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– David Sanford, Co-Founder and Chairman,
Sanford Heisler Sharp

The Firm celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. We have gone from three lawyers in Washington, DC and New York in 2004 to over 60 lawyers in seven cities nationwide. The national legal industry has recognized the Firm as the best in the nation in many areas: *Benchmark Litigation* awarded the Firm its Labor and Employment Firm of the Year in 2021; *The National Law Journal* named the Firm as Employment Rights Firm of the Year and Human Rights Firm of the Year in 2021, and Civil Rights Firm of the Year in 2022.

Our attorneys are routinely recognized for their excellence, passion, commitment, creativity, and intelligence. Of recent note:

H. Vincent McKnight, Jr. was installed as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Anti-Fraud Coalition of Taxpayers Against Fraud; **Christine Dunn** was awarded Sexual Violence Litigation Lawyer of the Year by *Lawyer Monthly*; and **Qiaojing Ella Zheng** was awarded *Silicon Valley Business Journal's* Woman of Influence.

And the Firm continues to evolve. We began as an employment law firm representing individuals against corporate interests. We continue to do that today – and do it as well as any firm in the United States. In addition, we have expanded the Firm by creating an Executive Representation Practice Group; a Financial Services Litigation and ERISA Practice Group; an Asian American Litigation and Finance Practice Group; a Whistleblower and Qui Tam Practice Group; a Sexual Violence, Title IX and Victims' Rights Practice Group; a Wage and Hour Practice Group; and a Trial Practice Group.

The Trial Practice Group has been busy: We just won a trial in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York against Robert De Niro's production company, Canal Productions, in a gender discrimination and retaliation lawsuit brought by De Niro's long time executive assistant. We are currently in [an ERISA trial in Seattle against Milliman](#). We will likely be in trial in [another ERISA matter against UnitedHealth Group](#) later this year. And we have five other trials likely to take place this year: a case



H. Vincent McKnight, Jr.



Christine Dunn



Qiaojing Ella Zheng

against a ghost guns retailer; [a discrimination case against the University of Miami](#); a [race discrimination matter against Kraft Heinz](#); a [gender discrimination matter against Xilinx](#); and a [retaliation case against Armani](#).

The Firm has also promoted attorneys into key firm-wide positions: **Danielle Fuschetti** is now the Executive Chair of the Discrimination and Harassment Practice Group; **Felicia Gilbert**, **Schwanda Rountree**, and **Leigh Anne St. Charles** are now Co-Chairs of the Discrimination and Harassment Practice Group; **Carolyn Guentert** is now the Co-Chair of the Sexual Violence, Title IX and Victims’ Rights Practice Group; **Kate Mueiting** is now the Firmwide Administrative Partner; **David Tracey** is now the Firm Managing Partner; and **Nicole Wiitala** is now the Managing Partner for Legal Personnel and Co-Ombudsperson.

In addition to the expansion of the Firm’s versatility and diversity in practice areas, we have added superior talent. Just this past year, we welcomed four new partners:

Brent Hannafan, Co-Chair of the Firm’s Trial Practice Group, joined our Nashville office after serving for six years as the Chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Tennessee.

Andrew Macurdy, Co-Chair of the Firm’s Trial Practice Group, joined our New York office after serving as a prosecutor at every level of government in New Jersey and as Senior Counsel to the New Jersey Attorney General.

Schwanda Rountree, Co-Managing Partner of our Washington, DC office, joined us after serving as Deputy General Counsel, Labor and Litigation for the Department of Defense Office of General Counsel.

Thiru Vignarajah, Managing Partner of our Baltimore office, joined us after serving as law clerk to Justice Stephen Breyer, as a federal and city prosecutor in Baltimore, Maryland, as Maryland Deputy Attorney General, and as a partner at DLA Piper. Thiru is currently running for Mayor of Baltimore.

In addition to our new Partners, we have just announced significant additions:

Surabhi Dhar has rejoined the Firm as Of Counsel. Surabhi will work with our attorneys on international and SEC whistleblower matters, including those involving customs laws, misrepresentations by public companies, and bribery involving foreign governments. Dhar resides and works in India and will expand our overseas practice.

