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TRAILBLAZERS

REAL ESTATE | CONSTRUCTION LAW

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What was the genesis of the idea that has made you a trailblazer?

In February 2020, we started to get calls about the Covid-19 pandemic. Our healthcare clients were seeing increased emergency room admissions and both they and our social service clients were concerned about having enough capacity in the event of a major surge. At the same time, our education clients were concerned about whether they would be able to operate at all.

Given this need, we worked with our healthcare clients to secure non-traditional space on an expedited basis in which to house patients who did not need in-patient care (including churches, hotels, and outdoor venues). We also helped our education clients open satellite locations in the suburbs and repurpose outdoor space as classrooms. And we ensured our social service clients could continue operating to meet the massive increase in need by enforcing their leasehold rights when necessary.

Of course, we continued working with for-profit clients who had their own need for financial relief too.

What sort of change has resulted from the concept?

Clients will be more ready to secure swing space and more open to considering new ways of doing business, including by taking space in locations they would never have considered before. They have also learned the value of bringing legal counsel in early enough that we can work cooperatively as a team to address a fast-evolving situation.

What bearing will this have on the future?

New York City is strongly recovering from the pandemic, but what I take from it is that in a crisis, many different parties in the not-for-profit and real estate sectors pulled together to work constructively for the good of all. While the experience was at times difficult, it has also made me very hopeful for the future.

**Patterson
Belknap**