

D.C. Employment Firm Loses Name Partner

Lizzy McLellan, The National Law Journal

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Katherine Kimpel

Public interest litigation firm Sanford Heisler Kimpel has appointed a new managing partner for its Washington office and changed its name back to Sanford Heisler, after name partner and office managing partner Katherine Kimpel left the firm.

Kimpel departed from Sanford Heisler effective June 4, the firm said, in order to take on other work in social justice and public interest matters. She was made a name partner in January 2015.

Kimpel spent nine years at Sanford Heisler, where she became a partner after three years. She has been the Washington managing partner since 2012. In addition to her work on employment litigation, particularly on race and gender discrimination issues, she worked closely with David Sanford and Jeremy Heisler in growing the firm.

Kimpel, who has also served as a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School, said she left Sanford Heisler in order to focus more on social justice and public interest issues. She said she plans to do more writing, and be more involved in the political process and academic endeavors. But she does not have immediate plans to join another law firm or organization.

"I'm not exactly sure what the whole constellation of things is going to look like," Kimpel said. She said the current conversations surrounding working women and criminal justice reform, the excitement of an election year and her comfort that she was leaving her practice and the Washington office in good hands made now the right time to shift her focus.

Kimpel is one of just a few women who have been name partners at Washington law firms. She said she was proud to reach that milestone, and plans to continue her involvement with women in the legal profession.

Sanford Heisler had only six or seven attorneys when Kimpel joined, she said, and now has a head count of 35 among four offices. Kimpel said she had not set out to help grow a law firm when she embarked upon her career, but it was a "happy accident" that resulted from joining a young firm.

"The firm has grown significantly since Kate's arrival in 2007, and she has helped manage that growth through her careful and tireless stewardship over the D.C. office these past four years," Sanford said in a statement. "Kate has an unflagging commitment to fighting on behalf of working women and people of color, and we wish her great success."