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Litigation Leaders: Bradley Arant's Anne Marie Seibel Looks for 'Dependable, Responsive, Committed, Hard-Working' Team Players

By Ross Todd

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Welcome to another edition of our Litigation Leaders series, featuring the litigation practice leaders at some of the biggest and most innovative law firms in the country.

*Meet **Anne Marie Seibel**, chair of the litigation practice group at **Bradley Arant Boult Cummings**. Seibel, who is based in Birmingham, Alabama, focuses on representing clients in complex, multi-forum, multi-plaintiff cases. She previously has held leadership roles with the American Bar Association, including serving as chair of the ABA's Litigation Section during the 2023-2024 bar year.*

Lit Daily: Tell us a little about yourself—perhaps even a thing or two your partners would be surprised to learn.

Anne Marie Seibel: I am the first lawyer in my family and an example of the opportunities for one generation to build upon prior ones. My father came to the United States as a child as a result of Congressional action accepting displaced persons who were left without a home after World War II. He and his two brothers all went on to get PhDs and passed on the importance of education to the next generation. On the other side of my family, my Italian immigrant grandfather was a stoneworker in the Empire State Building. His mantra was that you could achieve whatever you wanted with enough focus, motivation and determination. Their stories inspired me to make the most of my educational opportunities and eventually led me to pursue a legal career. Thankfully, I've had the benefit of many legal mentors to open my eyes to the opportunities in law, starting with a professor in law school. He was the one who encouraged me to move from Maryland to "tort hell" in Alabama in the late 1990s because the best of the bar had descended on the state to litigate. My mentors at Bradley threw me into the midst of that litigation and encouraged me

Courtesy photo

Anne Marie Seibel of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings.

to build my own platform, including nationally in the ABA's Litigation Section, where I eventually became Chair. The most fulfilling part of that job for me was interacting with lawyers from across the country and finding connections and synergies in their practices. Now, I'm thankful to have a similar opportunity to help energize the practices of my colleagues in the litigation group at Bradley.

Before taking on the role as chair last year, you went on a listening tour meeting with litigators across the firm. What did you get out of that experience?

Our litigation group management team benefited greatly from visiting with our colleagues. Given how busy everyone is, it is easy to fall into working in silos and focusing only on the next deadline. We took the time to ask everyone not only what they were working on now, but what they wanted to be doing in the future, along with what work they'd prefer to avoid. We feel that our group is stronger when we can build on synergies that already exist and match people's talents and strengths with others in productive teams. It was inspiring to see the diversity of work being performed by our colleagues for a broad array of clients. We are looking forward to building upon those themes of sharing information about the work we are doing during collaborative discussion at a partner retreat in February. We want any of our partners to know enough about the talents across the group to be able to provide an existing or potential client the resources they need in the spirit of collaboration that our firm promotes.

You have a group of three vice chairs who help you with some of the load in strategy and management. Who are they and how have you been dividing the labor?

Our team is made up of veteran litigators who have served in a variety of firm management roles for many years. All three of our vice chairs have served on the firm's board. The team works particularly well because we are all firm-first thinkers that want to sustain and enhance the firm's already strong litigation practice.

Andy Johnson serves as vice chair of practice management, functioning as the point person for staffing requests, conflicts questions, utilization challenges and lateral integration support. He has had a varied litigation practice with strong trial experience and deep experience in working up life sciences products cases for trial.

Alex Purvis serves as vice chair of business development, focusing on supporting our lawyers in their business development opportunities, looking for synergies within the group and organizing external professional and industry association participation. Alex has developed a particular skillset in helping our clients maximize insurance recoveries, including a recent significant jury trial win.

George Cate serves as vice chair of lawyer development, leading the effort to develop our next generation of lawyers, including mentoring, training and serving as a resource to lawyers developing their professional paths.George spent many years at trial boutique and joined us about 12 years ago with deep experience in internal investigations and responses to government inquiries.

We stay in close communication so that if a colleague reaches out to one of us, that person knows each of us speaks for the group. We are supported by an outstanding practice manager, **Brea Williams**, who coordinates our efforts and

enables us to prioritize our focus on decisions that require our attention.

How big is the firm's litigation department and where are most of your litigators concentrated geographically?

We have over 200 lawyers primary to the litigation group with an additional 150 in related practice areas such as government enforcement, labor & employment, bankruptcy, construction and government contracts. Our litigators are spread across our 13-office footprint from D.C. to Texas. From that footprint, we service clients and matters across the United States.

What do you see as the hallmarks of Bradley Arant litigators? What makes you different?

Our practice group developed its national reputation by litigating the most important cases in dangerous jurisdictions. Clients from across the country were getting sued by creative plaintiffs' lawyers in Alabama and Mississippi, and we became chosen counsel to litigate, try and work on appeals that made new law. Those matters put us on the front lines of doing cutting-edge work and we have carried forward the expectation that our lawyers have the ability to play at the highest level as we've expanded our footprint. Not only did that level of work allow us to recruit the best lawyers, but the connections that we made with clients and co-counsel positioned us to be a go-to firm for bet-the-company litigation in tough venues outside our footprint, too. I also think clients trust us with their matters because of the way we approach their work. We recently asked all of our litigators what their non-negotiable characteristics were for a Bradley litigator. The responses were remarkably consistent at every level of the practice group. Dependable, responsive, committed, hard-working, team players with integrity were the most common attributes our lawyers expect of each other. That type of consistency in values means that we can count on each other to service our clients' needs at the high level they (and we) expect.

