

Bracewell Elects Seven New Partners

News Release

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HOUSTON – Bracewell LLP announced today that seven lawyers have been promoted to partner, effective January 1, 2024: **Edward Fierro** (Houston), **Nicholas Neuberger** (London), **Andrew T. Prihoda** (Austin), **Brett W. Rector** (Dallas), **Jared Schuettenhelm** (Seattle), **Walter A. Simons** (Houston) and **Carlton D. Wilde III** (Houston).

“I am thrilled to welcome these outstanding lawyers to the firm’s partnership,” said Bracewell’s Managing Partner **Gregory M. Bopp**. “Each has distinguished themselves through their commitment to the firm, our clients and the legal profession.”

The internal promotions culminate a year in which the firm additionally expanded its partnership with the arrival of nine lateral partner hires.

2024 Partner Promotions

Edward Fierro – Resident in Bracewell’s Houston office, Fierro was promoted from senior counsel to partner in the public finance practice. He serves as bond counsel, disclosure counsel, underwriter’s counsel and purchaser’s counsel in various public finance transactions. He also counsels municipal issuers, obligated persons and regulated entities on legal, regulatory and policy issues. From 2015 to 2017, Fierro served as senior counsel to the director of the Securities and Exchange Commission’s Office of Municipal Securities. Fierro graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.A. from California State University, San Marcos, and earned his J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, where he was associate editor of *Berkeley Technology Law Journal*. He also served as a judicial extern in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York.

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Nicholas Neuberger – Resident in Bracewell's London office, Neuberger was promoted from senior counsel to partner in the corporate and securities practice. Neuberger is a corporate lawyer with a particular focus on international transactional matters within the energy sector. He has advised on a wide range of cross-border acquisitions in both the public and private sectors, having worked on deals and projects in more than 25 jurisdictions. He has particular experience in the structuring and development of energy projects, including in relation to shareholder arrangements. His recent engagements include work on the acquisition of one of the largest battery storage plants in development in the UK, the development of a European LNG terminal, as well as advising on the acquisition of an interest in the world's largest offshore wind farm in the Dogger Bank. Neuberger earned his B.A., with honours, from the University of Bristol, and his L.P.C., with distinction, from BPP Law School.

Andrew T. Prihoda – Resident in Bracewell's Austin office, Prihoda was promoted from associate to partner in the public finance practice. Prihoda counsels governmental entities on state and local government finance matters, including public finance, infrastructure development and public-private partnerships. He serves as bond counsel to state and local issuers, as well as underwriter's counsel, disclosure counsel, borrower's counsel and bank counsel. Prior to joining Bracewell, Prihoda served as deputy chief of the Public Finance Division in the Office of the Texas Attorney General. He earned a B.A. from Texas A&M University, a certificate in mediation from University of Houston-Clear Lake, and a J.D., *cum laude*, from Loyola University New Orleans School of Law.

Brett W. Rector – Resident in Bracewell's Dallas office, Rector was promoted from associate to partner in the healthcare and litigation practice. Rector has significant experience litigating cases involving managed care, billing and reimbursement, restrictive covenants and other complex commercial disputes. He also represents healthcare providers in regulatory matters, including government investigations and matters relating to alleged violations of federal and state anti-kickback provisions and Stark laws. Rector graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.A. from College of William & Mary and with a J.D. from University of Virginia School of Law, where he was Order of the Coif, a member of *Virginia Law Review* and executive editor of *Virginia Journal of Criminal Law*. He served as a judicial clerk to the Honorable Michael F. Urbanski of the US District Court of the Western District of Virginia and as a judicial intern for the Honorable Barbara M.G. Lynn of the US District Court of the Northern District of Texas. *Best Lawyers* has recognized Rector as "One to Watch" in Commercial Litigation, *Chambers USA* named him an "Associate to Watch" in Texas Healthcare, and he was recommended for Commercial Litigation, Especially Healthcare, in *Lawdragon 500 X – The Next Generation*.

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Jared Schuettenhelm – Resident in Bracewell’s Seattle office, Schuettenhelm was promoted from senior counsel to partner in the firm’s intellectual property litigation practice. Schuettenhelm focuses on all aspects of intellectual property, including IP litigation, IP counseling and strategy, technology licensing and transactional matters, patent royalty audits and related due diligence matters. Prior to becoming an attorney, Schuettenhelm worked for nearly eight years as a process engineer and scientist in the medical device industry. Schuettenhelm graduated with honors with a B.A. in biology from University of California, Santa Cruz, and *cum laude* with a J.D. from Santa Clara University School of Law, where he was Order of the Coif and managing editor of *Santa Clara Computer and High Technology Law Journal*. *Best Lawyers* has recognized Schuettenhelm as “One to Watch” in Intellectual Property Law, and *Managing Intellectual Property* has recognized him as a “Rising Star.”

