

The Legal Intelligencer

'Not Just Another Startup': The Archer Partner Who Helped Bring Back Philadelphia's Cycling Classic

By Jon Campisi

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What You Need to Know

- Archer & Greiner's Kate Sherlock was engaged by Race Street Partners to handle the legal work while the corporate entity worked on securing sponsors and generating interest in the event.
- The Philadelphia Cycling Classic had been on a decade-long hiatus, but organizers now hope to have the sporting event once again become an annual occurrence.

Growing up in the Philadelphia region, Kate Sherlock knew how much of a draw the annual Philadelphia Cycling Classic racing event was for the City of Brotherly Love, the sporting event helping to put the city on the international stage.

So she got excited at the prospect of working to bring the event back after it experienced a 10-year hiatus.

Still, for Sherlock, an Archer & Greiner partner who specializes in intellectual property and corporate work, it wasn't all fun and games—her legal work on the



Courtesy photo

Kate Sherlock, partner with Archer & Greiner.

event resulted in some long weekends and evening hours.

"About a year ago, my colleague Shelley Smith approached me and said, 'Hey, I got a call from [former] Mayor Michael Nutter, and he is working on an interesting new project to bring the Philadelphia Cycling Classic back to the City of Philadelphia in 2026, and they need legal counsel,'" Sherlock recalled in an interview.

Smith, a partner in Archer & Greiner's business litigation and labor and employment

groups who also served as city solicitor during Nutter's mayoral tenure from 2008 to 2016, also was quite familiar with the cycling event's popularity, and excited about bringing it back. But she felt Sherlock was the one who could handle the legal work best.

"She [Smith] said, 'this is not my wheelhouse, but I think it's your wheelhouse—would you be willing to sit down with them and chat?'" Sherlock recalled. "And I said, absolutely."

For Sherlock, the work took on a more personal meaning, as she grew up in South Jersey "a stone's throw away from the Ben Franklin Bridge."

About a year ago, Sherlock sat down with Nutter, Eric Robbins and Carlos Rogers, founders of Race Street Partners, to discuss the undertaking that was ahead of them.

"They pitched me on the vision to reinvigorate and relaunch this amazing event, and to sort of re-engage with an entire generation of Philadelphians who have no recollection of it," Sherlock said. "Anyone under the age of 25 doesn't recall [it]."

The work began by talking to city officials, seeking out potential sponsors, setting up a corporate entity and ensuring proper trademark protection was in place.

"There was no paperwork in place," Sherlock said. "They were starting from ground zero, and so that presented a really unique opportunity to get involved at that stage."

Sherlock said Race Street Partners realized she had the "substantive area of expertise that they needed," and she saw in them a group that was "not just another startup with founders looking to exit in five years."

"These are individuals who are committed to the mission, who love the city, and who love cycling," she said, noting that the goal is for the event to once again become annual. "This truly was a passion project for them, so it presented a very unique opportunity for me."

Sherlock said much legal work had to be crammed into a year to ensure the race could move forward toward its Aug. 30 scheduled date. The logistics included putting all of the contracts in place, securing sponsorship dollars, and connecting with prospective participants.

"There were no sponsors waiting in the wings to write checks," Sherlock said. "There was no contract repository that I could pull from and just simply tweak for this year. The way that we market sporting events and consume sporting events now is different than it was in 2016."

For Robbins, of Race Street Partners, the event also takes on a deeply personal meaning; he's a Philadelphia-area native whose mom helped run the civil court system in the city.

'A Second Home'

"As a little kid, I remember City Hall was like a second home to me because I was always there when I wasn't in school," Robbins said in an interview. "So, Philadelphia has been very important to me from a very young age and I obviously have formed a great love and respect for the city and the people of this great city."

Robbins and Rogers had been acquainted through mutual friends, and Robbins and Nutter have been friends for many years, he said. The racing event also takes on a

personal meaning for the former mayor, since Nutter's wife, Lisa Nutter, is a competitive cyclist herself, Robbins noted.

"So, the three of us formed Race Street Partners and we got to work together, and I think the efforts combined and the camaraderie and the determination and dedication really is what kind of propelled us forward," Robbins said.

Historically, the race was held in June, but this year it was decided to move it to August because of other big events earlier this summer, including the World Cup and the celebration of the country's 250th anniversary.

Robbins said the cycling event will include about 30 teams representing 10 different countries. The sponsors list consists of presenting sponsor AmeriGas, as well as another of other corporate sponsors including Citadel, Deloitte, Lincoln Financial and TD Bank. Law firms Archer & Greiner and Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, which both have strong ties to Philadelphia, are also among the sponsors.

"Philadelphia Cycling Classic would not be here without Archer & Greiner," Robbins said. "Simple as that. This is a grassroots effort, and they fit the piece of the puzzle with us perfectly."

Ensuring the proper paperwork was in place and the contracts were signed enabled Race Street Partners to move forward with their

dream of welcoming a beloved event back to its host city.

"Just the legal work, being a business adviser, being there, and even further, being there when needed, being able to work the extra hours, being there at nighttime, being flexible, all those things allowed us to not only get those sponsors, but close the deal, which is obviously everything," Robbins said. "We will forever be thankful for [Archer] because it paved the way for us to be as strong an organization as we are."

Sherlock said while Robbins and the rest of Race Street Partners were on the ground, working to reinvigorate interest in the race, she was behind the scenes providing them with sound legal advice "promptly, efficiently, and that I wasn't holding up any deals that had to get done quickly so that we could move forward and we could meet our goals to bring this race back."

"I needed to be available to them because issues always arise, and given this is their first year producing the event, I needed to be there for them," Sherlock said. "They don't have in-house counsel, and that's sort of a unique aspect of this engagement. Technically, I'm outside counsel, but this has not been a traditional outside counsel engagement."