

# Where Are They Now?

**Catching up with Previous SFNet  
40 Under 40 Award Winners**

**BY EILEEN WUBBE**

**SFNet 40 Under 40 Award recipients share how the Award affected their careers and advice for the Class of 2025.**

**Sherrill Hornett, managing director, Portfolio Management, White Oak Commercial Finance, LLC and 2021 40 Under 40 Award Winner**

**Since being recognized as an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner, what has changed most in your career? What was the biggest challenge in making that transition?**

A lot! I received the SFNet 40 Under 40 recognition shortly after making a significant shift in my career by joining the non-bank ABL community. One of the biggest changes that followed was the opportunity to manage a team for the first time – a professional milestone I had worked toward for many years. It was an invaluable learning experience that stretched me in new ways. That said, as a parent of two young children, I've come to recognize that I currently thrive more in an individual contributor role than in management. Letting go of that long-held aspiration wasn't easy, but I'm deeply grateful for the experience. It may be something I revisit in the future, but for now, I'm energized doing what I do best: managing risk, building relationships, and contributing alongside an incredible new team at White Oak.

**Looking back, what experiences or mentors helped prepare you most for this next step in your career?**

I took a leap of faith four years ago when I left Wells Fargo after an incredible 15-year run and joined the non-bank ABL community. Looking back, the professional development that came from having the courage to leave the familiarity and deep relationships of a well-known institution – and step into the uncertainty of a new environment where I had yet to build my reputation – laid a strong foundation of confidence and resilience. That experience prepared me for future transitions, including my recent move to White Oak. I couldn't have navigated that path without the guidance and encouragement of the many mentors and friends I've been fortunate to have in this industry, and I'm forever grateful for each of those relationships.

**What advice would you give to the current 40 Under 40 class or other young professionals aspiring to reach leadership roles?**

Some of the most significant career growth opportunities I've had came when I embraced change, had the courage to say no, and trusted myself to pursue a different direction – even when I couldn't predict exactly how it would unfold. I leaned on my invaluable network of industry friends and mentors, whose support made all the difference. My advice: believe in yourself and your potential, even when the next move feels uncertain, and never lose touch with the network that helps you grow.

**Yoojin Lee, partner, Holland & Knight LLP and 2021 40 Under 40 Award Winner**

**Since being recognized as an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner, what has changed most in your career? What was the biggest challenge in making that transition?**



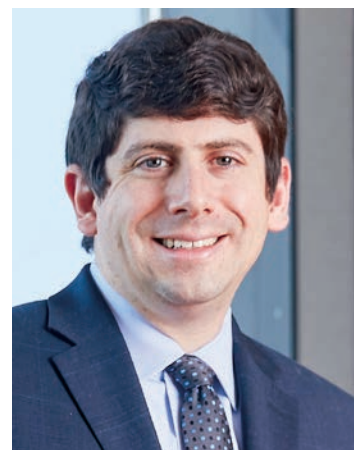
■ **SHERRILL HORNETT**  
White Oak Commercial  
Finance, LLC



■ **YOOJIN LEE**  
Holland & Knight LLP



■ **MICHAEL REGINA**  
Otterbourg P.C.



■ **MATT WEISS**  
Parker, Hudson, Rainer  
& Dobbs LLP

Since being recognized in SFNet's 40 Under 40, I have been elected partner and transitioned my practice to Holland & Knight with a group of attorneys from my prior firm. The biggest challenge in making the transition was starting at a new place, learning new systems, incorporating into a new culture, and meeting new people. However, working alongside welcoming attorneys at Holland & Knight made the transition less challenging.

**How did being named as an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner impact your professional trajectory or visibility within the secured finance industry?**

The popularity of SFNet's 40 Under 40 Awards has made my name more recognizable in the industry. As a result, my network of fellow SFNet 40 Under 40 honorees and others within the industry has expanded – many of whom I would have never met.

**What are your key priorities in your role at Holland & Knight LLP?**

My key priority at Holland & Knight is to work alongside colleagues to support our clients and provide them with a high level of legal services that they need to grow their business.

**What advice would you give to the current SFNet 40 Under 40 class or other young professionals aspiring to reach leadership roles?**

Young professionals should get involved in SFNet and in other industry groups – not only to learn from peers, but to grow their professional network. Such involvement will expose young professionals to more leadership roles within the community, which I believe will help advance their careers.

**What is next for you—are there any personal or professional goals you're particularly excited about in the coming years?**

I am excited about growing our team, mentoring young professionals and expanding my relationships within the community.

**Michael Regina, partner, Otterbourg P.C. and 2024 40 Under 40 Award Winner**

**Since being recognized as an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner, what has changed most in your career? What was the biggest challenge in making that transition?**

Since receiving SFNet's 40 Under 40 recognition, the most significant change has been my elevation to partner at Otterbourg. It's been a rewarding milestone, but the transition also came with a shift in perspective—from executing legal work to also thinking strategically about business development, mentorship, and the broader direction of the firm. Balancing those new responsibilities while continuing to deliver for clients has been both the biggest challenge and an incredibly valuable growth experience.

