

Rising Star: Mayer Brown's Grace Shie

Law360, New York (July 25, 2017, 12:58 PM EDT) - Mayer Brown LLP's Grace Shie manages global mobility programs for big-ticket businesses, including a top U.S. aerospace company, and previously helmed a major law firm's immigration practice in Hong Kong, earning her a spot as one of three immigration practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

A PIVOT FROM LITIGATION TO IMMIGRATION:

Although Shie started out as a litigation associate at a prior firm, the chance soon arose for her to assist with an immigration case, opening up a new career avenue. The world of immigration, with its bevy of opportunities to interact with clients, turned out to be the perfect match.

"I'm a people person," Shie said. "And in this type of field, I talk to my clients on a daily basis. ... When you're in litigation, sometimes you can be in a war room, doing discovery with lots of paper, but not necessarily people. So, it was the right fit for me."

THE TALENT TO LAND A MAJOR CLIENT:

In 2014, Shie successfully co-led a pitch to a large security and aerospace company, and she now manages a global mobility program for it. This entails everything from visa transactions and border-crossing issues to workforce matters associated with mergers and acquisitions. It's no small order, as it involves a slate of over 300 cases that span over 30 nations.

"It was their full global mobility program," Shie said. "And it was just one of the largest efforts that I've ever gone

RISING
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
STAR



Grace Shie
Mayer Brown

Age: 39

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Partner

Law school: Georgetown University Law Center

First job after law school: Associate at then-Shaw Pittman

through to win the work, to win a client, to land an account — and in turn, one of largest programs that I've had the opportunity to manage.”

ONE OF HER PROUDEST MOMENTS:

When she was just 31, Shie moved to Hong Kong to manage the “Greater China” immigration practice for Baker McKenzie, and the experience was among her proudest achievements as an attorney. Despite relocating to Hong Kong in the midst of the financial crisis in 2009, Shie was able to win the trust of her new clients and practiced in the region for several years.

“Once I reached the point where I knew I was looked to as a trusted adviser, that was a great moment for me — when I knew I had hit my stride in Asia,” Shie said.

THE REWARDS OF PRACTICING IMMIGRATION LAW, ESPECIALLY TODAY:

Having come to the U.S. from Taiwan when she was 6, Shie has a personal connection to immigration, and said she can “very much relate to my clients, and the people who benefit from my services.” And while there are plenty of challenges that currently come with practicing immigration, Shie noted there’s also satisfaction in helping clients navigate today’s landscape.

“Most of my clients, if not all, are major multinational companies. They do business across borders. And the way they do business is their workforce has to be mobile. Their employees have to be able to cross borders. And it's particularly difficult today,” Shie said. “And counseling them, and counseling their employees on how to navigate in today's environment — I think it's fair to say it's a fairly anti-immigrant environment in many regions and countries — the work is very rewarding in that way.”

ADVICE TO YOUNG ATTORNEYS:

Shie’s advice to young attorneys out there? Work overseas, if the chance presents itself. You can learn a lot about yourself, and there’s the opportunity to build an “incredible network of contacts” that you wouldn’t have had available to you beforehand, she said.

“Whether it's a six-month client project in Dubai or a two-year assignment to work in the foreign office of their company or their law firm, seize that opportunity,” Shie said. “That experience will be incredibly eye-opening, at least it was for me. And hopefully for some young attorneys, it'll be life-changing.”

— *As told to Allissa Wickham*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2017 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.