

Angela Kung

By: Laura Phillips

I recently made note of a firm announcement that Angela Kung has become Co-Chair of the Technology, Communications & Media (“TechComm”) Section at Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C. (“Mintz”), and I decided that it was time to highlight Angela. At Mintz she advises clients on a wide range of wireless issues, including licensed and unlicensed spectrum use policies. Her particular expertise includes FCC spectrum auction law and policy and substantive aspects of broadband funding programs. Earlier in her career, Angela was a staff attorney in the FCC’s Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and she served as a lead attorney for the FCC’s Connect America Fund Phase II Auction. She was also a member of the General Counsel team charged with oversight of the 800 MHz reconfiguration process. Angela received her B.A. in Economics from the University of Michigan and her J.D. from American University Washington College of Law, and I was happy to have a chance to chat with her.



Q: What attracted you to the field of communications?

A: I wish I could say that I have always been very thoughtful about my career. But, in truth, I somewhat fell into the communications field. I had initially decided to go to law school with the thought that I would pursue a career as a real estate attorney because I had experience working at a title company. That changed in law school when I became interested in antitrust and international trade. I found those courses to be intriguing and figured I could leverage my undergraduate degree in Economics to find a steady job. But then the financial crisis hit in 2008, which is right when I graduated law school. I was fortunate to have an offer at a large law firm, as several of my peers had their offers rescinded. And for some who did not have offers rescinded, they joined their law firms only to be let go a few months later. I was determined to avoid that outcome. So when my firm said they had a need in their communications section, I jumped at the chance. I thought, “I’m scrappy ... How hard can it be?” Well, soon after realizing that being in “communications” did *not* mean I was going to be working in the marketing department, I fell in love with the work. It is fascinating how rapidly technologies change and adapt to consumer demands.

ChatGPT could be responding to this very interview right now! I enjoy watching the industry change and progress, and I find so much joy in being a part of the process and developing policies that help shape those changes.

Q: Tell us about the various places you’ve worked through the years.

A: Despite how I got here, my legal career has been pretty straightforward. I’ve spent most of it in the private sector – at two different law firms – working primarily on wireless regulatory matters and spectrum use policy. I also did a three-year stint at the FCC in the Auctions Division, which, at the time, was under the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau before it moved to the Office of Economics and Analytics. I loved the experience, but the lure of private practice drew me back to Mintz.

Some of my more memorable job highlights, however, were in college at the University of Michigan. Among other things, I worked as a hotel concierge as well as a server at Cosi. This was right after Cosi merged with XandO (as some long-time DC residents may remember), and the eatery had this strange shift in the evening when it turned from a sandwich shop to a low-lit sit-down restaurant complete with overpriced s’mores. One

of my most memorable customers was Dave Chappelle, who I waited on in the smoking section, back when they existed. He only ordered a coffee, but he gave me a huge tip (especially for a college student). He also offered me tickets to his show that night. Sadly, being the rule follower that I am, I declined them, explaining that I had to finish my shift that night. I’ll never forget turning down those tickets to save my \$2.25 per hour job.

Q: Have things unfolded in your career more or less the way you planned?

A: Absolutely not, but in the best way possible. I did not aspire to be a lawyer because my mother was one. She runs her own immigration firm as a solo practitioner in Chicago and loves it. But the rebellious kid in me wanted to do things differently from my parents. Of course, the more we try to avoid things, the more likely they tend to happen. And now that I am a lawyer, I can honestly say that I really enjoy it. That is in large part due to the great people that I work with at Mintz – both past and present. They have helped shape my career into what it is today, supporting not only my efforts to achieve my goals (like making Partner), but also pushing me beyond those goals (such as becoming Co-Chair), even when I wasn’t sure that I could do it. As an Asian American woman, I didn’t see many people with similar faces or backgrounds in this profession, let alone in leadership positions. I am truly grateful for where I am today and the people that helped me get to this point.

Q: What’s the most interesting or challenging thing that you’ve done in your current position?

