

Crowell Picks Up Employment Ace From Vedder Price

By **Amanda Ottaway**

Law360 (September 30, 2020, 7:44 PM EDT) -- Crowell & Moring LLP said Wednesday it had expanded its ranks in Washington, D.C., with the addition of an employment law specialist from Vedder Price PC.

Although Sadina Montani has a broad range of experience, she focuses on two evergreen arenas: sexual harassment and wage-and-hour issues, she said during a phone interview Wednesday. This is her first full week on the job at Crowell, Montani said, adding that she is excited about the firm's strong presence inside the Beltway.



Sadina Montani

"Having colleagues here in town who understand this market and are so strong, particularly in the government contractor space, will be a fantastic resource for the government contracting clients that I currently work with," Montani said. She is also president of the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

She enjoys working with government contractors because they are often fast-growing and dynamic, she said. That expansion often leads to what she called "growing pains" in employment compliance, which is where she steps in to help.

Montani has also conducted internal sexual misconduct investigations for large nonprofits, think tanks, government contractors and the financial sector, she said. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she conducted one at an AmLaw100 firm, she added.

Montani argued in a 2019 Law360 expert analysis against zero-tolerance policies post-#MeToo, saying she believes such an approach can be unproductive.

"It's not a binary analysis," she said, of determining the severity of questionable behavior.

Instead, Montani continued, she thinks employers should foster environments where employees feel comfortable speaking up about bad behavior before it gets out of hand. Employers can't fix what they don't know about, she added.

"You want people to feel free to speak up when something starts in that direction, because it can be fixed," Montani said. "Ultimately the only thing that people want is for it to stop."

On another timely matter, the COVID-19 pandemic, Montani said employers are starting to get nervous about how to handle the first quarter of 2021 given that the Families First Coronavirus Response Act's leave provision expires Dec. 31, 2020, but the need for that leave likely will not have subsided by then.

She also said she's been working with employers on how to have performance-related conversations with their workers, especially in cases where people are working remotely.

"Employers are starting to get more aware of the need to actually balance holding employees accountable with being sensitive to the fact that these are totally unprecedented times," she said, referencing performance conversations that can be challenging even without a pandemic.

Montani's new firm welcomed her with open arms.

"Sadina's labor and employment practice, bar and community leadership positions and client service commitment align well with our firm and the needs of our clients," Crowell & Moring Chair Philip T. Inglima said in a statement.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.