Paul Knight has joined the Firm as Of Counsel. Knight joins us after serving as Chief of Special Prosecutions in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Washington, DC and after serving as a partner and Of Counsel at Nossaman for the past three decades. While at Nossaman, Knight served for twelve years on the Washington, DC Board of Professional Responsibility.

Kristi Stahnke McGregor has joined the Firm as Of Counsel. McGregor joins us after spending 15 years with a prominent national plaintiffs’ class action firm based in New York,



Danielle Fuschetti



Felicia Gilbert



Schwanda Rountree



Leigh Anne St. Charles



Carolyn Guentert



Kate Mueiting



David Tracey



Nicole Wiitala



Brent Hannafan



Andrew Macurdy



Thiru Vignarajah



Surabhi Dhar



Paul Knight



Kristi Stahnke
McGregor

where she litigated SEC and ERISA class matters along with healthcare and mortgage fraud qui tam actions, data breach class cases, and financial fraud matters.

Sharon Kim has joined the Firm's New York office as Senior Litigation Counsel. Kim joins us after working as an attorney at Big Law firms, where she litigated complex matters including ERISA class, discrimination, excessive force, special education, housing, gun control and voting rights cases.

Shaun Rosenthal has rejoined the Firm as Of Counsel. Rosenthal will continue working on SEC whistleblowing and qui tam matters and ERISA class cases.

In addition to the new hires, we have recently promoted five Associates into the Senior Litigation Counsel role: **Sarah Chu**, **James Hannaway**, **Kate MacMullin**, **Cara Van Dorn**, and **Frank Xu**. We have promoted two fellows into the Associate role: **Ting Cheung** and **Christopher Owens**. And we have hired five new Associates: **Denise Choung**, **Dacey Romberg**, **Hilary Rosenthal**, **Maureen Slack**, and **Hampton Watson**.

Fourteen Fellows also joined our offices around the country this past year.

We have buttressed our internal operations with significant promotions and hires: **Alec Konstantin**, who started with the Firm in New York in 2016 and helped open our Nashville office in 2017, our Baltimore office in 2018, our Palo Alto office in 2022, and our New York and La Jolla offices in 2023, was promoted and named the Firm's first Chief Operations Officer in 2023; **Khali Jones**, who served as Human Resources Coordinator in 2023, was promoted to Director of Human Resources in October 2023; **Lori Awes** was recently hired to be the Firm's first Chief Marketing

Officer; **Michael Greene** was hired as the Firm's first Chief Financial Officer; **Erika Rigsby** was hired as the Firm's first Director of Talent Acquisition and Development; **Paul Brownfield** serves as the Firm's first Media and Financial Services Litigation Specialist; **Kiara Pagan** was recently hired as the Firm's Human Resources Coordinator; and **Clarissa David** was hired as the Firm's Bookkeeper. And the Firm has just announced that **Danya Rangachar**, who has served as a Legal Intake and Operations Specialist in the Nashville office and as a Senior Legal Assistant in the Washington, DC office, will become the Firm's first Chief of Staff later this year.

Finally, and significantly, we are among the most diverse law firms in America. Over 30 percent of our partners are people of color; almost half are female. Almost half of our non-partners are people of color; over 60 percent are female. Almost half of our staff are people of color; over 70 percent are female. And, firmwide, we have 113 people: Over 40 percent are people of color; over 60 percent are female.

I could not be more proud of this Firm's accomplishments during the past 20 years, the diversity of race, gender, and national origin reflected among all levels of attorneys and staff, and the overall passion, vision, and commitment demonstrated by everyone around the firm every day. I look forward to what this extraordinarily talented and passionate team of lawyers and staff will accomplish over the next 20 years as we continue to serve as private attorneys general, litigating and resolving public interest, social justice, and civil rights matters that add significant value to individuals, groups of individuals, and communities across the United States.