**How did being named as an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner impact your professional trajectory or visibility within the secured finance industry?**

The 40 Under 40 recognition was a meaningful boost in terms of visibility and credibility. It helped open doors to new relationships and deepened existing ones, both within the firm and across the secured finance industry. It also reinforced the trust clients place in me and gave me the confidence to pursue greater leadership opportunities.

**Looking back, what experiences or mentors helped prepare you most for where you currently are in your career?**

I've been fortunate to work with mentors who modeled what it means to be both technically strong and commercially practical. One of the most valuable experiences was being given increasing responsibility early on—being trusted to lead deals and interact directly with clients gave me the confidence

and skills I needed to grow. I also learned a great deal from observing how senior partners handled deal structure, negotiations and client relationships.

**What advice would you give to the current SFNet 40 Under 40 class or other young professionals aspiring to reach leadership roles?**

Don't chase a title—focus on doing the kind of work that earns trust and makes you the person people turn to when something really matters. Do not underestimate the value of being consistent and dependable. It's not flashy, but it builds real credibility. Also, get to know your clients beyond the immediate deal points, for example, how they make decisions, what pressures they're under, and what you can do to actually help move the needle forward. That perspective will make your advice more valuable.

**Matt Weiss, partner, Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs LLP and 2023 40 Under 40 Award Winner**

**Since being recognized as an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner, what has changed most in your career? What was the biggest challenge in making that transition?**

I was named an SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winner two years ago. Since that time, I was named partner at my law firm, Parker Hudson, in January 2024. On a day-to-day basis, the transition from associate to partner was not as significant as I thought it might be. However, it is still a profound change. Being a partner emphasizes that you are a stakeholder in the future of your firm and have a vested interest in its future success. This has allowed me to take a variety of new leadership roles where I can provide my experience and insight, including assisting with the management of our firm's Complex Litigation and Restructuring Team, chairing our firm's Diversity Committee, and overseeing our monthly compilation of recent bankruptcy and commercial law cases that we share with firm clients. The biggest challenge I've had as a new partner is striking the correct balance between staying on top of the day-to-day workflow and ramping up my business development efforts.

**What are your key priorities in your role at Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs LLP?**

I have a number of different priorities in my role at Parker Hudson. Most important, it is important that I am a productive and collaborative member of the Firm's Complex Litigation and Restructuring Group, which combines our firm's attorneys with bankruptcy and litigation backgrounds. Our practice runs the gamut from traditional litigation, to representing insurers in mass tort bankruptcy cases, to representing creditors or DIP lenders in bankruptcies. As a junior partner, I view myself as a link between the more senior partners and our group's associates and being in the middle means that I play an important role in directing and executing our legal strategies

on behalf of clients. A second priority of mine is to be a good firm citizen, which is reflected in my involvement with committees, recruiting, our summer associate program, and business development efforts. I'm mindful of how important partners' non-billable efforts are to the firm's success. Finally, it is a priority of mine to present a good public face for the firm within the larger legal and business communities, including through my involvement with the local bar association, participation in events with various industry organizations like SFNet and TMA, and other civic engagement. Not only is such involvement helpful for business development, but I think it's generally important for attorneys to engage with those around them and to use their unique skill sets, where possible, to advance both the legal profession and their broader communities.

**Looking back, what experiences or mentors helped prepare you most for this next step in your career?**

I am lucky to have had several mentors both at Parker Hudson and at prior law firms. My Parker Hudson mentors were instrumental in positioning me to be a successful partner candidate and guiding me through the partnership process. There are also a number of experiences that I've had in recent years that have positioned me for success professionally, including my work on a significant bankruptcy court bench trial and my service on the board of the Bankruptcy Section of the Atlanta Bar Association. Through my involvement with the local bar association, I have also had the opportunity to participate in panel discussions on various bankruptcy topics that have allowed me to increase my profile in the legal community.

**What advice would you give to the current SFNet 40 Under 40 class or other young professionals aspiring to reach leadership roles?**

The main piece of advice I would offer to this year's 40 Under 40 class is that you shouldn't passively assume you'll be tapped for promotions or leadership positions. Rather, it's

important to identify what your goals are and work with others within your firm or company to take steps to achieve those goals. I believe that I've been given several leadership roles at my firm because I was (hopefully correctly) seen as someone that was reliable and would do a good job when presented with a project. But getting to that point requires a lot of work and building up a reputation as someone who is both diligent and competent. I think the advice boils down to simply trying hard and doing your best work regardless of whether the project is high profile or is something that you think other people are paying close attention to. Because how you do your work, and the attitude you bring to the office, over time will establish your reputation, either positively or negatively. 📌



*Eileen Wubbe is senior editor of The Secured Lender magazine.*

**The main piece of advice I would offer to this year's 40 Under 40 class is that you shouldn't passively assume you'll be tapped for promotions or leadership positions. Rather, it's important to identify what your goals are and work with others within your firm or company to take steps to achieve those goals.**