

Rising Star: BuckleySandler's Lauren Randell

By **Matt Chiappardi**

Law360, Wilmington (April 17, 2015, 4:35 PM ET) --



With achievements that include the recent settlement of U.S. officials' bribery accusations against Noble Corp.'s ex-CEO on the eve of trial, BuckleySandler LLP's Lauren R. Randell has already distinguished herself as one of leading young white collar attorneys and landed among Law360's list of Rising Stars.

At only 34, Randell — one of four of Law360's top white Collar attorneys under 40 — has amassed an impressive record being front and center in landmark U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act cases, achieving some extraordinary results in the process.

Between 2012 and 2014, she was part of the team that represented Noble's former CEO Mark Jackson in a U.S. Securities and Exchange commission case alleging he bribed Nigerian officials to secure offshore oil platform permits. The case was the only contested litigation to come from a broad government investigation into oil and gas drillers and was set to turn into the first SEC trial on FCPA claims to hit the courts in decades.

But shortly before the gavel fell, Randell and her team were able to settle with a deal that saw Jackson pay no money to the SEC and escape disbarment from future employment. The result was gained in no small part to Randell and her team's tenacity in the face of claims brought against individuals by the federal government.

"You need to be willing to take on the government," Randell said. "Just because the government has brought a case, doesn't mean it's the right case to bring."

The case also resulted in judicial precedent in the FCPA law area on so-called facilitating payments, an exception to bribery accusations that Randell says the government has "minimized to the point of not existing" that may have a strong influence on future litigation.

Randell was also involved in representing one of the defendants in the government's so-called Africa



Lauren R. Randell

sting operation that resulted in the indictment of 22 executives on allegations of conspiring to bribe the defense minister of Gabon. The case involved a fictitious deal to supply the country's presidential guard with weapons and military gear that included a \$1.5 million bribe, and her client's charges were dismissed after the trial ended in a hung jury.

Part of that success came from moving the discussion in the case to facts the government didn't want to focus on, such as what Randell says was a problematic informant who had corruption issues of his own, and other issues including supervision of the sting and possible violations of internal regulations.

And all of it had to be done without the immense resources available to federal government.

"We don't have an office full of FBI agents to go track down people," Randell said. "You have to know the case better than they do. You have to see the weaknesses, dig down and find them even if they're not apparent."

Randell, who did her undergraduate work at Yale University and got her law degree at Yale Law School, joined BuckleySandler in 2010, coming over from Mayer Brown LLP.

Randell also has extensive experience in accounting, securities and other fraud-related matters, but her original career aspirations didn't necessarily include her foray into the white collar practice area.

Initially, Randell was attracted to the more theoretical world of appellate law but had the chance to dip her toes into the white collar practice area as part of the trial team in 2009 that won the acquittal of a senior executive of W.R. Grace & Co. in the case over asbestos contamination in Libby, Montana.

Three months immersed in the case gave her a taste for a practice area steeped in facts and investigation with the opportunity to work in the field directly with people developing a case, and she was hooked.

Rising through BuckleySandler's ranks quickly, Randell reached partner just four years after joining the firm and now has a resume that belies her age. She tells young attorneys looking to break into the practice area that not only hard work but also a willingness to have confidence in their abilities and jump in are key.

"Be the expert on the case and you become invaluable," she said. "Throw yourself into it so that you've made yourself indispensable. If you know the facts and issues better than anyone, you might be the one to argue that motion."

Meanwhile, the Rising Star already won the recognition of her peers as a standout in the field and is grateful for the opportunities she has at BuckleySandler.

"The team we've built here is a wonderful group of legal minds, which you need in this realm," she said. "They've really given me opportunities over the years to build my own expertise. That kind of support is something I hope every young attorney gets."

--Editing by Christine Chun.