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LITIGATION DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR, Real Estate KRAMER LEVIN

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What are some of the department's most satisfying successes of the past year and why? What was satisfying about obtaining dismissals of all claims in the Wade Park matter was not only the repeated litigation victories, but also that Kramer Levin engineered a key component of the real estate loan for one of the clients (effectively, an equity sweep) that made it unscathed through years of lender liability litigation. That initial deal structuring and planning of

remedies were very helpful in the eventual litigation. It was an excellent example of our firm's collaborative approach.

We are also especially proud of our successful representation of The Frick Collection, which, together with its adjacent Frick Art Library, is one of New York City's most esteemed cultural institutions. Nevertheless, the Frick's Fifth Avenue facilities were outdated in multiple respects and no longer adequate for important parts



Kramer Levin Naftalis and Frankel LLP Office in Manhattan, New York.

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LITIGATION DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR

of its mission, including the display of art, educational programs, the preservation of the library's extensive collection, and the overall visitor experience. The Frick's extensive renovation program, including major expansion that for the most part is underground, received the required City approvals but still provoked two lawsuits by Upper East Side neighbors. Litigation continued even after the Frick shut down its buildings, moved the entire Library collection and much of its art work into storage facilities, and opened a temporary operation at the former Whitney Museum on Madison Avenue. We believe that, in defeating the two litigation efforts to stop this project, we were instrumental in saving this great institution.

Finally, Kramer Levin's victory in the Fourth Watch litigation for client CPR Money LLC, a lender to real estate developers, was satisfying because Kramer Levin obtained dismissal with prejudice of the initial complaint. Florida state courts generally grant a plaintiff leave to amend its complaint, sometimes as many as three or four times, unless the defendant establishes that no amendment could cure the defects in the pleading. In Fourth Watch, the court adopted Kramer Levin's arguments that CPR had cleared that high bar.

A prospective client in crisis calls and asks why your team should be retained. What is your answer? Whatever the nature of the crisis, we have seen it before, know how to handle it and have the bandwidth to be on top of it immediately. If the litigation crisis requires other areas of expertise to manage—such as transactional or bankruptcy, as real estate disputes often do—we are well-equipped to handle those aspects as well.

What traits do you respect most in opposing firms and lawyers? Creativity, diligence, crisp-writing, persuasive oral advocacy and integrity.

What is the firm doing to ensure that future generations of litigators are ready to take the helm? We think the best way to prepare the next generation to lead is by putting them in the room where things happen and handing them the reins whenever possible. We staff cases leanly to give our associates frontline litigation experience and client exposure, and create meaningful on-the-job opportunities to develop and hone skills. Our formal and informal professional development programs also address the nuts and bolts of litigation, deposition techniques, drafting and writing, and ethics. In addition, we offer training programs designed to strengthen our lawyers' business acumen on topics such as accounting, networking and business development, and client service.

Our extensive shadowing and pro bono programs provide junior lawyers with additional chances for on-the-job training and partner mentoring early in their careers. Shadowing opportunities include participating in conference calls, attending client meetings, covering hearings and court conferences, attending depositions, and participating in negotiations. Pro bono work enables our litigators to follow their passions, and has fostered broad involvement in areas such as political asylum, LGBT rights, domestic violence, housing and homelessness, criminal trials and appeals, and service to nonprofit groups. We also regularly host training programs that promote awareness of DEI topics.