Part B of that prior question: How would you describe the firm's niche in the market? Sometimes you partner with other larger firms on matters. At others, you're taking the lead for the client nationwide. What are the challenges of operating in that model?

Our firm is 155 years old, which provides a level of experience and stability that is rare. Over that time, we've been fortunate to develop capabilities to handle both the most important matters in our footprint and also litigation across the country for clients in and outside of our footprint. That's a special spot in the market, and we recognize it. A lot of firms can handle litigation, but the values mentioned above, including teamwork, have made us a sought-after team member for national litigation. In those roles, we've done everything from serve as national counsel, embedded appellate counsel at trial, national discovery counsel, expert development counsel, national brief-writing counsel and trial counsel. Often, we play those roles in "virtual firms" where a client designates a team for specific tasks. When we do that, we find that both the clients and other law firms seek us out again for the value we add to the team. It is important to those engagements that we build deep relationships that allow us to serve clients in these fulfilling ways. It is a blessing and challenge that sometimes clients move us into more significant roles on those matters once they get to know our lawyers' capabilities. It is a challenge because we do not want our law firm partners to see us as

a threat to their own work. But, because there will always be matters where public companies need to hire Wall Street law firms, those firms know we aren't truly a threat to their practices. Instead, we make the management of the litigation better through our contributions to those matters and the clients get the benefit of not paying Wall Street rates for all aspects of the work.

In what three areas of litigation do you have the deepest bench? (I know it's hard, but please name just three.)

We have an exceptionally talented group of lawyers who serve as embedded trial counsel. Because even our appellate lawyers have grown up as well-rounded litigators: They understand the nuances of trying a case, arguing to a trial judge and the press of a jury trial. They've been embedded in cases across the country, charged with arguing all key legal motions, watching the record in trial and arguing at the charge conference. Our life sciences lawyers were pioneers in MDL cases and in working in virtual firm structures for national clients. Whether it is in the MDL setting, individual mass tort cases or handling a specific task such as identifying experts or doing fact work-ups, this group can be found working anywhere in the country on a given day. We can do everything from remove a case to try it, thanks to multiple generations of lawyers who have worked in this space. The expertise developed in these mass actions has expanded well beyond life sciences into other matters that require expertise in coordinated litigation.

Finally, we have deep experience handling complex disputes for businesses. For example, Bradley is one of the few larger firms capable of handling complex insurance coverage litigation on the commercial policyholder side. Our lawyers also handle any type of business-to-business or intra-business dispute there is. At any given time, we are litigating the dissolution of a business, the breakup of a joint venture, a contractual dispute regarding earnings or allegations of unfair competition. Often, but not always, these are in areas where our firm has particularly deep client bases, such as healthcare, construction or banking.

What were two or three of the firm's biggest in-court wins in the past year, and can you cite tactics that exemplify your firm's approach?

Our wins often include lawyers from multiple offices, coordinating to bring their respective expertise to the matter at hand. Due to our culture of collaboration and teamwork, it is typical for us to assemble the best team to serve our clients, regardless of the location of the individual members. We are also deliberate about including younger lawyers in the matters as there's no better way for us to train the next generation than to involve them actively in the litigation decisions.

We successfully represented two individual voters and a nonprofit advocacy group in a constitutional challenge to several election rules issued by the Georgia State Election Board ahead of the 2024 General Election. Our attorneys led the case at both the trial court and Georgia Supreme Court levels, advancing legal theories that were ultimately adopted in a landmark ruling. The court's decision established a new test for legislative nondelegation under the Georgia Constitution, overturning prior precedent and reaffirming that only the General Assembly may set election policy. The ruling significantly curtails agency discretion and is expected to have far-reaching implications for administrative law in

Georgia and beyond. The team included lawyers from two offices, including **Chris Anulewicz**, **Marc James Ayers**, **Spencer Stephens**, **Ashley Strain** and **Jonathan DeLuca**.

A Bradley team of **Michael Bentley** and **Sumner Fortenberry** successfully argued a case of first impression in the Eleventh Circuit under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, which authorizes courts to dismiss "malicious" prisoner lawsuits. Each year, prisoners file around 30,000 civil rights lawsuits in federal court. The act's dismissal authority is critical to screening abusive prisoner lawsuits at the beginning of a case. The inmate argued that failing to disclose his full litigation history to a district judge was not a "malicious" action, an argument that—had it been accepted—would have disrupted the screening procedures adopted across the circuit. The Eleventh Circuit rejected the inmate's arguments, adopted Bradley's positions and affirmed the district court's broad screening authority. *McNair v. Johnson*, 143 F.4th 1301 (11th Cir. 2025).

What does the firm's coming trial docket look like?

We have a busy trial docket ahead in 2026. Among the jurisdictions where we have teams trying cases are California, Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, Vermont, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey and Florida. The matters involve a wide range of different subject areas, including wrongful death, products liability, environmental, negligence, insurance coverage, breach of fiduciary duty and a range of business disputes. We are lead counsel in most of the matters, but also have teams serving in embedded appellate counsel roles for significant trials involving multiple firms. In addition to those court cases, we also have a series of arbitrations across the country in the securities space and related to business disputes. All of those are litigation group-specific matters and don't include the many trials in our related practices, including our international construction team.

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