 2021.

Why did you decide to return to Proskauer?

Colin Cabral: I made the original decision to leave Proskauer to join an in-house position as a litigator at a biotechnology company based in the San Diego area. That only lasted a year, as the company was the target of an acquisition. The decision to return to Proskauer was an easy one. Proskauer is my ideal balance of exceptional legal talent and healthy, high-character human beings. I knew I would have the freedom to develop as a lawyer without being ground into dust. I genuinely love this place and have not regretted my decision for a second.

Yomarie (Jo) Habenicht: When I left Proskauer, I thought that I was leaving the practice of law altogether. So, when I decided to return to law, I couldn't see myself anywhere else but Proskauer. This is where I learned to become a lawyer — both technically and as a client-serving professional — and I thought I wanted to keep learning more from those that I admired. It was not so easy for me to come back as it was the middle of the pandemic and there was a hiring freeze, so I made a short stop at another law firm. But, as soon as the opportunity opened at Proskauer, I jumped right at it. I knew it was the right move for me and my career.

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Yomarie (Jo) Habenicht, Associate, Tax

What made that decision possible for you?

Colin: It was a relatively easy transition from San Diego to the LA office, in terms of logistics. But it was my relationships and the people I would get to work with that made it a no-brainer. I had previously worked with partners Mike Firestein and Lary Rappaport, both of whom I have a ton of respect for, and they were based in our LA office.

Yomarie: The decision was made possible thanks to the relationships that I developed while I was at Proskauer and by staying in touch with those colleagues. These relationships included partners and associates in my department who I consider my friends and mentors.

What experience did you gain that you have been able to bring back to Proskauer?

Colin: I experienced all things from the client's perspective: shoddy work product, outsized bills, budget constraints and little-to-no notice in advance of important deadlines. My prior experience as "the client" informs how I treat clients today as their outside counsel. I would not want one of our clients to deal with the same frustrations that I felt when I was in the same position trying to do right by company management.

Yomarie: I learned that I thrive in structured work environments with clear expectations and deadlines, so I try to be as clear as I can when communicating to more junior attorneys. I also learned that it is really hard to be integrated into an organization in a post-Covid world, so I try to be extra mindful of new hires in my department to try and provide additional tools, so they feel integrated.

"Yes, it is a business. But Proskauer cares about its people. That distinction is what makes this such a special place to work."

Colin Cabral, Partner, Litigation

Do you approach things differently now?

Colin: "Don't know what you got until it's gone." (That's a reference to 1980's hair band Cinderella.) When I saw how other firms operated, it provided invaluable perspective into what is truly special about this place. Yes, it is a business. But Proskauer cares about its people. That distinction is what makes this such a special place to work.

Yomarie: My time away from Proskauer made me appreciate even more what I have here — the mentors, sponsors and friends that rally behind you and beside you. As I get older, I realize more and more how relationships have the ability to impact your life — both in a positive and negative way — so, I am very intentional about spending more time and effort developing relationships with my colleagues and clients.

Related Professionals

- **Colin G. Cabral**
  Partner
- **Yomarie S. Habenicht**
  Senior Counsel