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2025 Future Leader Award Recipient: Yliana Vicknair

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Chamberlain Hrdlicka is proud to recognize Associate Yliana Vicknair as the recipient of the firm's 2025 Future Leader Award, presented by the Attorney Development Committee to honor associates who make exceptional non-billable contributions that strengthen the firm and its culture.

Based in the firm's Houston office, Yliana focuses her practice on fiduciary litigation, guiding clients through complex disputes that often arise during pivotal life transitions. In addition to her legal practice, she is a deeply respected leader within the firm and an integral member of the Recruiting Committee, where she plays an active role in attracting, mentoring, and supporting new talent. Her leadership extends to firm culture and community engagement, including her longstanding leadership of the Houston offices' participation in the Houston Young Lawyers Foundation's Adopt-an-Angel initiative, which since 2021 has helped provide Christmas gifts to more than 400 children in underprivileged communities.

Yliana's nominators describe her as a quiet leader whose generosity, thoughtful guidance, and calm presence inspire confidence and collaboration across the Litigation group and the firm. Through her commitment to recruiting, mentoring, community involvement, and firm initiatives, she exemplifies the values of the Future Leader Award and continues to make a lasting impact across Chamberlain Hrdlicka.

Q&A with Yliana Vicknair**1 Your practice focuses on fiduciary litigation, which often involves complex relationships and high-stakes trust issues. What initially drew you to this area of law, and what keeps you engaged in the work today?**

I was initially drawn to fiduciary litigation because I really clicked with the team I joined and found the issues in these cases genuinely interesting. The work often involves complex relationships and nuanced legal questions, which kept things engaging early on. Over the past six years, I've grown to really love this area of practice because of the clients. Fiduciary disputes tend to come up during major life transitions and being able to help people navigate those moments in a thoughtful, steady way is very rewarding. I also enjoy that no two cases are exactly alike; there are always new research questions and unique issues to work through, which keeps the practice challenging and interesting.

2 You've been recognized with the Future Leader Award for your impact beyond billable work. How do you see leadership, especially quiet or behind-the-scenes leadership, showing up in a law firm environment?

I think quiet, or behind-the-scenes leadership is incredibly important in a law firm, particularly for younger associates who are just starting out. Being an attorney can be very rewarding, but it can also be stressful and overwhelming, especially when

2025 Future Leader Award Recipient: Yliana Vicknair, *Continued*

you're adjusting to professional life straight out of college or law school. In my experience, leadership often shows up in small, everyday ways: taking the time to answer questions, offering guidance before it's asked for, or simply keeping your office door open for people to come by when they need help. Our firm does this especially well, with strong formal and informal mentorship across practice groups. That kind of leadership helps create an environment where associates at all stages feel supported and equipped to grow.

3 In addition to excelling in your litigation practice, you are deeply involved in recruiting, mentoring, and firm initiatives. Why are those non-billable contributions important to you, and how do they strengthen the firm as a whole?

Recruiting, mentoring, and other firm initiatives are important to me because they help me stay connected to people across the firm whom I don't necessarily work with on a day-to-day basis. I also think these non-billable contributions are essential to the long-term health of the firm. The people we recruit and how we support and develop associates directly shape who we are and where we're headed. Investing time in those efforts helps ensure the firm continues to grow thoughtfully, with strong lawyers who are engaged and committed for the long haul.

4 You've played a significant role in community engagement efforts, including leading the Houston offices' participation in the Houston Young Lawyers Foundation's Adopt-an-Angel initiative. How does community involvement influence firm culture and the way attorneys connect with one another?

Leading the Adopt an Angel initiative has been especially meaningful to me because it highlights how generous and engaged people at our firm really are. Seeing people from different sections and roles come together around a shared goal is incredibly rewarding. Community involvement like this plays an important role in shaping firm culture because it generates connection outside of billable work. It allows attorneys and non-attorneys to interact in a more relaxed, informal way, which strengthens relationships and reinforces a sense of teamwork throughout the firm.

5 As someone who is balancing a growing fiduciary litigation practice, firm leadership, and life as a new mom, what advice would you offer to young attorneys who want to build a meaningful, sustainable career while staying true to their values?

I would encourage young attorneys to say yes—especially early in their careers. Say yes to networking events, study groups, and professional organizations in your practice area. Say yes when a different shareholder or partner offers you a project and say yes when a colleague asks you to grab lunch or coffee. Those moments are where relationships and opportunities really begin. Building a meaningful and sustainable career isn't just about the work itself; it's about being engaged with your firm and your broader professional community. When you jump in and stay connected, you start to understand how you want to shape your career over time, both professionally and personally.