Sharon Kim



Shaun Rosenthal



Sarah Chu



James Hannaway



Kate MacMullin



Cara Van Dorn



Frank Xu



Ting Cheung



Christopher Owens



Denise Choung



Dacey Romberg



Hilary Rosenthal



Maureen Slack



Hampton Watson



Alec Konstantin



Khali Jones



Lori Awes



Michael Greene



Erika Rigsby



Paul Brownfield



Kiara Pagan



Clarissa David



Danya Rangachar

Practice Area Highlights

Notable Litigation Successes

In re: GE ERISA: On March 7, 2024, a federal court in Massachusetts granted final approval of a record \$61 million settlement of a nationwide class action lawsuit originally filed by Sanford Heisler Sharp in 2017 against General Electric (“GE”) under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (“ERISA”). Led by San Diego Managing Partner and Financial Services Practice Group Chair **Charles Field**, the lawsuit is believed to have resulted in the largest-ever settlement of an ERISA case alleging a company failed to offer any alternative investments to the company’s own proprietary, under-performing mutual funds. Chairman **David Sanford**, Co-Vice Chairman **Kevin Sharp**, Firm Managing Partner **David Tracey**, Of Counsel **Shaun Rosenthal**, and Associate **David McNamee** also served as counsel for the plaintiffs. Charles Field was interviewed about the settlement by [401\(k\) Specialist](#) magazine.



Charles Field



David Sanford



Kevin Sharp



David Tracey



Shaun Rosenthal



David McNamee

Graham Chase Robinson v. Robert De Niro and Canal Productions: On November 9, 2023, after an eight-day trial in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, a jury found Canal Productions (“Canal”) liable for gender discrimination and retaliation under the New York City Human Rights Law and awarded Ms. Robinson \$1.26 million in damages. The jury also rejected Canal’s counterclaims of conversion, breach of fiduciary duty, and breach of the duty of loyalty. Firm Chairman **David Sanford**, Co-Vice Chairman **Jeremy Heisler**, Nashville Partner and Trial Practice Group Co-Chair **Brent Hannafan**, New York Partner and Trial Practice Group Co-Chair **Andrew Macurdy**, Washington, DC Co-Managing Partner **Vince McKnight**, New York Partner **Andrew Melzer**, New York Partner **Melinda Koster**, Senior Litigation Counsel **Kate MacMullin**, and Associate **Michael Lockman** represented Ms. Robinson. Visit our [website](#) for more details about the matter’s trial and verdict.



David Sanford



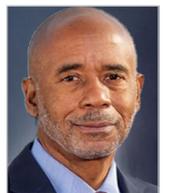
Jeremy Heisler



Brent Hannafan



Andrew Macurdy



H. Vincent McKnight, Jr.



Andrew Melzer



Melinda Koster



Kate MacMullin



Michael Lockman

Mayor and City of Baltimore v. Polymer80, et al.: On February 21, 2024, the City of Baltimore reached a settlement with Polymer80 that prohibits one of the nation’s largest manufacturers of easy-to-assemble gun kits, or so-called “ghost guns,” from selling or advertising its products in the state of Maryland. The lawsuit, in which Sanford Heisler Sharp served as co-counsel with the Baltimore City Department of Law and the Brady Campaign, alleged that Polymer80 created a public health crisis in the city due to the proliferation of ghost



Brent Hannafan



James Hannaway



Albert Powell



Paul Winston-Cange



Carrie Mutombo

guns used in violent crime. The settlement included \$1.2 million in damages. Nashville Partner and Trial Practice Group Co-Chair **Brent Hannafan**, Senior Litigation Counsel **James Hannaway**, Staff Attorney **Albert Powell**, and Tom Henderson Civil Rights Fellows **Paul Winston-Cange** and **Carrie Mutombo** served as co-counsel for the City of Baltimore. James Hannaway spoke about the case to Baltimore’s [WBAL-TV](#).

