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Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Wagner Law Group Nabs DOL Veteran For Benefits Practice

By **Danielle Nichole Smith**

Law360 (April 14, 2020, 6:43 PM EDT) -- The Wagner Law Group bolstered its team in Florida with the addition of a former Sugarman & Susskind PA lawyer who has experience working with the boards of trustees for multiemployer plans and also spent time as a trial attorney at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Ivelisse Berio LeBeau started at Wagner as a partner on Monday, after nearly 13 years at Sugarman & Susskind. Berio LeBeau told Law360 on Tuesday that she's been "so impressed" with Wagner's "fantastic group of lawyers," noting that Marcia Wagner — the firm's managing partner — is "amazing."

"She has put together a great group of lawyers with depth in my area of practice, employee benefits law and employment law, and I'm very excited to work with them," Berio LeBeau said.



Ivelisse Berio LeBeau

Over the years, Berio LeBeau has worked with the boards of trustees for multiemployer funds, which generally consist of representatives from both unions and management, and helped clients dealing with DOL reviews, among other things, she said.

Before joining Sugarman & Susskind, Berio LeBeau was a trial attorney in the DOL's Office of the Solicitor, and it was there that she was introduced to the world of employee benefits through working with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, she said.

"I didn't really know much about it, but I learned pretty quickly working with EBSA and with investigations of breaches of fiduciary duty," Berio LeBeau said. "It turns out — who knew, right? — that employee benefits was actually this fascinating area of law with all sorts of novel and developing issues and interesting issues in ways that actually affect real people. I found that intellectually very satisfying."

Berio LeBeau said the perspective gained from being a government attorney has been useful, though she noted it's important to have perspective from the other side as well and to see how laws and policies are affecting people in the real world.

"I think government attorneys have a higher standard, frankly, to interpret and enforce the law," she said. "I was really fortunate to work with really great lawyers in my years at the Department of Labor."

Berio LeBeau told Law360 that she's done both litigation and compliance work throughout her career. She received her law degree from Boston College Law School in 1990 and her bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College in 1987.

"Ivelisse is a distinguished and highly accomplished ERISA and employee benefits attorney; we

are delighted that she will be joining our firm," Marcia Wagner, the managing partner, added in a statement Monday.

--Editing by Daniel King.

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