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2019 Ones to Watch: Leslie Byrd, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP

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Name: Leslie Byrd

Title: Special Counsel

Company Name: Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP

Address: 180 Maiden Lane, NY NY 10038

Real estate organizations: NYC Bar Association Real Property Law Committee; Development Subcommittee; Program Chair – “Commercial Real Estate Basics and Beyond” May 2017 and May 2018

What do you consider to be your greatest success in the past 12 months?

My greatest success occurred last month, when I joined Stroock as special counsel to lead the firm’s Condominium/Coop practice. After several years of working in the field at a prior firm, I’m thrilled with the opportunity to serve and, hopefully, expand the practice at Stroock. Condos and coops are central facets of NYC residential real estate—and condominiums are often the preferred form of ownership for both commercial and nonprofit developers. I’m excited to work with the Stroock team to help shape the NYC landscape for the 21st century.

What advice can you offer to someone who is just getting started in your industry?

I think development as a real estate lawyer has to occur on two tracks—technical competence and people skills. Careful drafting and attention to detail are critical. However, it’s equally important—for document preparation and business development—to see the big picture by considering, “What does my client want and why?” Don’t be afraid to ask for help on either track—the experienced attorneys around you started out just like you.

Who or what do you attribute to your success?

Perseverance is certainly key. Whether pushing through dense documents, tense negotiations, fatigue after the occasional all-nighter, personal setbacks or crowded NYC subways, I’ve learned to cultivate selftalk that supports an “I can do it” attitude. I also read avidly—news, trade journals, novels—and try to listen more than I speak.