June 18, 2021

Washington, DC – Tara L. Ward, partner in Wiley’s Government Contracts Practice, was profiled by Law360 as a 2021 “Rising Star” in Government Contracts. Ms. Ward was one of the top five lawyers in her practice area recognized on this distinguished list of attorneys under 40 from around the country whose “legal accomplishments transcend their age.”

In a June 17 article, Law360 noted high-profile victories including Ms. Ward’s successful defense last year of client MicroHealth LLC against claims alleged by a former teaming partner. Ms. Ward led an interdisciplinary team at Wiley in persuading a Virginia state court, following a 14-day trial last year, to reject all 13 of its former teammate’s claims, including breach of contract, misappropriation of trade secrets, and tortious interference.

“I will always value the MicroHealth case as one of the top ones in my career,” Ms. Ward said in an interview with Law360, citing the diversity of issues in the case. “On the government contract side, from small business matters, 8(a) program eligibility, to the core issue of enforceability of teaming agreements and understanding contract vehicles and competition requirements – all of that is sort of nuts-and-bolts government contracts issues. But then you get into intellectual property and data rights issues and also employment law.”

Ms. Ward said she first became interested in government contracts law as a student at The George Washington University Law School, where she is now an adjunct professor of government contracts. Her enthusiasm for that area of law continued to grow after joining Wiley, where she relishes the diversity of issues addressed in her work.
“Now, as a partner and having been in the field for over a decade, all of that remains true. I love the variety of the work,” said Ms. Ward, who is also motivated by a drive to help others.

“The people behind the companies matter to me,” she said. “Another part is just the business of it. I’ve really come to appreciate how important what we do is to companies’ missions – whether that’s to grow into the federal marketplace, whether that’s to branch out and start supporting different agencies using different contract vehicles, or whether it’s just to take time out and make sure compliance programs are up to snuff.”

Ms. Ward also appreciates the opportunity to increase the visibility of women in the government contracts field. “There might be some women – junior associates or government attorneys and law students – who are looking at and to me to see what I’ve done and what’s different now versus 10 years ago versus 20 years ago,” she said. “And I think that’s all a good thing.”

To read Law360’s profile of Ms. Ward, please click here (subscription required).