Fogg v. Garland: In September 2023, Sanford Heisler Sharp and the U.S. Marshals Service (“USMS”) received preliminary approval for a \$15 million settlement in a nearly 30-year long racial discrimination complaint alleging the USMS discriminated against African Americans in its promotions, recruitment, and hiring policies for Deputy U.S. Marshals positions. As part of the settlement, the USMS agreed to institute significant programmatic reforms to its hiring practices. The race discrimination complaint was originally filed in 1994; Sanford Heisler Sharp Chairman **David Sanford** became lead counsel for the plaintiffs in 2004. The late Sanford Heisler Sharp Partner **Tom Henderson**, in whose name the firm established the Tom Henderson Civil Rights Fellowship for junior attorneys, was also instrumental in leading the litigation. *Fogg v. Garland* overcame numerous legal hurdles and appeals to win class certification from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”). The class encompasses all past, current, and prospective African American Deputy U.S. Marshals from January 23, 1994, through the present. The class is also represented by Washington, DC Partner **Saba Bireda**; Washington, DC and Baltimore Partner **Christine Dunn**; Firm Administrative Partner **Kate Mueting**; Palo Alto Partner **Felicia Gilbert**, Of Counsel **Shaun Rosenthal**, Senior Litigation Counsel **James Hannaway**, and Tom Henderson Civil Rights Fellows **Shannon Henris** and **Erica Roberts**. In 2022, *The Washington Post* published an investigation of Sanford Heisler Sharp’s class action lawsuit against the Marshals Service. Read it [here](#).



David Sanford



Tom Henderson



Saba Bireda



Christine Dunn



Kate Mueting



Felicia Gilbert



Shaun Rosenthal



James Hannaway



Shannon Henris



Erica Roberts

Current Impact Litigation

Mattson, et al. v. Milliman: On February 9, 2024, a federal court in Washington ruled against consulting firm Milliman’s motion for summary judgment of an [ERISA class action](#) brought by Sanford Heisler Sharp on behalf of some 4,300 employees who allege they lost tens of millions of dollars in retirement savings due to Milliman’s decade-long failure to remove risky target date funds from its retirement plan. The matter went to trial in April. San Diego Managing Partner and Financial Services Practice Group Chair **Charles Field**, Firm Chairman **David Sanford**, Firm Co-Vice Chairman **Kevin Sharp**, Nashville Partner and Trial Practice Group Co-Chair **Brent Hannafan**, Firm Administrative Partner **Kate Mueting**, Of Counsel **Bob Sullivan**, Senior Litigation Counsel **Sharon Kim**, and Associates **Denise Choung**, **David McNamee**, and **Hampton Watson** represent the plaintiffs.



Charles Field



David Sanford



Kevin Sharp



Brent Hannafan



Kate Mueting



Bob Sullivan



Sharon Kim



Denise Choung



David McNamee



Hampton Watson

Snyder v. UnitedHealth Group, Inc.: On March 12, 2024, a federal court in Minnesota denied the majority of a motion for summary judgment by UnitedHealth Group, Inc. (“UnitedHealth”), paving the way for trial in an [ERISA suit](#) brought by Sanford Heisler Sharp on behalf of a class of some 150,000 participants in UnitedHealth’s 401(k) plan. The Complaint alleges, among other things, that UnitedHealth Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer John Rex personally intervened to prevent the removal of a poorly performing Wells Fargo Target Fund Suite from the retirement plan because Wells Fargo was a critical customer of and financier for UnitedHealth. San Diego Managing Partner and Financial Services Practice Group Chair **Charles Field**, Nashville Managing Partner **Leigh Anne St. Charles**, Nashville Partner and Trial Practice Group Co-Chair **Brent Hannafan**, Firm Chairman **David Sanford**, Firm Co-Vice Chairman **Kevin Sharp**, Associates **David McNamee** and **Hilary Rosenthal**, and Tom Henderson Civil Rights Fellow **Shannon Henris** represent the plaintiffs.



Charles Field



Leigh Anne St. Charles



Brent Hannafan



David Sanford



Kevin Sharp



David McNamee



Hilary Rosenthal



Shannon Henris

Huskey, et al. v. State Farm Fire & Casualty: Sanford Heisler Sharp is co-lead counsel in a [class action lawsuit](#) alleging that State Farm Fire & Casualty (“State Farm”) violates the Fair Housing Act (“FHA”) through its use of algorithmic decision-making tools in claims processing, which disproportionately impacts Black policyholders by flagging their claims for greater scrutiny than those of white policyholders, causing delays in urgent repairs and in the payment of benefits. Firm Managing Partner and Public Interest Litigation Practice Group Co-Chair **David Tracey**, Senior Litigation Counsel **Sharon Kim**, Staff Attorney **Albert Powell**, and Tom Henderson Civil Rights Fellows **Paul Winston-Cange** and **Emma Stanton** represent the plaintiffs.



