

ABA Journal Profiles Janet Goelz Hoffman

July 28, 2022

As part of the "Members Who Inspire" series, the *ABA Journal* featured Janet Goelz Hoffman, senior counsel and pro bono counsel, and her transition to serving at Katten as a pro bono leader and mentor. Janet has a longstanding commitment to pro bono service, dating back to her law school days at Northwestern, where she spent time with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services.

Prior to her retirement as a partner in 2021, she focused on succession planning for the firm and her clients, pairing clients with attorneys who had similar personalities, work styles and appreciation for their missions. Janet stated, "These not-for-profits are mission-driven organizations, and they make their decisions not only based on the economics of the decision but how it aligns with their mission. Sometimes those decisions aren't the same ones that a for-profit entity would make. I tried to match people who would be, if not sympathetic to the mission, understanding of it and willing to think about those sorts of issues."

Additionally, Janet worked with Katten's director of pro bono services, Jonathan Baum, to transition into a pro bono counsel role that provides opportunities to help organizations while mentoring attorneys. She noted, "[The firm was] very enthusiastic. I think they saw the benefit of that kind of mentorship, and it gives us an opportunity to take on much more complex transactional pro bono on a more consistent basis." Jonathan strongly agreed, stating, "In addition to her analytical ability and her warmth, she has this wealth of experience. She's worked with hundreds of nonprofits over the years. One of the things that makes her such an asset, both to the clients and the people she's mentoring, is there is probably nothing that a nonprofit has experienced that she hasn't seen before."

For Janet, pro bono work and not-for-profit board service is deeply personal. "Board service gives me perspective on the operations and governance issues of a not-for-profit that has informed my professional advice to clients. Sometimes the most tidy legal solution isn't the best path for a not-for-profit. Serving on boards has helped me understand the need to marry our legal advice with sensitivity and support for the core mission of each of my not-for-profit clients."

["Succession Planning: In retirement, Janet Goelz Hoffman supports nonprofits through pro bono and mentoring," ABA Journal, August 1, 2022](#)

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