

The Texas Lawbook

Free Speech, Due Process and Trial by Jury

Julia Simon Leaves Mary Kay C-Suite for Lynn Pinker

APRIL 10, 2024 | BY MARK CURRIDEN

For more than 23 years, Julia Simon successfully navigated legal danger zones, intellectual property disputes and litigation threats as a top lawyer at Addison-based skincare and cosmetics company Mary Kay.

On Wednesday, Simon started her new position as a partner at the Dallas litigation boutique Lynn Pinker Hurst & Schwegmann after retiring from Mary Kay as its chief legal officer in March.

“I genuinely enjoy practicing law. I love the problem solving and the risk analysis and putting my client in the best position for success,” Simon told *The Texas Lawbook* in an exclusive interview. “The skills that make me a strong litigator made me a great chief legal officer. I can identify the patterns and see what is ahead with a broad view. That allows me to offer creative solutions to complex issues. I have seen a lot in my 30-plus years of legal practice, and I am excited to share that knowledge with my clients.”

Lynn Pinker leaders said Simon had her choice of law firms.

“She’s a legal powerhouse, and I’ve had the pleasure of working closely with her as a client, friend and mentor for almost 20 years,” said Lynn Pinker managing partner Chris Schwegmann. “Julia brings a wealth of experience and knowledge and has a clear vision of the opportunities she can bring to the firm.”

Simon said she worked with Schwegmann and other lawyers, including firm founder Mike Lynn, in several major disputes.

“I have been in

the litigation trenches with Lynn Pinker lawyers for more than 20 years,” she said. “I always considered myself a part of the trial team and they always respected my litigation skills. I still have a t-shirt they gave to clients years ago that says, ‘Want to Win.’ As one of the top five litigation firms in Texas, they clearly know how to win and that feels like exactly the right fit for me and the clients I will serve.”

A 1991 graduate of the University of Texas School of Law, Simon practiced labor and employment for about five years at McGlinchey Stafford in New Orleans and then more than three years at Locke Purnell Rain Harrell — now Locke Lord — before going in-house to Mary Kay. She was the company’s deputy general counsel from 2004 to 2015, before being promoted to chief legal officer.

Mary Kay, which is privately owned, promoted assistant corporate secretary and vice president of legal, Allison Levy, to be its new general counsel in March.

In 2022, the Texas General Counsel Forum recognized Simon with the Robert Dedman Award for Ethics.

“We’ve worked for Mary Kay forever, and we got to know each other over the years,” Lynn said. “It was an easy decision on our part. Julia will bring to us a breadth of experience, her in-house experience that she can bring to us. She will be a leader at the firm.”

The Lawbook did an interview with Simon about her time at Mary Kay.



**Julia
Simon**

The Texas Lawbook

Lawbook: Why was it time to retire from Mary Kay?

Julia Simon: Twenty-three years is a long time. But when you love what you do and where you work, it seems like no time at all. That is especially true at a company like Mary Kay where I was able to use my legal knowledge and strategic thinking to protect entrepreneurial opportunities for women around the globe. I am proud of the compliance programs we built. I am proud of the important legal precedent we established through a complex litigation docket. I am most proud of the team that I led. They are absolutely incredible, and they will continue to keep Mary Kay the standard bearer for what a responsible manufacturer and direct sales company should be. My Mary Kay journey gave me so much more than I could have ever dreamed of. But I knew it was time for me to use my 30-plus years of legal experience to do something different, and I wanted to make the move while I am still young enough for another phase of my career.

Lawbook: What was your best day at Mary Kay?

Simon: Every day at Mary Kay was a good day. How could it not be when your work has the ability to truly change people's lives? But I was especially happy on the days when legal strategies I created resulted in favorable outcomes for the company in the courtroom or the boardroom. What is more fun than winning? Those cases that impacted business and industry beyond the walls of Mary Kay were the most fun because they have a lasting impact. I am also proud of strategies I developed

that helped the company work around business disruptions to get products in the hands of women entrepreneurs around the world.

Lawbook: What do you want the focus of your practice to be?

Simon: I am a litigator at heart. Not sure what that says about me, but my friends and family would totally agree with this statement. My practice will include complex commercial litigation, but I will also offer strategies to help clients prepare for and avoid disputes when possible. My 23-year in-house practice has taught me that legal disputes do not begin when the lawsuit gets filed or a demand letter is sent. The facts that determine your fate in a legal dispute are created in conference rooms, on Zoom calls and in never-ending emails. I want to help clients put themselves in a position to win.

Lawbook: DEI has come under attack in the past two years. Why do you think that is and what is the future of diversity and inclusion in the legal profession?

Simon: It is unfortunate that the term DEI has been demonized with a false narrative that it benefits some to the exclusion of others. Decades of research confirms that diverse teams are more successful and that creating an inclusive environment is good for workers and good for business. The truth is that intentionality around building diverse environments uplifts everyone. I hope educational institutions, public and private companies, and communities continue to advance their diversity goals. There is definitely a way to do it in alignment with existing laws, and I am here to assist as needed.