

Daily Journal

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Top 40 under 40



Lauren Gallo White

White is a Wilson Sonsini partner focused on internet litigation and counseling for technology clients. Among them are Google LLC and its YouTube subsidiary.

She remains working remotely during the pandemic. “Our D.C. and San Diego offices are reopening slowly,” she said in mid-July, “but most of us are still remote, with lots of Zoom and Google Meet. My practice is geographically dispersed, so I’m used to video discussions.”

White is one of the lead lawyers on the Wilson Sonsini team defending Google in one of many cases seeking to hold responsible social media platforms for tragic shootings and attacks across the world. In July 2020 she and the team led its opening appellate brief seeking affirmance of the win she obtained at the trial court in Texas in December 2019.

There, U.S. District Judge Jane J. Boyle of Dallas dismissed with prejudice a suit brought by a Dallas police officer and his husband against Twitter, Facebook Inc. and Google asserting they facilitated the deadly 2016 Dallas police shootings. The judge rejected the plaintiffs’ effort to tie the Palestine organization Hamas to the shooting and noted that no international terrorism was involved. As in other similar cases in which White leads the defense, the Anti-Terrorism Act does not apply because it does not cover

acts of domestic terrorism, the judge held. *Retana v. Twitter Inc.*, 3_19- cv-00359 (N.D. Tex., filed Feb. 13, 2019).

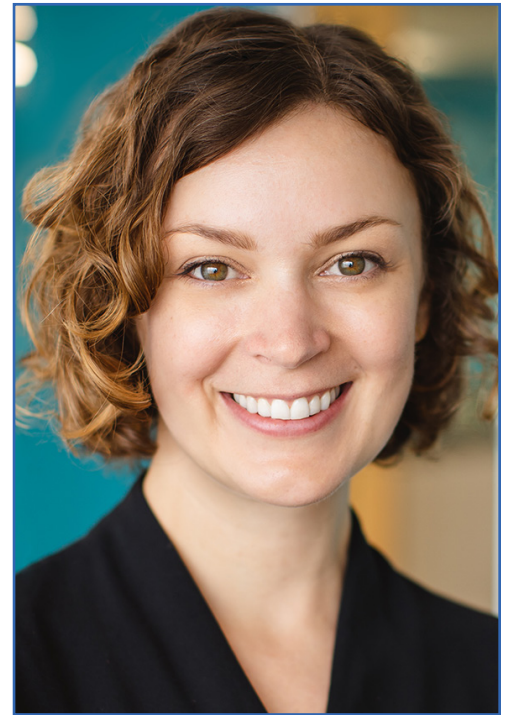
“There have been multiple wins and multiple appeals and I’m on all of them,” White said. In another such case, on March 24, 2020, a Florida judge granted dismissal of similar claims based on the 2016 Pulse Nightclub shootings in Orlando. That dismissal was based on a 6th Circuit ruling White and the team obtained over nearly identical claims in a separate case. Others remain before the 9th Circuit.

“We and our co-defendants have beaten every one of them, because there is simply insufficient proximate cause,” White said. “There have been no new claims filed for nearly two years now, so maybe they have gotten the message.”

In February 2020, a 9th Circuit panel affirmed a trial judge’s rejection of claims by Prager University that YouTube improperly censors content. White was one of the lead attorneys on the defense. *Prager University v. Google LLC*, 18-15712 (9th Cir., opinion filed Aug. 27, 2019).

“Private platforms are not public forums subject to First Amendment scrutiny,” White said. “That holding is not necessarily surprising, but it is a theory plaintiffs are still trying to advance when YouTube and others restrict content.”

White said she’s fully occupied. “The



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world has grown ever more skeptical of internet companies. There are demands for legislation and constantly evolving theories of liability. We do a lot of triaging. It’s been very busy and very rewarding.”

— John Roemer