



KATE MUETING, 37

FIRM: SANFORD HEISLER SHARP

PRACTICE: EMPLOYMENT LAW

TITLE: PARTNER

■ **WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU LEARNED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE?** Judge [Michael] Melloy [of the Eighth Circuit] and Judge [Richard] Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia taught me the importance of building relationships. Both encouraged their clerks to meet and get to know others. Continuing to do this has benefited my career—and made it more enjoyable.

■ **DESCRIBE YOUR BIGGEST WIN OR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN PRACTICE.** I've been able to recover millions for my clients, but more importantly I've fought alongside them to make workplaces better for others. Companies and law firms have taken affirmative steps toward fair opportunities and compensation, and meaningful protections against discrimination.

■ **WHO DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR GREATEST LAWYER MENTOR?** My constitutional law professor Bill Buss. We continue to keep in touch. He encouraged me to pursue a career that is meaningful for me and that advances justice.

■ **PLEASE SHARE A KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS.** I take time to understand [clients'] experiences, and I provide them thoughtful and honest counsel on how the law applies. I fight aggressively for them, and for workplace fairness.

D.C.'S RISING STARS

Washington, D.C., is a magnet for the top graduates from the top law schools in some of the most sophisticated practices in the nation, including appellate and antitrust. So for the NLJ's 2017 Rising Stars list, how did we go about reviewing a large pool of smart, young nominees? Very carefully. We looked for key elements including success on the highest stages, diversity of practice groups and law firms. We also looked closely at recommendations. We are proud to present our 2017 Rising Stars. This year, we share their keys to success in their own words, edited for clarity and length. —Lisa Helem, managing editor

A SPECIAL REPORT

