

Member Spotlight: Adrienne Braumiller

The international trade lawyer with a plan, a purpose...and a good heart.



Adrienne Braumiller is the founder of Braumiller Law Group PLLC and an innovative force in the international trade law arena. With more than 25 years of experience, she is widely recognised as a leading authority in customs, import, export, foreign-trade zones, free trade agreements and ITAR compliance.

Adrienne Braumiller is a woman who has beaten the odds to establish her own successful international law and customs practice.

As a young thirty-year-old lawyer she took the challenge laid down by a friend to establish a firm in Dallas, Texas. She did this despite being repeatedly told she could never compete with the big names operating in Washington D.C. and New York, while also coping with being a female managing partner in a very male-orientated industry.

Fast-forward 27 years, and Braumiller Law Group is now a pre-eminent firm in international trade and customs law. Adrienne is regularly recognised by Chambers and Partners as a leader in her field, and she is actively involved on a key Federal Advisory Committee that counsels the Department of Commerce on export control. She previously advised Customs and Border Protection after an appointment from the Secretary of Homeland Security and Treasury.

Despite all these accolades, Adrienne is most proud of her recent award from the Texas State Bar. She was nominated for the Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award by one of her Associates, and won the accolade for her outstanding work mentoring other women who

have gone on to have successful careers. Adrienne was chosen from a field of 37,477 female attorneys in the state of Texas.

Adrienne began her legal career in San Francisco, despite growing up in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her interest in trade law could have driven her to Washington D.C. and a job in government, but she decided a private practice would be more beneficial in the long run. After building her expertise in the trade and customs arena, the challenge came, in 1992, to build her own firm and she jumped at the chance.

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him and his wife back in Dallas. I was only thirty years old and I didn't know what I didn't know; which was probably a good thing. I wasn't married and I didn't have children, so I knew I could starve if required. I really didn't know what I was getting into, and I had no idea how hard it would be to land clients. We did it anyway and then it just grew exponentially, because we were the only customs and trade law firm in Dallas."

Adrienne was also drawn back to Dallas not only because she attended law school and passed the bar in Texas, she was also taking a gamble that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would be ratified, providing huge opportunities for trade with Mexico (currently called the USMCA). NAFTA has been responsible for providing Braumiller Law with plenty of business, thanks to the increase in cross-border trade. It is ironic then, that the recent protectionist stance of US President Donald Trump has meant that the firm is busier than ever.

Trump recently threatened to impose punitive tariffs on Mexico, which had many of Braumiller's clients scrambling to understand the extent of the cost to their businesses. The escalating trade war with China has also provided important business for the firm.

"I've seen companies that are very concerned they might go out of business with the Chinese tariffs. We've helped them navigate and figure out mitigation strategies for legally avoiding those tariffs. We have filed over 400 exclusion requests with the United States Trade Representative (USTR), booking a great success rate.

"We've also looked at other opportunities for people to mitigate the tariffs, such as moving their production to a different country, or changing the classification of goods through product engineering. Sharing costs with suppliers or reclaiming import

duties on exported goods is another way."

Adrienne is looking for opportunities to grow her business from both an organic and acquisitive level. The firm has a very sophisticated marketing strategy that includes extensive use of social media platforms. There is also a regular newsletter informing clients of the firm's views on topical trade and customs policy.

As well as legal practice, Braumiller Law Group also encompasses a consultancy arm (Braumiller Consulting Group) that provides specific advice on complex areas of trade legislation. This includes issues such as clarifying harmonised tariffs, or understanding the commerce control list for exports. The group's partnership with IR Global is partly motivated by a desire to help international importers into the US deal with this complexity.

Aside from growing her own business, Adrienne's work with mentoring younger women has been integral in launching several promising legal careers, and she takes pride in that. Her advice to young professionals starting out, is to undertake a clerkship with a lawyer they respect and gain experience from working hard. Once a job is secured, she believes the opportunity to undertake placements can lead to new opportunities. Attending conferences, writing articles, and accepting speaking engagements are also good ways to raise your profile.

She says: "A young lady with an impressive background recently asked me for an internship. She had been working with the US trade representative in Washington D.C. and I was thinking I would love to have her. When the Section 301 Chinese tariffs hit, she pulled out; but I didn't mind because it was an amazing opportunity that will give her more options when she eventually leaves the government.

"As another example, I sent an employee of mine on a placement to a large sporting goods company in Houston. The general counsel of the firm fell in love with her and offered her a job. She now lives in Hong Kong as Vice President of international sourcing of this company."

Adrienne's willingness to offer the benefit of her experience, allied to her personal warmth and strong bond with staff and colleagues, has earned her the moniker 'Mamma Bear'. This is enhanced by her habit of regularly eating lunch with the team and promoting a flat hierarchy within the firm.

As an actual mother herself, she enjoys spending time with her twenty-one-year-old son Ean when away from the office. Although he attends college in San Diego, he spends plenty of time at the family home during vacation with his three best friends, whom Adrienne calls 'the band of brothers.'

When not working or running a family home, wine and travel play a large part in Adrienne's relaxation schedule. She enjoys wine tasting events and loves experiencing new cultures. One habit she has developed is to throw a dart at a map of the world once a year and then make plans to visit the country into which the dart is embedded. In 2019 she spent two weeks in Croatia and hopes to make Japan her next destination.

Adrienne's journey to the top of the legal profession has seen her rise to become an internationally renowned trade lawyer, recognised and respected at the highest levels of US government. She has done that while maintaining humility and the willingness to help others to achieve their own goals.

She beat the odds to get this far, and you certainly wouldn't bet against her achieving the next phase of her plan to take Braumiller Law Group to new successes.

Adrienne Braumiller

IR Global's exclusive Trade & Customs Law member in the U.S - Texas

braumillerlaw.com | Adrienne@BraumillerLaw.com | +1 214 348 9306

Braumiller Law Group, PLLC, is a highly respected boutique law firm focused on international trade compliance and proven strategies to optimise global trade business practices. The attorneys and trade advisors of Braumiller Law Group know exactly how to navigate the intricate maze of global trade regulations, and have a successful track record for helping clients save millions of dollars in compliance penalties.

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