



Cozen O'Connor

Women in Leadership



Located in the heart of downtown, Cozen O'Connor's Minneapolis office serves local, national and international clients in a wide variety of practice areas including: litigation, corporate transactions, trade law & remedies, securities & financing, real estate finance & development, corporate bankruptcy & restructuring, antitrust, intellectual property, and mergers & acquisitions – working collaboratively with the firm's 750 attorneys across its 29 offices. Four of Cozen O'Connor's Minneapolis-based women attorneys share their unique breadth of practices and experiences and offer how the firm's unwavering support elevates their careers and enables their pursuit of many community-based volunteer and pro bono activities.



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BARBARA MULLER

AALM: Tell us what stands out to you about your firm’s culture.

Muller: It still amazes me how easy it is to get the assistance of one of our attorneys who is fully versed in a certain subject matter, from white collar crime to environmental law to bankruptcy issues. No matter where my clients are located, I’m able to get them the best possible advice in the subject matter area they need in the blink of an eye. Some of these “emergency matches” have resulted in a long-standing relationship with the attorney who advised them and is now working with the client to avoid any further emergency in the specific area of expertise.

AALM: Tell us about the work you do in the community.

Muller: In 2016, the German government appointed me as the Honorary Consul for Germany in Minneapolis. My consular district includes all of Minnesota, the Dakotas and parts of Western Wisconsin. As Honorary Consul, I have a wide range of responsibilities – from regular tasks such as accepting passport applications or certifying signatures, to assisting individuals and their families with issues related to the U.S. criminal system, to organizing a concert of classical music with a quintet from one of the most famous German orchestras. My position allows me to work on important causes and with great organizations such as the Jewish Community Relations Council in Minnesota and the Dakotas.

AALM: What do you most enjoy about practicing in the area of corporate business law?

Muller: In addition to the Juris Doctor that allows me to practice in Minnesota, I have the German law degrees. On one hand, I enjoy working with U.S. companies on matters with connection to Germany, such as the establishment and/or operation of a subsidiary, entering into a distribution agreement, or hiring employees in Germany, or acquiring a German company. On the other hand, I do the same kind of work for German companies here in the United States. Having the law degrees of both countries allows me to explain the differences in both legal systems to my clients and make the “switch” from one system to the other as easy as possible for them.

AALM: Tell us about a noteworthy case.

Muller: The South Carolina subsidiary of one of my German clients was served with a subpoena in a criminal investigation by the Federal Department of Justice. The DOJ accused my client of having violated antitrust laws. I immediately involved antitrust attorneys from Cozen O’Connor and basically acted as intermediary between the client in Germany and my colleagues, explaining the U.S. system to the Germans and certain cultural differences and issues to my U.S. colleagues. The best part – we were successful, and the DOJ didn’t pursue any kind of legal action against my client.

KRISTI ZENTNER

AALM: Tell us what stands out to you about your firm's culture.

Zentner: Working with top notch lawyers that have commanding track records and sophisticated clients is a given within an AM LAW 100 firm. What sets Cozen O'Connor apart from other firms of its size and stature is its collegial culture. Attorneys, staff and administrators here are genuinely great people, with a surprising handle on work/life balance. For years I have worked in a part time capacity here; the firm has embraced my decision, supported my professional growth and provided me with ample career development opportunities. My career is not built the same as many of my colleagues but Cozen O'Connor has allowed me to find success in my own way, which I appreciate.

AALM: Can you tell us about the work you do in the community or pro-bono efforts?

Zentner: Cozen O'Connor encourages all attorneys to contribute their services to pro bono opportunities and supports the efforts of its members in doing so. For the past several years I have been a supervising attorney for the Business Law Clinic at the University of Minnesota Law School. The Business Law Clinic provides corporate based legal assistance to constituents in the community who would otherwise be unable to afford the costs of an attorney. I enjoy the rewarding feeling of assisting a client who has an entrepreneurial spirit and is looking to start or grow a business that will help their community thrive. And, working alongside the students at the clinic is a wonderful opportunity to help them connect abstract scholastic teaching with real-world scenarios. Motivating the students to develop creative, innovative solutions in a time managed way, will hopefully continue to spark their interest in corporate legal work.



AALM: Can you share what you most enjoy about practicing law?

Zentner: One of my favorite parts about the practice of law is that it is always evolving. I have a general corporate practice, but over time and with the effort of a team approach, my colleagues and I have developed niche practice areas dealing with supply chain management as well as customs, tariff and trade matters. This evolution in niche practice areas was driven primarily by needs from our team's clients; however, the firm has embraced this growth opportunity and has allowed us to use our expertise to assist other firm clients as well.

AALM: Can you share how you work with your partnering attorneys? How does having a team help provide the best legal advice to your clients?

Zentner: Simply the best part of my career is the company that I keep with colleagues and clients. The legal team that I have been a part of spans decades – we have worked together through the ups and downs that life provides and continue to loyally serve our clients together. We take a collaborative approach, meaning, we shift clients and projects across practice groups as the need arises. Clients know that they are in the best hands possible when given to a colleague for assistance.



