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Baker Donelson Alumni Spotlight: Daisy Karlson Fernández

December 20, 2021

Daisy Karlson Fernández now serves as litigation counsel for DoorDash in San Francisco, California.

Tell us about your career at Baker Donelson. What did you learn from your time here that stuck with you?

One moment that stuck with me is Shareholder Eric Pruitt encouraging a room of summer associates to "be indispensable." It's difficult to do that in Big Law, but it's a theme that guided my five years at Baker.



Tell us about your role now.

I'm one of five attorneys on DoorDash's litigation team. I'm the main point person for any legal implications arising from our trust and safety, insurance, claims, community defense or merchant teams. I also assist our IP and international teams on everything from small claims to consumer class actions.

Why is it important to mentor young women attorneys?

Mentorship is critical in this industry. While I knew of Sandra Day O'Connor, RBG and Elle Woods growing up, I never met a female attorney, let alone a female judge, until I was in high school. And while there might be more women in law school than ever, less than 20 percent make it to equity partner and 25 percent make it to general counsel. The rates for female lawyers of color are worse. I wouldn't be where I am today without the advocacy and sponsorship of powerful women, and I hope to not only pay it forward, but see more women of color at the table.

What is one piece of advice you have on work-life balance?

It's hard to pick just one, so here are my top three:

1. Take the time off for yourself.
2. Young associates learn from example, and work-life balance is taught top-down.
3. Burnout should never be glorified or rewarded.

What advice would you give to your younger self just starting the practice of law?

I hate referencing the "work family" as it buys into some dangerous myths about the American workplace, but it is important to surround yourself with colleagues who are able to show compassion, empathy and understanding, but also draw boundaries (especially in this remote world where the line between being on and off is so easily blurred). Good colleagues and a strong team are vital to this industry.

Is there a misconception you had about going in-house that has now been debunked, and, if so, what is it?

That the business teams dislike and/or fear the lawyers. My work requires much more collaboration and cross-functional partnership, and less time being the "bad guy" or saying no.