David Tracey



Sharon Kim



Albert Powell



Paul Winston-Cange



Emma Stanton

FTCA Complaints against the U.S. Army and the U.S. Department of Defense: Sanford Heisler Sharp has filed Federal Torts Claims Act (“FTCA”) complaints on behalf of 11 victims of Dr. Michael Stockin, a former Army doctor who has been criminally charged for sexually abusing at least 41 soldiers and veterans in his care at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington. [The FTCA complaints](#), the first step toward filing a lawsuit for individuals with claims against agencies of the federal government, allege that the Army was negligent in hiring, supervising, and retaining Dr. Stockin, and negligent in protecting the victims from his abuse. The plaintiffs are represented by **Christine Dunn** and **Carolin Guentert**, Partners and Co-Chairs of the Sexual Violence, Title IX, and Victims’ Rights Practice Group, and Tom Henderson Civil Rights Fellow **Jillian Seymour**. Christine Dunn discussed the case on the news outlet [Spotlight on America](#).



Christine Dunn



Carolin Guentert



Jillian Seymour

Attorney Spotlight Q&A: Sharon Kim



Sharon Kim

Sharon Kim is a Senior Litigation Counsel in our New York office. [Her practice encompasses](#) financial services litigation, public interest litigation, victims' rights work, and employment discrimination and retaliation matters. Sharon was named the Charles F.C. Ruff Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year during her time at Covington & Burling, and she received a Pro Bono Publico Award from the Legal Aid Society. Sharon graduated from Harvard Law School, where she was afforded the privilege of representing clients as a student attorney in criminal justice and special education cases. Sharon also earned her B.A., summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, at Harvard. During her free time, Sharon reads and writes poetry.

Q: What inspired you to pursue a career in public interest and civil rights law?

Sharon: I studied human rights and post-genocide studies during my time at Harvard and decided to attend law school to pursue public interest work after spending a year with inspiring and fearless mentors at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. Certain life circumstances arose that propelled me in a different direction as I endeavored to uphold and live by the following line from Ron Padgett's poem "How to Be Perfect": "Take care of things close to home first. Straighten up your room before you save the world. Then save the world." But, along the way, I was given valuable opportunities to pursue pro bono work and continue fighting for the causes I cherished – while meeting some great colleagues and friends along the way. It is a true gift to now be able to pursue civil rights and public interest work full-time, especially with those who are smart, sharp, and, most importantly, full of heart.

Q: What has been the most rewarding moment in your career so far?

Sharon: Prior to joining Sanford Heisler Sharp, I was afforded the opportunity to spearhead and contribute to two cases that were markedly different from each other but led to outcomes that affirmed to me how law could in fact be used to repair injustices, hold wrongdoers accountable, and speak truth to power, when and as necessary. In one of those cases, I had the privilege of representing a former apartment superintendent who was summarily terminated after she had notified her employer of her pregnancy where performance was used as pretext. Not only were we able to secure monetary relief that enabled our client to start a new chapter with her family, we were also able to convince the court to impose sanctions against her employer for dilatory conduct that continued into the case as it was being litigated. In the other case, I served as a key member of a team that represented the trustees of a nurses' pension plan against the plan's former investment manager for violations of ERISA when it had entered into self-

dealing arrangements with the plan. The efforts made in that case to prove and expose the truth of arrangements that had been entered into by the fiduciary for its own financial gain left a lasting impression on me, and I am grateful to be able to continue the work of fighting against such misconduct and beyond with our team.

Q: What are you currently working on and why do you see it as important?