HEATHER MARX

AALM: Tell us what stands out to you about your firm's culture.

Marx: When we opened Cozen O'Connor's Minneapolis office in 2013 as part of the first wave of large national firms entering this market, I continually heard from our new colleagues about Cozen O'Connor culture and how it distinguishes our firm from others. While I thought at the time that that was the routine pitch every firm gives as part of their integration process, what I learned in practice is that you actually can't oversell how fantastic the culture is at our firm. We have the privilege of working with the most dedicated, supportive, pioneering, and truly fun group of

professionals that I have encountered, and they inspire me to push myself and my practice to new heights so that I am doing everything I can to foster and build our firm's community.

AALM: What have you found surprising about the practice of law that you didn't anticipate when you started out?

Marx: I had no appreciation for just how dynamic my practice would become. While I expected the litigation practice

to bring new challenges with each case, what I have found surprising is how the changes in the economic and political climates have pushed my practice to include areas like the trade remedies practice that our office recently started at Cozen O'Connor. My part within that trade remedies practice is to provide our clients advice and advocacy in some of the most challenging and nuanced avenues of trade and customs disputes, both in the regulatory and private sector context, and I would never have anticipated when I started practicing 17 years ago that I would find myself in this type of a cutting-edge arena.

AALM: Can you share how you work with your partnering attorneys? How does having a team help provide the best legal advice to your clients?

Marx: What I appreciate most about our team is that we always lead with "yes." Whatever our clients or colleagues need, we find a way to get it done and done well. My best success always comes when I partner with my colleagues, both in this office and across Cozen O'Connor's significant footprint. Utilizing the depth of knowledge that their strengths bring in areas like corporate law, bankruptcy,

real estate, and labor and employment, and coupling that with what I can provide in nearly any litigation arena, has proven time and again to be the best avenue for providing our clients with the type of continuing success that builds lasting relationships.

AALM: Can you share a bit about a successful or noteworthy case that you recently were involved in?

Marx: I recently had the opportunity to argue before the North Dakota Supreme Court in a complex banking case that exemplifies how integrated and strong our team is. In a case that began as part of a Texas bankruptcy and grew into numerous civil cases involving significant allegations of fraud, our team obtained successful results for our client at each turn, culminating with a unanimous decision in our favor from the North Dakota Supreme Court, awarding our client millions. While I was certainly proud of the briefing and arguments I presented, what I appreciated most about the win was that it solidified all the strategic advocacy and hard work our team put into the case from the outset.



TINA SYRING

AALM: What is your proudest accomplishment as a lawyer?

Syring: While I am extremely proud of the work I have done with my clients on labor and employment matters, there is one case that I handled that will forever stand out as my proudest accomplishment as an attorney. I work with the Children's Law Center on a pro bono basis and have represented several different youths who are given a voice in the courtroom when dealing with extremely difficult family situations, none of which are their fault. For nearly three years, I represented two children whose biological parents had their parental rights terminated by the court. As a result, my clients were placed with two wonderful foster parents. The greatest day of my professional career was attending the adoption ceremony of my clients with these foster parents. So many times, my role as an attorney is one in which I am an adversary and an advocate. This time, however, my role was one in which I helped my clients have a better life with two loving parents.

AALM: What have you found surprising about the practice of law that you didn't anticipate when you started out?

Syring: When I started my legal career, I believed I wanted to do estate planning. One day as a first-year associate, I

was given the opportunity to work on a sexual harassment litigation matter. I was instantly hooked on employment law and litigation. Had I not been given the opportunity to work on that case, I might never have considered L&E, which is a perfect fit for me. One of the greatest things – and surprising things – about the practice of law is the ability to explore what you might be interested in pursuing. Cozen O'Connor is committed to exposing our law clerks and first-year associates to the different areas of practice, helping to guide them in finding their path to what truly interests them.

AALM: Can you share what you most enjoy about practicing employment litigation?

Syring: I love employment law and litigation because not one single day is like any other day. My work always differs and presents challenging, complex human issues. It may range from employees simply not working together in the manner a company expects, or the enforcement of a non-compete agreement on emergency basis, or strategizing on how to handle a multi-jurisdiction wage and hour litigation. I could be conducting a #MeToo investigation one day and the next day talking to an employer on how to provide a reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability. It is the interaction with my clients and how we work together, in partnership, to come up with the best solution that is my favorite thing at the end of the day.

AALM: Can you share how you work with your partnering attorneys? How does having a team help provide the best legal advice to your clients?

Syring: What attracted me to Cozen O'Connor remains true today: the amazing partnerships our attorneys have in working on solutions for our clients. In Minneapolis, I am currently the only labor and employment attorney, but we have over 90 labor and employment attorneys nationally. I work closely with several of these individuals in handling a myriad of issues and cases. Each time, I have been awed by the knowledge base and depth of experience we have in approaching these issues to provide the best advice for our clients.