

## Kathleen Wu: From Tennis Mom to Uber-Volunteer

*By Patricia Baldwin* – (August 22) – It doesn't take long, in a conversation with Kathleen Wu, to figure out how the partner in the Andrews Kurth Dallas office went from tennis mom to U.S. Tennis Association uber-volunteer.

She often uses the phrase "raised my hand."



*Kathleen Wu*

And once she raises her hand, the real estate finance lawyer undertakes an assignment with passion and determination, according to friends and colleagues.

Wu is currently wrapping up a two-year appointment as national USTA chairperson for Diversity & Inclusion, a term ending at the Aug. 30-Sept. 3 semiannual meeting in New York.

The results of her leadership effort can be seen on the USTA website, where four "engagement guides" help local tennis associations reach out to population segments key to the growth of the game—African American, Asian American, Hispanic and LGBT.

But that's getting ahead of this story.

This latest phase of Wu's tennis involvement began when her now 19-year-old son, Grant, was 3, and he began playing tennis.

"I always played recreationally, but my son got me back into it," Wu says.

Traditionally, she recalls, "Tennis was perceived to be an elite sport."

Fast forward through a variety of volunteer positions, including volunteer service as general counsel under four USTA Texas presidents.

Wu's enthusiasm, however, heightens when she talks about diversity and inclusion in the game. She especially thinks inclusion is important.

"It's not enough to reach out and say 'We want more Asian-Americans or women, or whomever,'" she says. "We have to be inclusive, because nobody is going to stay in a place they don't feel welcome."



And, she notes, "There are courts for every income level."

Carleen Richards, vice president and associate general counsel for Goldman Sachs in Irving, has worked with Wu in the legal profession and in tennis efforts.

Richards, who is of Hispanic descent, says Wu has "gained a lot of credibility" and has expanded her passion for diversity and inclusion to the law. She points out that Wu has served in various leadership positions within the Dallas office of Andrews Kurth, including hiring partner and managing partner. Wu also co-founded the firm's Women's Initiative Team and spearheads its biannual Executive Women's Retreat.

"I don't think people realize they have predispositions," Richards says. "Part of what Kathleen has done is to create awareness."

Noel Elfant, general counsel of DeLaval in Illinois, agrees. He says he has observed Wu's >



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penchant for tackling complexities, whether in a real estate transaction or a networking event at a conference.

“She has helped us on so many levels,” he says.

Dan Barta is president of USTA Texas and the fourth in that role to ask Wu to work as general counsel for the section.

He says that diversity and inclusion efforts are evident in local events.

“The perception that tennis is a rich man’s country club sport has changed,” he says.

He adds that the sport also is directing efforts at socioeconomic issues to help reduce the cost of playing tennis.

Wu, also, has seen the proverbial fruits of her labors. She remembers going to one of her son’s sectional tournaments in the deep South. As she observed the dozen youth, she realized there was one Caucasian boy among the very diverse group.

She describes her “OMG” thought: “This is it. They are finding us.”

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