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## Shumaker Elects First Female Chair

By **Madison Arnold**

Law360 (January 19, 2023, 4:17 PM EST) -- For the first time in its nearly 100-year-old history, Shumaker Loop & Kendrick LLP will be led by a female chair, after the firm said on Thursday its management committee voted to promote a Sarasota, Florida, attorney as its next leader.

Jennifer B. Compton is the first woman to take the helm of the firm, which has offices in Florida, Ohio, North Carolina and South Carolina. Before being promoted, Compton served as vice chair of the management committee and managing partner of the Sarasota office.

"Any time you're the first of anything, it's a humbling experience. Yes, I love the fact that our highest management positions reflect what has been going on in our firm for years, and that's very successful women in leadership," Compton told Law360. "To be the first female in that position, I think it's probably just fortuitous and happenstance for me personally, but I'm excited to see it, and ... I know I won't be the last."



Jennifer B. Compton

Shumaker opened its doors in 1925, according to its website. It employs a team of about 300 attorneys and advisers who are based in nine offices in Toledo and Columbus, Ohio; Tampa, Sarasota, Tallahassee and Dade City, Florida; Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina; and Charlotte, North Carolina.

"We're coming up on our 100-year anniversary so what a fantastic time to be asked to play a small part in continuing to bring the firm through the first 100 years and set up for success for the next 100," Compton said. "We are scattered from Florida to the Carolinas to Ohio, and it's a really opportune time for us as we seek to expand and grow in our markets and anywhere else where it makes sense."

Compton is joined in the leadership ranks by attorney Jaime Austrich, who was chosen as the firm's vice chair.

Thomas P. Dillon, the previous Shumaker management committee chair, said in a statement, "[W]e are honored to have Jennie and Jaime lead the firm and are confident they will help achieve our goal of making a difference for our clients, in our communities, and to our culture. Both are experienced, talented leaders committed to building a firm focused on client service."

Some of Compton's goals for her tenure is to continue with diversity efforts, follow through with strategic growth and promote firm culture, especially by helping those who joined during the pandemic, she said.

Compton is a Sarasota native and an employment law attorney, who has offered counseling and litigation services to clients for more than 25 years, the firm said.

She primarily represents employers and provides preventative counseling and litigation defense in cases brought by current and former employees. She has experience dealing with cases related to the Americans With Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act, among other regulations, according to her profile on the firm's website.

"I love my work for my clients, some of whom I've been representing for 25 years. I will have to delegate more, but I have a fantastic team that I've built over the past 25 years ... So I will absolutely keep practicing law, and I'm going to get better at delegating," Compton said.

She has worked at Shumaker for more than 13 years, and is a graduate of Samford University's Cumberland School of Law, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Compton is heavily involved in the Sarasota community, the firm said. She is a founding member of the Sarasota Bayfront Planning Organization and chair of the Bay Park Conservancy Board, where she is helping to create a 54-acre accessible park.

She is also a founding director and vice chair of Gulfside Bank, which the firm said is the only locally owned community bank in Sarasota.

Austrich worked as chair of Shumaker's Tampa litigation department for more than 10 years before being elected to the management committee. He has been with the firm for more than 23 years, according to his LinkedIn profile.

"Jennie is a true pioneer, both at work and in the community, and I'm excited to serve alongside her as vice chair of the management committee," Austrich said in the statement.

--Editing by Gemma Horowitz.

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