

McGlinchey's South Florida Head On Joining Women Leaders

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With her appointment as managing member of McGlinchey Stafford PLLC's South Florida shop, **Kerry Ann Cummings** has joined the ranks of women who make up a majority of firm office leaders.

"They're a fantastic group of women as a whole and they're strong, amazing people and great lawyers who have a positive impact on the firm," Cummings said. "I am truly honored to be a part of this group."

Cummings was promoted to member in January after nearly a decade with the firm, and just a few months later, McGlinchey Stafford selected her to lead the Fort Lauderdale team of eight attorneys and several others who work remotely or in a hybrid model for the firm in the South Florida region.

Cummings is a commercial litigator who primarily represents financial institutions in a broad array of matters involving mortgage foreclosures, creditors' rights, real estate and title issues, according to her firm bio.

And while the office as a whole is focused on commercial litigation, including bankruptcy, reorganization, creditors' rights, consumer finance and real estate, Cummings said she and the firm are working to diversify in South Florida and expand what they offer clients.

Law360 Pulse recently caught up with Cummings to talk about her new role and plans for the office. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What made you want to take on this role?

I wanted to continue to foster the collaborative team effort and the all-around positive focus that is the energy in this office. We have a fantastic group of people and a lot of us have worked together for numerous years. We are like a family. And it's not limited to Fort Lauderdale. I work with people in all of our offices across the nation. We are collaborative here locally and it also spreads across the firm as a whole. I want to be part of carrying this

into the future. I also wanted to give the people in this office and South Florida a voice within the firm, and I can be pretty loud.

Everyone here is a professional who knows what they're doing. I would say my management style is relaxed; there is no micromanaging here. We all bounce ideas off each other all the time, and if anyone Kerry Ann Cummings needs help, there are people here and across the firm for that. I think it's important to have an office atmosphere where everyone feels like they're part of the team, part of a family, and that's what McGlinchey offers.

Can you talk about your plans for the office?

My focus this year is on growth mode. I want to round out the office with more comprehensive service offerings but also find people who complement the collaborative culture we have and who will fit in well with the great group of folks we have here.

The firm's goal is to diversify our practices outside of financial services, which has always been our bread and butter. We're looking for intellectual property, labor and employment and corporate real estate attorneys. We're not just looking for in-the-office people, we've embraced remote work here. We're looking for folks all throughout Florida, self-sufficient people.

We're not limiting our search to a particular practice area. We're a business litigation firm, but we also deal with compliance and insurance matters. Basically anything that complements the practices we have here. We're ready to welcome new attorneys with arms open wide.

What sets the firm apart from other firms that have moved into the state?

I think it's the group of people we have here. Everyone is good at their jobs and have great reputations. We get a lot of our clients through word of mouth. The culture here really does set us apart. We work so well together across the firm, whether you're here in Florida, in Louisiana, Tennessee. There is a lot of support and collaboration and personally, I consider many of my colleagues my friends and like family.

The atmosphere here in the office really makes it a nice place to come into work. We enjoy each other. It's a great place. As a manager, I think it's important to appreciate your people and listen to them, not just listen, but really hear them. We've built a family atmosphere here, and it makes for a nice workweek.

Can you talk about the firm's commitment to diversity?

Diversity is very important to the firm, and as the years have passed, it's become more of a focus. It opens people up to different cultures, different situations and an array of different ideas and perspectives. Our clients are diverse, so we should be diverse.

McGlinchey's commitment to diversity is really there, it's not just on a piece of paper. Somewhere between 70% and 80% of the firm's office managing partners are women. They're a fantastic group of women as a whole, and they're strong, amazing people and great lawyers who have a positive impact on the firm. I am truly honored to be a part of this group.

I haven't seen anyone push back on seeking to have diversity in the 10 years I've been at the firm. McGlinchey has always been diverse and embraced that diversity. The truth is, honestly, everyone is just lovely here.

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