

David Flugman Named to Crain's New York's "40 Under 40"

03/22/21



(Excerpts from this piece were originally published in Crain's)

The pandemic has posed myriad challenges for the city and the state, but the enterprising young New Yorkers named to [Crain's New York Business 40 Under 40 list](#) are ensuring that the Big Apple not only recovers but thrives.

Lawyer David Flugman has litigated his share of headliner cases—negotiating a groundbreaking settlement in a lawsuit against Bernie Madoff, winning changes to the “Dickensian” treatment of psychiatric patients at Kings County Medical Center and achieving affirmation of a New Jersey statute outlawing conversion therapy for minors.

A concert pianist, opera lover and onetime member of Yale University’s a cappella group, he originally thought he might practice entertainment law. But in the end, litigation and its problem-solving excited him more.

“The joy for me of litigation is you never know what’s coming next,” Flugman said.

After a dozen years at Kirkland & Ellis, where he became a partner at age 31, he joined majority women-owned Selendy & Gay three years ago to build out its litigation practice and head up its diversity and inclusion efforts. One attraction was a commitment to breaking the traditional mode of thinking at law firms.

“From the inception [of a case], we think about the themes, the storytelling in front of a judge or jury,” he said. “Then we work backward to understand not just a case but industries and where market forces are going.”

Much of his public-interest practice concerns LGBTQ rights. Flugman, who married his husband in 2017, is particularly proud of the firm’s diversity and inclusion efforts, as well as the significant amount of time spent mentoring young associates.

“We are trying to celebrate people’s diversity and use it as an asset,” he said, “helping people realize the full potential they have as lawyers.”

He predicts his public-interest practice and that of the firm will increase as cases dealing with equal access, religious liberties and transgender rights become more common—and more contentious.

“We are poised to explode,” Flugman said of his firm. “We have a group of people committed to getting at systemic causes and building us into a model for how business can achieve those objectives.”

Attorney

- David Flugman