

Rising Star: Kilpatrick Townsend's Charles Galbraith

Law360, New York (August 4, 2017, 4:29 PM EDT) -- Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP's Charles Galbraith has spent much of his career trying to bring positive change for Native American communities, including pushing for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act while working for the federal government, earning him a spot as one of three Native American law practitioners under 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Galbraith said he had worked on the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act in one form or another for pretty much his whole career — including in former President Barack Obama's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs — and eventually saw the fruits of his labor in 2013 when it was signed. In regard to Indian law, he said, there was a provision that recognized the authority of tribes to prosecute non-Native Americans who commit violent crimes against Native American women.

"The reason it was so satisfying is that it was a glaring policy problem," Galbraith said. "Native American women face the highest rates of domestic abuse of any group in the country."

WHY NATIVE AMERICAN LAW:

As a member of the [Navajo Nation](#), Galbraith said, he went to law school with the goal of representing Native American tribes.

"Throughout history, tribes have been taken advantage of, both in the law and in government action, and it was a motivator for me from early on in my educational career," he said. "I was fortunate enough to get some great opportunities early on to work on the Hill, the Department of Justice and the White House."

WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:

Galbraith said his responsibility to Indian Country is one he enjoys, and that being in private practice, he is able to leverage the experience he has had in the federal government, litigation and working with tribes.

"I have a real motivation to help tribes solve their biggest problems," he

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STAR



Charles Galbraith
 Kilpatrick Townsend

Age: 37

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Counsel

Law school: Arizona State University College of Law

First job after law school: Legislative assistant for then-U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson, D-South Dakota

said. "What I enjoy most about being an attorney is when tribal governments and other clients come to you with their biggest problems."

OTHER NOTABLE WORK:

Galbraith said he does work as a special prosecutor for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, prosecuting white collar crimes against the nation.

"I work on several different matters there, but they are all similar in that someone who had a position of trust abused that trust," he said. "And it's important for tribes to be taking on that responsibility as an active self-determination to make sure that people that take advantage of tribal governments are held accountable."

THE BIGGEST CASE OF HIS CAREER:

In 2009, Galbraith said, he was a federal prosecutor when he pursued a fraud case against an Arizona real estate investor named Mario Bernadel. After a two and a half week trial — which Galbraith said was his longest — he eventually got a conviction, which led to Bernadel being sentenced to around 17 years behind bars.

He said Bernadel made money through kickbacks in a scheme where he would recruit investors to buy homes in their names, pay them a few thousand dollars and use a broker or appraiser to essentially inflate the value of the homes. He said Bernadel would then get loans for more than the homes were actually worth.

"Then they would pocket the difference, the homes would go into default and the bank was the ultimate one that was defrauded," Galbraith 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 2017 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.