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TRAILBLAZERS

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E. DEE MARTIN BRACEWELL



PIONEER SPIRIT For Dee Martin, advocacy means telling a story. Martin, co-leader of Bracewell’s policy resolution group, represents the FBI Agents Association, which asked her to show the effects of a government shutdown on agents and their investigations. “We weren’t just taking one-pagers up to the Hill in sort of the normal advocacy way.” Instead, Martin’s team produced a book, “Voices From the Field,” in which agents told their own stories of how the shutdown had hampered their ability to work on national security and other important matters. “It became a very important tool for us to rise above the noise and get the attention of all the federal officials.”

TRAILS BLAZED Martin was a political activist before she became a lawyer, and she still considers herself an activist and an advocate. Her book on the FBI agents quickly stirred action at the highest levels. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi read some of the narratives on the House floor, and President Donald Trump cited the concerns of federal law enforcement officers when he agreed to a Democratic proposal to reopen the government. Martin uses a similar approach in lobbying for other causes in Congress and in the federal executive branch. “I don’t think there’s anything more powerful than storytelling.”

FUTURE EXPLORATIONS Martin thinks the coronavirus pandemic may have permanently altered how advocacy works, calling into question the ability to meet officials in person and “hash out policy issues.” She sees other methods, such as social media, as becoming more crucial in carrying a client’s message to the right officials. “Every single member of Congress has a Twitter account. Every committee of jurisdiction has a Twitter account, every executive agency — everyone uses Twitter to communicate. Having a powerful narrative that can be easily be disseminated over social media really helps us gain traction.”