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Announcing ...

SNELL & WILMER PARTNER PATRICIA LEE REFO BECOMES PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Refo is Second ABA President From Arizona in Organization's 142-Year History

PHOENIX (August 5, 2020) – Snell & Wilmer is pleased to announce that [Patricia Lee Refo](#) has been sworn in as the 144th president of the American Bar Association. Refo is the second Arizona-based attorney and 10th woman to be elected ABA president.

“I am honored to serve the ABA’s members and walk in the footsteps of so many legal giants,” Refo said. “This moment presents a unique opportunity to advance the ABA’s mission and lead the profession in finding new tools all attorneys can use to better serve their clients. Now, more than ever, our nation’s lawyers will step up to help solve the challenges we face.”



Patricia Lee Refo

Refo, who has been an attorney at Snell & Wilmer for 24 years, became the first ABA president to be sworn in virtually, accepting the honor by video from the porch of the Sandra Day O’Connor House in Tempe due to safety concerns caused by the pandemic. She was sworn in by Arizona’s Judge Mary Schroeder, the first woman to serve as Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, on the patio of the home of Arizona’s Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court.

“Focusing on the legal needs of our nation stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic will remain a top priority for the ABA under my leadership,” Refo said. “We will continue our work to address the pandemic and its impact on our justice system. The legal needs arising out of the pandemic are incalculable – in evictions, foreclosures, bankruptcies, domestic violence and so many other matters. At the same time, we will help lawyers and our justice system to adapt to this new virtual environment.”

Refo will also help lead the organization in redoubling its efforts to advance racial equity and reinforce equal treatment under law for all persons, without regard to race, gender or any other impermissible factors. Under her guidance, the ABA will also help America vote in November and encourage lawyers to serve as poll workers and in other roles to protect the integrity of the election. Additionally, Refo will oversee the ABA’s continued support of the rule of law around the world.

Refo has held numerous leadership roles in her decades with the ABA, including serving as chair of the organization’s policymaking House of Delegates, the second highest ranking elected official of the organization, from 2014 to 2016. She has also served as chair of the ABA’s largest practice group, the Section of Litigation, as well as chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Membership, the American Jury Project, and the Association’s grassroots advocacy activity, ABA Day in Washington. Refo was also a member of the ABA Commission on Civic Education and the Separation of Powers. She is the 10th female ABA president and fifth in the past six years.

“Over her career, Trish has worked tirelessly to develop and advance the ABA’s key goals and initiatives,” said Matt Feeney, chair of Snell & Wilmer. “The ABA continues to address a range of difficult and complex issues facing our profession, our country, and our global community, including those relating to access to justice, the need for an independent judiciary, and systemic racism. During these unprecedented times, I

cannot think of anyone more prepared, qualified, and determined than Trish to embrace those challenges and to help drive tangible solutions. We congratulate her on this outstanding achievement.”

At Snell & Wilmer in Phoenix, Refo concentrates on complex commercial litigation and internal investigations. She chairs the firm’s Professional Liability Litigation Group.

Refo has served on the Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Evidence of the United States Judicial Conference, appointed by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, and on the Arizona Supreme Court’s Advisory Committee on Rules of Evidence. She is a member of the American Law Institute and its Litigation Advisory Panel and is a fellow of the American Bar Foundation and the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education. Previously, Refo served as a director of the American Bar Endowment and as co-chair of the National Association of Women Lawyers Committee for the Evaluation of Supreme Court Nominees.

Among her awards and recognitions, Refo in 2007 was named to the National Law Journal’s list of The 50 Most Influential Women Lawyers in America. She received the President’s Award from the State Bar of Arizona and has been inducted into the Maricopa County Bar Association Hall of Fame. She received her B.A. with high honors and high distinction and her J.D. cum laude from the University of Michigan.

About Snell & Wilmer

Founded in 1938, Snell & Wilmer is a full-service business law firm with more than 450 attorneys practicing in 15 locations throughout the United States and in Mexico, including Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego, California; Denver, Colorado; Washington, D.C.; Boise, Idaho; Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Portland, Oregon; Salt Lake City, Utah; Seattle, Washington; and Los Cabos, Mexico. The firm represents clients ranging from large, publicly traded corporations to small businesses, individuals and entrepreneurs. For more information, visit www.swlaw.com.

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