

## 2020 in Perspective: A Consequential Year

Each year at this time, we share with you insights gained across our practices over the past 12 months. It's our way of showing you the depth of our capabilities and creativity of our attorneys. A way to assure you that you are in good hands with Katten.

But 2020 was no ordinary year. It would take a book to capture the challenges met, lessons learned and insights gained. However, we know no one has time for a lengthy discourse, as we all continue to tackle the formidable challenges that remain in front of us.

Instead, we offer this brief review to share perspectives we have gained after being tested, as you were tested, by a perfect storm of illness, economic shock, a widespread recognition of the depths of racism in our society, and social unrest.

The tests were many and tough. But we fought through and, in the process, changed as a firm. We learned that our people are even more resilient, capable and compassionate than we knew. We remain the firm you have known and trusted. But we are a decidedly different and (we believe) better law firm than a year ago.

Our challenges paled in comparison to those faced by the heroes of 2020 — the nurses and doctors, grocery clerks, first responders and other frontline workers who risked illness and death to care for and support the rest of society. And, if we are honest, our challenges were unevenly shared as well, as bigotry, racism and the impact of the pandemic continued to cause a disproportionate amount of harm and hurt to our Black and Brown colleagues, friends and fellow citizens.

### Assisting With COVID-19 Response

Like many, we provided essential services. We helped clients cope with traumatic disruptions to their businesses. We showed them how to rearrange and preserve critical employee, customer and supplier relationships. We helped them keep up with (and adapt to) fast-changing regulations.

We were trusted advisers when trust was at a premium.

As we look back, we are gratified by the many ways our knowledge and experience were harnessed to assist with COVID-19. We published scores of advisories to keep our clients up to date on rapidly changing circumstances. We helped one client create a company to produce ventilators; another to engineer a public/private partnership to open hundreds of COVID-19 testing sites. We showed many how to handle government PPP loans when a borrower was acquired. We helped hospitals and doctors develop telehealth services. We also were at the forefront as the pandemic's wildfire-like spread caused many to confront their mortality and prioritize estate planning.

### A Closer, More Personal Firm

We did these things and more while adapting to a truly virtual practice of law.

While we were well along in support of remote working, we never expected — nor planned — to move, in just a few days, our operations, 1,300 people, and thousands of client relationships, from our offices to our homes.

It was an incredible feat. It speaks to the can-do attitude of our attorneys and the impressive skills of our business professional staff. To a great extent, these operational challenges remained behind the scenes when dealing with clients — except for the occasional children's drawing (or child) showing up in the background as we worked from home.

This shift brought our people closer and helped us see each other in the broader context of our lives. We saw those drawings and kids much more frequently on our internal video calls. We talked of the challenges of homeschooling, day care ... and ... no day care.

Somehow, it all came together. It worked.

As it worked, we saw in stark relief why so many young parents (more often mothers) leave the practice of law. We saw with greater clarity what it will take to address the needs of working parents and achieve the goals we have set for ourselves to draw on more women (and members of other under-represented groups) for our leadership roles.

So, with renewed determination, we launched a new six-part "boot camp" series to offer practical business development training and support to women in all stages of their careers. We also created a Parents Affinity Group focused on the challenges of balancing work, childcare, homeschooling and everything else in the busy life of a working parent.

### Commitment to Fighting Racism

We at Katten have long been recognized for our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We were honored with more awards in 2020. But the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and too many others caused us to rethink our approach.

We have been active, but insufficiently activist. We have not done enough to make our attorneys and business professionals not only aware of but energized to take action to combat the pervasive acts of racism that Black people routinely encounter in their everyday lives.

We cannot be silent or passive.

To that end, we conducted internal "listening circles" where we shared personal and professional experiences of racism to build awareness and empathy among colleagues and enlist each other as allies in the fight to overcome this scourge. We became a founding member of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance, with its goal of identifying and dismantling structural, systemic racism using pro bono resources. We also formalized an employee matching program to support organizations with an anti-racism agenda.

There is much to be done. We are committed to doing all we can to see that it is done.

### Gratitude for Your Confidence

In closing, increased clarity is always one of the benefits of hindsight. 2020 is over. It was a difficult, even tragic, year for far too many of our friends and fellow citizens. But if we measure our experience in 2020 by what we learned and gained, and not simply by what we suffered and lost, it was a remarkable year of consequence as well. We will build upon what we learned. We will continue to change where our changes are for the better.

We hope Katten was helpful as you navigated your own challenges. We are ever grateful for your trust in our counsel. Thank you for your confidence in Katten.

Sincerely,



Roger P. Furey  
Chairman

Noah S. Heller  
Chief Executive Officer