

DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN BUSINESS



BROWN BATTLES BIG CASES IN HIGH COURTS

► WINNER: LAW

JESSICA BROWN

Title: Partner

Company: Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Location: Denver

ination case that sought billions in damages for 1.5 million current and former female Wal-Mart Stores employees.

Brown represented Wal-Mart in the case, which eventually went to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2011, the Supreme Court ruled in Wal-Mart's favor, essentially saying that it was impossible to prove that every current or former female employee of the retail giant was the victim of discrimination.

With that case, Brown gained significant experience in large-scale electronic discovery, which she used to join the team representing Swiss financial giant UBS in the case involving the alleged manipulation of the LIBOR (London Interbank Offer Rate) rate, the benchmark used for short-term interest rates globally.

The case and subsequent investigations are ongoing, and she continues to represent UBS, assisting the bank in cooperating with government regulators.

In her "spare" time, Brown has been a leader in associations, this year taking the helm as president of the Colorado Women's Bar Association. At CWBA, she created the Moms Luncheon, an event that aims to support working moms through sharing common challenges and interests.

Brown also has served for several years on the board of the Legal Aid Foundation, the fundraising arm of Colorado Legal Services, which provides free civil legal services to low-income Coloradans.

She chaired the board until July, and under her leadership, the foundation's annual fundraising event revenue rose 13 percent this year to a record \$1.74 million.

"The thing that strikes me and inspires me when I look at her is the balance she has achieved," said Diana Poole, executive director of the Legal Aid Foundation. "She is operating at the top of her field, has a family and is very engaged with them, yet she also has the time to take her leadership skills and use them for the good of the community."

BY HEATHER DRAPER
Special to the Business Journal
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Opting out was never an option for Gibson Dunn partner Jessica Brown, who has built a practice that works on some of the highest-profile corporate cases in the world.

She wants to keep other female attorneys from leaving the notoriously stressful profession as well.

Brown became one of the first female partners in the Denver office of Gibson Dunn 13 years ago, and has been advocating for women ever since.

A working mom herself, she wants to eliminate the oft-repeated expression in law that "every new mom is one bad day away from quitting."

"I really do encourage women to take a longer-range perspective," she said. "I want to help keep women in the game so they can stay long enough to excel."

Since joining Gibson Dunn in 1995, Brown has not only developed innovative ways to keep working moms in the profession, but also has led the charge to expand the firm's labor and employment practice in Denver.

She developed an interest in employment law after clerking for the late Jim Carrigan, a former

IF SHE COULD HAVE A SUPERPOWER IT WOULD BE:

"I would love the ability to teleport. I do a lot of business travel, including internationally, so that would be much easier if I could teleport. I could bounce back and see my kids before they go to bed and head overseas again if necessary."

U.S. District Court judge and Colorado Supreme Court justice.

"I didn't take a single employment law class in college, but 40 percent of the federal docket in Colorado, at least at that time, was employment law cases," she said.

The Denver office of Gibson Dunn had no employment lawyers when she started, so Brown reached out to partners in other offices to work with them on employment law matters, relocating to Orange County for several months to learn from a senior employment law partner there.

As her career progressed, she went from handling mostly single-plaintiff discrimination, harassment and retaliation cases to working on more complex matters, such as trade secret and class-action lawsuits.

For several years, she worked on the largest employment discrimination class-action lawsuit in history – *Dukes v. Wal-Mart*, a gender discrim-