

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

King & Spalding celebrates growth with photo contest

By Nicole Tyau
Daily Journal Staff Writer

On the 16th floor of the U.S. Bank building in downtown Los Angeles, King & Spalding LLP is establishing roots.

“The firm was historically a southeast crescent firm based in Atlanta, and they made a strategic decision to become something bigger and better,” said King & Spalding managing partner Peter Strotz. “Growth in California was important to the firm.”

The expansion into a new office also generated an unfamiliar decorating idea. King & Spalding launched a photography contest among its staff. The premise was to capture Southern California through a lens and feature the best photos as artwork in the new office.

“We don’t spend money unnecessarily, so we’re always looking for ways to do things in a cost-efficient way,” Strotz said. “We thought, ‘What better way to combine a cost-efficient approach with what is best about L.A. and what is best about the creativity and resourcefulness of the people that work for us than to use photos as art?’”

Staff members, associates and partners submitted 79 photos for their colleagues to vote on. Strotz said he didn’t anticipate such an enthusiastic response but is glad the photography contest continued to foster King &

Spalding’s environment of collaboration.

“I love winning cases. There is no better feeling than that, but wins come and wins go,” Strotz said. “This is meaningful because this is enduring and giving people not just a place to come to work but a career, a trajectory, an opportunity to create something that’s going to last beyond the time that they’re here with us.”

Strotz has witnessed firsthand the meteoric rise of the firm’s Los Angeles presence. He was there when it started as a small practice in 2011 with three people working out of a tiny sublease. Watching the resulting growth over the past eight years has been extremely rewarding, Strotz said.

King & Spalding’s expansion accelerated in recent years with the addition of several practice area teams to the Los Angeles office, including and environmental practice headed by Peter Hsiao. Under his guidance, the practice has grown to 12 partners and 21 counsel and associates and is still looking to expand.

“Our growth trajectory continues straight up, and it’s because we’re in California,” Hsiao said. “The environment is so important to the citizens of California, and this is one of the places where we see tremendous growth in a cutting-edge area of the law.”

In fitting form for an environmental attorney, Hsiao submit-



Courtesy of Stacy L. Foster

Stacy L. Foster, an associate in King & Spalding’s mass tort and toxic tort and product liability practices, took this shot of Santa Monica pier in June.

ted a photo to King & Spalding’s contest that was taken by a former colleague. It captures the U.S. Bank tower from a neighboring skyscraper along with the Pasadena mountains in the background. A rainbow stretches beyond the horizon, a marvel Hsiao described as a feat of physics created by the tremendous height of the buildings.

“I like it because it symbolizes the intersection of our legal practice and the environment that we live in and that all of us are seeking to preserve,” Hsiao said.

Blythe Kochsiek, an associate in King & Spalding’s special matters and government investigations practice, has been snapping photos since middle school. She described herself as an artsy kid from a family of lawyers who used photography and the law as creative outlets. Naturally, the King &

Spalding’s photography contest piqued her interest.

“I thought it’s just a really cool way to not only ... bring the entire office together but also to show how diverse Los Angeles is and really exhibit that,” Kochsiek said. “It has a more meaningful connection in our shared space as opposed to just photos of things that aren’t as meaningful to people.”

Strotz said he and the rest of the firm’s leadership were delighted with the attorneys and staff members who submitted so many photos.

“We get to see what people can do from a creative standpoint,” Strotz said. “And they can take pride in doing something that’s going to be hanging on the walls here for generations to come.”

nicole_tyau@dailyjournal.com