

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Anita Girdhari

Law360 (August 15, 2018, 1:25 PM EDT) -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP partner Anita Girdhari's experience in moving forward big-ticket transportation infrastructure public-private partnerships has made her a standout young attorney at the firm, earning her a spot as one of four project finance practitioners under 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

RECENT DEALS:

Girdhari has been a key player in numerous transportation-related deals in U.S. markets, according to the firm. For example, she is now representing a group of bidders for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project in Alabama, a project brought about by a need to expand the road's capacity.

She has also been advising on the financing and negotiation of a public-private partnership at Denver International Airport to refurbish a section of the airport — the Jeppesen terminal, she said. According to Girdhari, financing for the project closed at the end of 2017, just a couple days before Christmas.

"I think just the length of the negotiations and the complexity of some of the issues we had to sort out with the city, in particular coming up with payment streams that work for both parties," is what made the deal challenging, she said.

WHAT MOTIVATES HER:

Girdhari said she enjoys the clients she works with, who often return to her for help on other issues, and the coworkers she

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STAR



Anita Girdhari
Gibson Dunn

Age: 38

Home base: New York City

Position: Partner

Law school: New York
University School of Law

First job after law school:
Associate at White & Case LLP

spends her day with. Her area of law is about bringing parties together and building something, and being a part of that creation keeps her looking forward to the next project.

"For example, I travel through Denver quite a bit, so I think it will really be interesting and fun to travel through the refurbished terminal I was a piece of creating," she said.

WHY SHE IS A PROJECT FINANCE ATTORNEY:

She said she enjoys being part of an area of law that revolves around creating and building tangible things, and that she feels she is always actively learning new things because so many different issues come up on a daily basis.

"It is really multidisciplinary," she said. "So I do everything from negotiating with governmental entities to negotiating construction contracts with construction companies to working on financing with various financing parties involved."

HOW SHE THINKS HER PRACTICE WILL CHANGE IN THE COMING YEARS:

There is a lot of room for growth in her area, she said, adding that there is an environment now where a lot of states and cities are looking for alternative forms of financing for public works.

"I think there's a lot of interesting synergies that I expect will arise for increasing coordination and cooperation between the public and private sector to finance public-private partnerships," she said.

— *As told to Adam Lidgett*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.