

Jenner Selects New MP, with Katya Jestin Stepping Back From Role

By Andrew Maloney

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What You Need to Know

- Katya Jestin, co-managing partner at Jenner since 2020, said she is shifting her focus to her 'booming' practice.
- Ishan Bhabha, a D.C.-based partner and co-chair of education and technology practices, will succeed Jestin.
- The firm stated it is on pace this year to increase its revenue by nearly 50% relative to the first year Jestin and Mehrberg were in their roles, in 2020.

After five years at the helm, one of Jenner & Block's leaders will step aside.

The firm announced Thursday that Katya Jestin, a New York-based partner in investigations, compliance and defense and co-managing partner of the firm since January 2020, will step back from the firmwide leadership role to focus on her practice. She will remain a member of the firm's policy committee.

In her place, the Am Law 100 firm is elevating Ishan Bhabha, a Washington, D.C.-based partner and co-chair of its education and tech-



Courtesy photos

Ishan Bhabha (left) and Randy Mehrberg of Jenner & Block.

nology practices, effective January 2025. He will serve as co-managing partner alongside Randy Mehrberg, a Chicago-based partner who also co-chairs the energy practice and began in the role at the same time as Jestin.

The planned leadership change comes as Jenner expects more revenue growth in 2024, even on top of the firm's 14% growth last year, and the firm continues to expand in other offices. Still, Jestin has served two years past her initially anticipated leadership tenure, she

Courtesy photo



Katya Jestin of Jenner & Block.

said, and she will continue to serve as co-chair of the firm's investigations, compliance, and defense practice.

She said in an interview this week there was nothing specific that made her want to shift her focus right now, except that her practice is "booming." She noted she's a government-appointed legal monitor for Glencore, the Swiss commodities trader that was enmeshed in a bribery case and that the firm has "several very robust investigations for some important firm clients also going on in parallel."

"It's a wonderful thing. I couldn't be happier. I love what I do, and it just felt like the right time," she said.

The process to find a successor has been going on for several months, Mehrberg added. He and Jestin were originally slated to serve

as co-managing partners for three years. But there's not a set term for the co-managing partner position, at least at this point, Mehrberg said.

"I think we serve at the pleasure of the policy committee, is the best way to characterize it," he said. "If you were to bet on sequencing, Ishan will be in the role longer than me going forward. And having a staggered approach, we think, is helpful for continuity and to continue our growth and success."

The firm grew revenue by 14% last year to more than \$582 million. Profits per equity partner grew roughly 18%, amid a 4% contraction in its equity tier, and the firm jumped seven spots in the Am Law rankings to No. 86.

Jestin said the firm's financial performance over the last five years has been "the strongest in its history," and the firm noted in a release that its revenue is projected to be up more than 48% relative to 2020 by the end of this year. That would mean a little more than \$660.5 million.

Asked about revenue expectations in general, Mehrberg said the firm is pleased with the execution of its strategy, and that it has expanded its client base and its work with its clients. "It's all yielding results," he said, adding a bit later: "We are optimistic. Maybe even confident."

Jenner landed on the 2024 A-List and notched the top score among the top 20 firms in the pro bono category. The leaders pointed specifically to a 2020 pledge to provide \$250 million in pro bono legal services over the

subsequent five years, which the firm said it exceeded earlier this year, about 18 months ahead of schedule, after averaging more than 75,000 pro bono hours a year.

Bhabha said all of those things have put him and Mehrberg and the rest of the firm in a position to reach more goals during their tenure. “This is not fixing the holes in the boat. It’s super-charging the motor,” he said.

He added: “I think the role as I see it—and I haven’t even started yet—but the guiding light, I think, needs to be to put the institution and its members, attorneys and staff, in the best position to serve our clients. Serving clients in the best possible way is the North Star for us.”

The firm doesn’t put too much stock in where its leaders are based, Jestin added. So the fact Bhabha is in Washington, D.C., rather than New York isn’t expected to be a significant change.

“I was the first person in this role not in Chicago, and I think it is a testament to the fact that we are a global law firm. Our talent is where our talent is,” she said.

That doesn’t mean the dynamics in each office are exactly the same. The firm this year essentially doubled its footprint in San Francisco with a new office and added a second office on the west side of Los Angeles, pointing to low turnover and rapid growth on the West Coast. Mehrberg said San Francisco is now its fastest-growing and busiest office on a per capita basis.

He noted the firm has had a strong start to the year and would like to have a strong finish. He also said they’re ahead of their pro bono contributions from last year.

“We’d like to continue on that path and do even better than last year, then set ourselves up for success in 2025,” he said. “And again, that just means partnering with our clients, understanding the range and depth of their challenges, and supporting them in achieving their goals.”

This story has been updated to clarify that Jestin will remain in leadership as a member of the firm’s policy committee.