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Katten Names Three Mentoring Awards Recipients

(NEW YORK) Katten announced today the firm recognized three individuals — General Counsel Michael I. Verde, Associate Alexander C. Kim, and Conference and Event Services Supervisor Jessica Berger, who are all based in the New York office — with the 2025 John P. Sieger Excellence in Mentoring Awards.

The annual awards were established in 2022 to honor the firm’s late Insolvency and Restructuring practice Chair and longtime Partner John P. Sieger, who demonstrated an exceptional commitment to mentoring and developing talent and shaped the careers of many attorneys at Katten.

“Naming these awards for John was meant to be and is the highest compliment to him. Mentoring is core to who we are as a firm. It’s a vital part of our culture, it’s vital to the professional growth of our attorneys and our business professionals,” said Chair Gil Soffer. “Everyone who’s had a good mentor, not to mention a great mentor like John, knows how consequential it can be and knows what a defining moment it can be in their careers.”

Internal selection committees reviewed the nominations and selected the recipients based on the impact of their mentorship and their commitment to supporting, inspiring, teaching and engaging attorneys and business professionals through mentoring.

Last week, the awards ceremony was held announcing the winners.

Verde has been a partner at Katten since 1999 and is the General Counsel.

“Mike is an exemplary leader in this firm. He is principled, consistent and listens carefully before deciding on a course of action. Mike carries out those traits with a natural warmth and humor,” according to a colleague.

In accepting his award, Verde pointed to the ethos of the firm that Sieger helped create. “Katten is a pretty special place. I was raised within this firm that you treat people with respect and you

help them. And so, I've always lived by that," Verde said. "It speaks more to the firm than to me."

For more than four years, Kim has been an associate in the Financial Markets and Regulation practice, where he advises some of the largest and most prominent digital asset trading platforms and blockchain technology companies. Aside from his work counseling financial services industry participants, he is a frequent thought leadership contributor, speaker at key industry conferences, and co-chair of the firm's Asian American Pacific Islander Affinity Group, which plays a vital role in cultivating a culture of belonging and inclusion at the firm.

"Alex's ability to empathize and his patience in explaining not only how to develop a great work product but also how to develop oneself set him apart from his peers. He is incredibly approachable regarding difficult topics and provides sound advice for how to thrive in this work environment," according to one mentee.

Kim dedicated the award to his mentors who have taken an interest in his success at Katten. "To me, mentoring is not just about professional development or teaching someone something. It is about showing up for one another when nobody is looking, over and over and over again," he said.

In her events supervisor role, Berger, who joined the firm in 2023, is often the first point of contact for new hires in the New York office, and coordinates client-facing events and meetings.

"Jessie leads with empathy, shows genuine care for people and their growth, and fosters a supportive, inclusive environment where everyone feels like they belong. What is most impactful is the way she mentors without ego. She is always approachable and encouraging, and never makes anyone feel small," according to her colleague.

Berger said hearing about Sieger's legacy, particularly how he uplifted others, made an impact on her. "I'm so grateful to be part of a community that celebrates all the large and small ways that we can support those around us and puts time and energy into showing how actions — big, small and those that we even think are inconsequential — can really influence our culture."

Nearly 50 Katten attorneys and business professionals were nominated for this year's awards — a testament to how strongly mentorship is valued at the firm.

"Mentoring isn't something that happens only in a meeting or formal setting — it's reflected in how we show up for one another every day," said Katten CEO Noah Heller. "There's no greater joy than seeing someone you believe in succeed and surpass your own expectations. That spirit is one of the many reasons why Katten is such a special place to practice and work."

Katten is a full-service law firm with approximately 700 attorneys in locations across the United States and in London and Shanghai. Clients seeking sophisticated, high-value legal services turn to Katten for counsel locally, nationally and internationally. The firm's core areas of practice include corporate, financial markets and funds, insolvency and restructuring, intellectual property, litigation, real estate, structured finance and securitization, transactional tax planning, private credit and private wealth. Katten represents public and private companies in numerous industries, as well as a number of government and nonprofit organizations and individuals. For more information, visit katten.com.

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