Walter A. Simons – Resident in Bracewell’s Houston office, Simons was promoted from associate to partner in the appellate practice. Simons represents clients in high-stakes appeals in Texas and across the United States. Simons also frequently serves as appellate counsel during trial proceedings by providing strategic advice to trial teams and drafting briefs for the trial court. He graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. from Rice University, and *magna cum laude* with a J.D. from University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, where he was executive editor of *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. Simons served as a law clerk to the Honorable Patty Shwartz of the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and to the Honorable Gray H. Miller of the US District Court for the Southern District of Texas. Simons was named “One to Watch” in Appellate Practice by *Best Lawyers* and is recommended in Appellate Dispute Resolution in *The Legal 500 United States*.

Carlton D. Wilde III – Resident in Bracewell’s Houston office, Wilde was promoted from senior counsel to partner in the litigation practice. As a member of Bracewell’s insurance recovery group, he represents corporate policy holders in complex insurance coverage matters related to all types of policies. He also has first and second chair experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants in a range of complex business litigation and arbitration matters in the energy, construction, consumer products, real estate and healthcare industries. Wilde earned his B.B.A. from The University of Mississippi and his J.D., *cum laude*, from South Texas College of Law Houston, where he was a member of *South Texas Law Review*. *Best Lawyers* recognized Wilde as “One to Watch” in Commercial Litigation and Intellectual Property, and he was recommended for Complex Business Litigation in *Lawdragon 500 X – The Next Generation*.

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2023 Lateral Partner Hires

In addition to internal promotions, Bracewell grew its partnership ranks in 2023 with the addition of nine lateral partners across eight offices, including **Bucky Brannen, Christopher L. Crumbley, Carrie Douglas, Eugene R. Elrod, Kelly Robreno Koster, Scott Le Bouef, Brian Rogers** and **Paul Schuster**.

Bucky Brannen – Brannen joined Bracewell's Dallas office in April 2023 as a partner in the firm's tax practice. He advises clients on ways to reduce state and local taxes in every phase of business, with experience in all types of state and local tax issues nationwide, including taxes on sales, property, income, gross receipts, severance and motor fuels. Brannen graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. from Austin College and received his J.D., *magna cum laude*, Order of the Coif, from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law. He also earned a Master of Law in Taxation from New York University School of Law.

Christopher ("Kit") L. Crumbley – Crumbley joined Bracewell's Austin office in October 2023 as a partner in the firm's intellectual property litigation practice. He has over 20 years of patent law experience, serving as a lead administrative judge at the United States Patent & Trademark Office's Patent Trial & Appeal Board and as a trial attorney with the Intellectual Property Section of the Department of Justice's Civil Division. Crumbley graduated *cum laude* with a B.A. in chemistry and political science from Rice University in 1997 and earned his J.D. in 2000 from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Carrie Douglas – Douglas joined Bracewell's San Antonio office in April 2023 as a partner in the firm's healthcare and life sciences practice. She represents hospital systems, ambulatory surgery centers and large physician practices in coverage and reimbursement disputes with health insurers/payors, recovering millions of dollars for health systems and other providers. Douglas earned her B.A., with honors, Phi Beta Kappa, in the Plan II Honors Program from The University of Texas at Austin, and her B.B.A., with honors, from UT's McCombs School of Business in Finance and the Business Honors Program. She received her J.D. from The University of Texas School of Law.

Eugene R. Elrod – Elrod joined Bracewell's Washington, DC office in November 2023 as a partner in the firm's energy regulatory group. A highly regarded member of the oil and gas regulatory bar, Elrod has over 40 years of experience in the oil and gas regulatory space, primarily focusing on pipeline matters. He also served as a trial lawyer at the Federal Power Commission, which is the predecessor of the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission. Elrod graduated with an A.B. from Dartmouth College and earned his J.D. from Emory University School of Law.

Kelly Robreno Koster – Koster joined Bracewell's Houston office in June 2023 as a partner in the firm's labor and employment group. She is highly experienced in counseling employers in all aspects of the employment relationship and defending against lawsuits filed by employees. Prior to joining Bracewell, Koster served as general counsel for an international staffing company. She earned her B.S. from Cornell University and her J.D. from American University, Washington College of Law.

Scott Le Bouef – Le Bouef joined Bracewell's New York office in August 2023 as a partner in the firm's energy finance group. A leading energy and commodity transactional lawyer, Le Bouef represents clients in a wide variety of commodities and derivatives transactions and related regulatory matters, with a focus on energy commodities. Le Bouef earned his B.A. from Boston College and his J.D., *cum laude*, from Boston University School of Law.

Brian R. Rogers – Rogers joined Bracewell's New York office in August 2023 as a partner in the firm's energy finance team. Rogers advises private debt funds, banks and other financial institutions, commodity merchants, private equity funds, family offices, and public and private companies in a variety of debt financing transactions in all levels of the capital structure. Rogers earned his B.S. in Accounting and Business Management from the University of South Florida in 2009 and his J.D., with honors, from Boston University School of Law in 2013.

Paul F. Schuster – Schuster joined Bracewell's Dallas office in June 2023 as a partner in the firm's litigation department. He represents healthcare providers and other entities on a range of litigation and regulatory matters, including contractual disputes, statutory violations, industry regulations, business torts and class actions. Schuster received his B.A., *summa cum laude*, from University of Pennsylvania, where he was a Phi Beta Kappa member. He received his J.D. with high honors from The University of Texas School of Law, where he was Order of the Coif, Chancellor at Large.