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TRAILBLAZERS

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PIONEER SPIRIT From the time she was a child, Kerri Chewning knew she wanted to be a lawyer. Since then, she's used that drive and determination to help expand Archer's white collar criminal defense practice and climb the ranks of the Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey (AFBNJ), becoming the organization's president in June 2020. "The AFBNJ is not just about the practice of law or about your career. It's about the entirety of what it is to be a lawyer. To use our superpowers for good."

TRAILS BLAZED In her practice, Chewning has found a niche defending clients in cross-border litigation involving the clash of executive branch foreign policy and the need to curb criminal and quasi-criminal activity in the U.S. and elsewhere. One of her recent cases revolves around federal legislation that allows terrorism victims to collect against the sanctioned assets of individuals who are found to have some nexus to the terrorist organization that committed the crime. "The law on this is very vague, and there's little decisional law. I think it represents a serious due process problem – if the defendant has no real connection to the terrorist organization, is that the right way to compensate victims?" Chewning's work in this area has helped evolve Archer's small white collar criminal practice into one that's more interdisciplinary, with criminal, regulatory and companion civil litigation matters.

FUTURE EXPLORATIONS As the newly inducted president of AFBNJ, Chewning's goals focus primarily on demystifying federal court practice and succession planning. From highlighting the legal talent in South Jersey to creating opportunities for younger lawyers to get involved, she's eager to create a pipeline of new trustees. "You have to grow leaders from the ground up. People will lie down with you if they see you're in the trenches with them."