

Fisher Phillips Leader Strives To Advance Women At Firm

By **Madison Arnold**

Law360 (June 18, 2024, 3:50 PM EDT) -- As the newest member of Fisher Phillips' management committee, San Diego-based partner Danielle Moore is bringing her longtime passion for mentoring and helping advance other women.

Moore, who was recently elected to the employer-side labor and employment firm's management committee, has had a long history of supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal industry, including creating her firm's Women's Initiative and Leadership Council, or WiLC.

"I think as women we all have moments where we realize we're really in the thick of juggling — for me, it was two kids and a career and a husband. For other women it's caring for their parents or what have you. We've all been through those struggles, and men also face those, but there are some unique components to it for women," Moore told Law360 Pulse in a recent interview.

Moore replaced chairman emeritus Roger Quillen, who stepped down after 27 years on Fisher Phillips' three-member management committee. Her election means the body charged with leading the national firm is now majority women — her fellow members are her mentors, chair John Polson and longtime partner Christine Howard.

While she is still in her first weeks on the committee, Moore plans to take her passion and experience supporting others into her new role by helping with associate development.

Law360 Pulse recently caught up with Moore to learn more about her work supporting women and how she plans to approach her new position. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How did you get started in leadership?

I went to San Diego and it was a new market for me, legally speaking, and so I did what lawyers do to develop business and to develop a reputation and a career — I hit the pavement and sat on boards and spoke to organizations and all those things. One of the things I did was I sat on the board of Lawyers Club of San Diego, which is our women's bar association, and it's powerful. It is huge ... and it is full of wonderful female judges, female leaders. It was really inspiring to me at the time.

I was on the board with these amazing women and I thought, Gosh, I really think we have an



Danielle Moore

opportunity at the firm to do more for our women, to advance our women. And so I started to prepare a proposal to the firm for a women's initiative. I recruited and collected some powerful partners around the firm because I had no clout. I was, like, a first-year partner. Together we made this proposal, and our management said, "100% yes, absolutely." They made me co-chair, and so that was my first leadership role at the firm. It was really my first window into leadership on a national scale and I was hooked. I just loved it. I loved making change, making us better.

I spent about five years co-chairing WiLC with Christine [Howard], and then I felt passionately that I had to practice what I preach and create opportunities for women. I stepped off of WiLC to open that spot up for a new female leader. I became the chair of our development committee, which is the committee that is in charge of keeping us cutting-edge.

What about supporting women in particular struck a chord with you?

I have always had a passion for mentoring and helping advance other female professionals, even in school. But I do think that Lawyers Club was the first entryway or avenue for me to do that on a bigger scale. I just understood [women's experiences]. I witnessed it. I kind of climbed my way through it, and at the time that I did, there really weren't a lot of women that I could look up to and who could really reach that hand down and help pull me through. Christine Howard is probably the exception. She really taught me how to be a leader.

When I had my first baby [while working] in the Irvine office, there had been no other women who had done that — to have a baby at a law firm and continue [on] to make partner and grow and develop their careers. I figured it out as best as I could, and so I think once I got through that, I really just wanted to be that example or that person who was reaching down and helping those after me.

How does a law firm benefit from actively supporting its women employees?

It's not just women. It's diversity generally. An organization is healthier for that diversity of thought that people talk about and write about. It's having those different viewpoints, those different life experiences — bringing all of that into the decision-making process of an organization overall makes the organization stronger and better for it.

Part of that then translates to our recruiting and our retention. People feel heard and that their needs are met and they're able to understand and be part of the culture and the fabric of the firm.

Why did you want to run for the management committee?

When I was on the development committee, I had my hands on a lot of different parts of the firm for the first time, like our branding, who we were to the world, our culture, our retention, our recruiting, our building of clients, all the business of law. I had a couple partners who came to me who had seen what I was doing on the development committee and said, "You need to think about running for the management committee." And I thought, Wow. I was so incredibly flattered, and I thought, Maybe someday. I didn't think now, today, but they got me thinking about it. I thought, Well, if I'm gonna do it, there are really two things I need to know. One, is it right for me? Do I want it? And two, am I right for the firm? Am I the best person and can I do it and do it well? I had made a lot of great strides on developing committees, so I thought that I had the skills that were there, and then I also have two kids at home and I want to be thoughtful and make sure I could give it 100%.

I have this glorious, amazing husband who stays home and we have lots of talks about "What would this look like" and "Can I take this on" and "What would it mean for our family," and went through this process of figuring out, OK, yes, I do have an interest. I'm passionate about this. And then part two, OK, as a family, we can do this. We can do this in a way where I could do right by the firm, give it 100%, be all in and not jeopardize what we have going on at home, so that was really my calculus.

What are you most looking forward to tackling in your new position?

I do recognize that there are going to be things I haven't even thought of yet. But that said, I do think that, from what I have seen and part of this is from my work on the development committee, that there are areas of opportunity where I'm excited to kind of dig in and roll up my sleeves and really help make us better in those areas. Probably the biggest for me is developing our associates. I really want to make [it] a priority for me in this role: the teaching, coaching, training, development of our associates. Part of that is retention, of course, but I think that these are our future leaders of the firm, and so I really want to focus there. That's what I'm excited to dive into the most.

--Editing by Alanna Weissman.