

## MVP: Bracewell's Ann D. Navaro

By Christopher Cole

*Law360 (October 20, 2020, 3:21 PM EDT)* -- Ann D. Navaro is co-leading a Bracewell LLP team that persuaded a federal judge to reject multiple efforts by cities, counties and others to halt construction on a major natural gas pipeline project in West Texas, landing her among Law360's 2020 Environmental MVPs.

### **HER BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR:**

Navaro successfully defended a large midstream company, Kinder Morgan Texas Pipeline, and the Permian Highway Pipeline against three preliminary emergency motion hearings by opponents that sought to stop construction.

The project was roped into a pair of cases — a lawsuit by several local governments including the city of Austin, Texas, and other opponents, and an action by the Sierra Club — seeking to halt the 428-mile gas pipeline in court.

"So those cases are not yet resolved, but those preliminary victories meant that the project could continue on schedule," Navaro said.

"Defending three of those in a relatively short time frame on the same project was a significant team effort and certainly a satisfying victory on behalf of our clients," she said.

### **HER BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS YEAR:**

Since last fall, Navaro and her colleagues have been working with a lot of clients who deal with the federal government, who she said are trying to get things done in what may be the last year of the Trump administration.

"And that can be very challenging when you're operating in a federal regulatory environment that may look dramatically different a year from now, as it did between the end of the Obama administration and



the beginning of the Trump administration," she said.

"So certainly, a significant challenge over the past year has been focusing on helping our clients build resilient strategies for their businesses that can appropriately anticipate the impact of what could be dramatic policy and legal shifts," Navaro said.

#### ***HER PROUDEST MOMENTS THIS YEAR:***

Navaro counted the early victories allowing the Kinder Morgan Texas Pipeline project to move forward as highly satisfying, "and it's particularly so because I think it's very important that industry be able to rely on a predictable permit process," she said.

Also, Navaro is just finishing her second year in private practice after more than two decades in the federal government.

"I'm fortunate to work with colleagues on a very collaborative basis and effectively [help clients in] interpreting and getting through some very complex and opaque federal requirements," she said.

Navaro previously held senior legal and policy roles at the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Department of the Interior, and was a U.S. Department of Justice environmental trial lawyer.

"I loved my years in the government, and I was very fortunate to work for three very different, very interesting government agencies with lots of really dedicated government employees," she said. "I felt I was ready for a new challenge, and one thing I really like about private practice is being able to focus on specific projects for companies or other entities that want to move a specific project forward."

#### ***WHY SHE'S AN ENVIRONMENTAL ATTORNEY:***

Navaro told Law360 that, as with many people in the environmental field, "it was probably my youth spent largely out-of-doors. I was fortunate to have a mother and a grandfather who, I would say, were first, amateur naturalists, and then my mother actually studied botany as I got older, and I always spent a lot of time outside with her and with other members of my family appreciating the environmental world."

"And so I think that instilled in me an abiding interest in doing something with that professionally," she added.

#### ***HER ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:***

For anyone just starting their legal careers, Navaro put an emphasis on seizing every chance to learn something new.

"Junior attorneys should love what they're doing," she said. "They should dive in with both feet and view every assignment as an opportunity to learn something, whether it's something substantive or a skill or to learn from the other lawyers around them."

"The bottom line is, it's important to enjoy what you're doing, and I think the best way to do that is to approach your job with enthusiasm and a lot of curiosity," Navaro said. "And I think that will lead to a satisfying career."

— *As told to Christopher Cole*

*Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2020 MVP winners after reviewing more than 900 submissions.*

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