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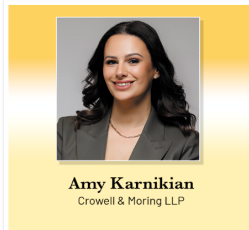
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Amy Karnikian

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Amy Karnikian
 Crowell & Moring LLP

Los Angeles

Corporate & Transactional

Amy Karnikian's team closed the deal with what felt like moments to spare before the New Year. Her client had just moved into aircraft ownership, leasing and management, a structure her group built from the ground up, and once the framework existed, the client wanted to close on multiple aircraft acquisitions under tight timelines. "I am particularly proud of how efficiently we were able to respond to their pace

without compromising the rigor with which we protected their interests," Karnikian said.

Karnikian's path into aviation started before law school. "I worked with an aircraft lessor, an experience that fundamentally changed my professional trajectory and ultimately led me to law school," she said. She spent the early part of her career in aircraft leasing and finance, representing lessors, airlines and financiers across transactions. Her practice has since grown to include advising airlines, aviation suppliers, Fortune 500 flight departments, high-net-worth individuals and other aviation sector clients on transactional and regulatory compliance matters spanning commercial aircraft, commercial space and emerging technologies, including eVTOL aircraft and unmanned aircraft systems.

Among the matters she points to is her work advising a major e-commerce and technology company on the transition of 25 aircraft, nearly a quarter of its cargo fleet, from a single carrier to three new operating carriers. The team negotiated aircraft returns and deliveries and managed technical and regulatory requirements for each aircraft, all while the company kept its delivery operations running without interruption. "Being trusted with that responsibility, and delivering on it, was enormously satisfying," Karnikian said.

Karnikian credits two people in the industry, both now clients, with shaping how she approaches her work. "They removed the question 'Can I do this?' from my vocabulary and pushed me well beyond the limits I had placed on myself," she said. "Without their belief in me, I would not have taken the risks that have driven my growth."

She said the obstacles that matter most in her deals are rarely legal ones. "The greater challenge lies in deeply understanding your client and their business: what they need, what they value, what keeps them up at night," Karnikian said. "Tough negotiations and compressed timelines are manageable when you have done the foundational work of truly knowing your client."

Looking at where the industry is headed, Karnikian points to sustainability commitments, fleet strategy shifts driven by supply chain and OEM pressures and the maturation of eVTOL and unmanned aircraft systems as forces reshaping aviation law. "Stagnation is simply not an option in aviation," she said. Practitioners, she added, need to track where clients and regulators are moving and get ahead of the legal questions before they fully take shape.

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