Sharon: I have been part of a tremendous team that is spearheading efforts in *Mattson et al v. Milliman*, where trial started in April in the Western District of Washington. Our case involves breaches that have arisen from ERISA fiduciaries' disloyal and imprudent conduct and decisions made over the management and monitoring of investments in the company's 401(k) defined contribution plan designed for its employees. This case and others similarly situated are important for two reasons (among others). **First**, 401(k) plans exist as the main if not sole source of income for millions of Americans after years of working in the nation's economy, and all detriment associated with the underperformance of investments in retirement plans is borne directly by the plans' participants. Our lived reality affirms the need to preserve robust safeguards so that fiduciaries act in proper respect of the trust bestowed to them, and congressional intent dictates that the duties arising under ERISA be regarded as the highest known to the law so that the interests of employees are fully – rightfully – protected. **Second**, there must be robust efforts to uphold and prioritize corporate accountability – to, *inter alia*, create and preserve a world where conflicts of interest are taken seriously and the pursuit of corporate profits at the expense of all else is disallowed and remedied effectively when it occurs. ERISA's bright light, should it continue to shine bright, ensures that the best interests of plan participants are prioritized first and foremost as powerful interests are held responsible for their misconduct and abuse of authority in the spirit of total mutuality.

Awards and Recognitions



David Sanford

Firm Chairman **David Sanford** has been selected to the inaugural *Forbes* [America's Top 200 Lawyers](#) list. The peer-reviewed list, chosen from among thousands of candidates, represents "lawyers with stellar track records in their specialties, those who have broken barriers to emerge as leaders in their fields, and attorneys most respected by peers and clients," the magazine wrote.

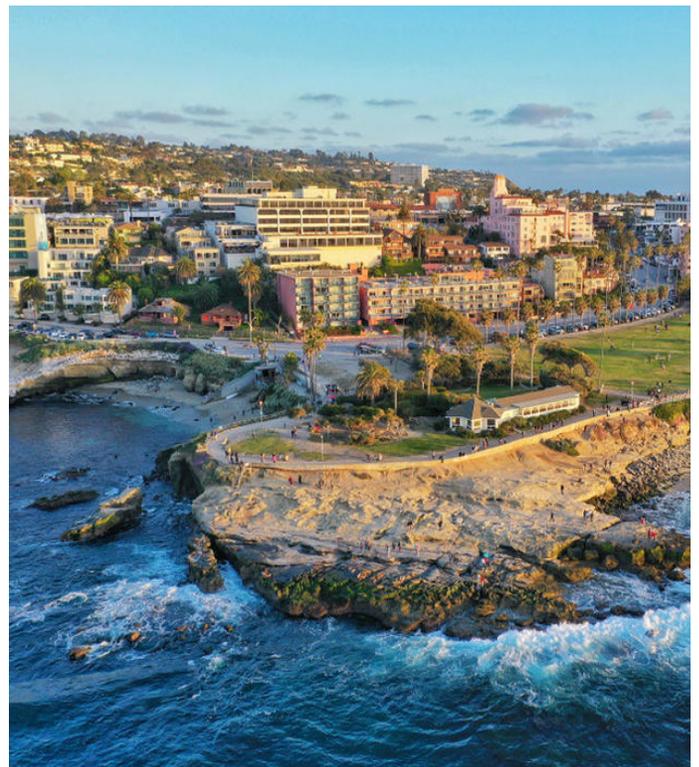
David was also named a finalist for 2024 Labor & Employment Litigator of the Year by *Benchmark Litigation*. David has previously been recognized as Labor & Employment Attorney of the Year in 2019 and 2021; was one of three lawyers in the U.S. named as Attorney of the Year Finalist in 2018 by *The American Lawyer*; and was inducted into the *National Law Journal's* Elite Trial Lawyers Hall of Fame.

Expanding the Firm's Presence

Sanford Heisler Sharp is pleased to share that we have expanded our operations in New York City and San Diego with two new, larger office locations.

[Our New York Office](#) is now located in lower Manhattan at 17 State Street, Suite 3700, New York, NY 10004.

In San Diego, [our office](#) is now located in La Jolla, at 7911 Herschel Avenue, Suite 300, La Jolla, CA 92037.





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