A: My current position as Co-Chair of the Technology, Communications, and Media practice at Mintz is fairly new; it’s literally been only a few weeks! But it has been both interesting and challenging to take on this new role, specifically learning the management aspects of the firm as well as continuing to build and maintain my own practice. I’m lucky

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that we have an incredible team, and we all get along and are respectful, even when we may disagree. It has also been really fun to think of new ways to help the practice grow. One of the things I'm most proud of when I returned to Mintz from the FCC was starting our NextGenFem initiative. The idea was to bring together up-and-coming female leaders in the communications industry for networking events and community building. We hosted a variety of events pre-pandemic, including an Arianna Grande concert, a “puppy party” happy hour with adoptable rescue pups, and a flower arranging workshop. And we hosted some fun virtual events during the pandemic as well. We recently transformed this initiative to include women in the communications field at all stages of their careers (which was my not-so-secret way of being able to continue to attend these events even though I am no longer “NextGen”). And I am thrilled at being able to pass the baton to one of our own NextGenFems – B'anca Glenn – to spearhead it. I know she will do great things.

Q: **Is or was there something interesting or someone who surprised or impressed you during your career and why?**

A: I have met so many wonderful and inspirational people in this field. Everyone I meet, particularly through the FCBA, is so impressive! And I have had so many incredible mentors (some of whom probably aren't even aware that I have dubbed them that). My current Mintz Co-Chair, Tara Corvo, has been one of them. I was the first Associate she hired and, even though we work in different areas of the communications industry, she has always looked out for my career. Moreover, having spent only a few weeks in her shoes as a leader of our group, I can more fully appreciate all the work that goes into running a team and a successful practice. Russell Fox has also been, and continues to be, my inspiration.

Not only is he a rock star wireless attorney, but he has an amazing knack to remain calm while providing sage advice.

Q: **What do you enjoy reading?**

A: I'm going to admit publicly that I don't read for pleasure – I read too much for work already! But I do (and I'm going to say not-so-shamefully) watch a lot of reality television. I'm currently watching Season 4 of *Love is Blind* and, in my defense, so does AOC! I am also an avid fan of the *Real Housewives* franchise. Does reading tweets and Instagram posts about some of my favorite terrible people count as reading? Outside of reality TV, I'm currently enjoying *Ted Lasso*, *Succession*, and *Beef*. And I always keep up with my favorite local D.C. blog, *PoPville*.

Q: **Is there something (a hobby or other tidbit) people don't know about you that you are willing to share?**

A: I'm a big supporter of rescue animals, and I've learned a lot and gotten involved with a rescue organization for a particular breed of dog, the Japanese Chin. No surprise my own two rescues, Mochi and Soba, are Japanese Chin. We saved them from going to a puppy mill. After learning more about the puppy mill industry, I knew I wanted to help out to save dogs from this horrific practice. I am now the D.C. representative for JCCare, a nationwide volunteer Japanese Chin rescue organization. I often spend my spare time helping to find homes for our rescues and organizing events. I try not to be too preachy about it, but pandemic pups are a real thing and have created a serious problem for shelters and rescues. I'm a strong proponent of people becoming educated about the breeding industry, being thoughtful about if and when to bring an animal into their homes, and fully understanding the commitment they are making.

Q: **Can you share your perspective on the pitfalls to avoid or other career advice for those who are just getting started in the communications field?**

A: I always recommend to those getting started in their career, whether in communications or otherwise, to be willing to put in the work. Pay attention to detail, and never think that a project or request is beneath you. So much of my early career was spent on tedious tasks like proof reading, cite checking, and, of course, document review. Some of my discipline and approach stems from being a child of immigrants. I always felt like I had to triple check my spelling and know the grammar rules back and forth so no one would ever question whether I spoke English. And while I may have disliked it at the time, those inglorious tasks gave me the opportunity to show that I am consistent and reliable. Similarly, I recall well what one of my mentors said to me. He told me to never let a question that you don't know the answer to simply go past you. Take the time to learn about the issue or answer, even if it means spending a little extra time to do so. That has served me well over the past few years, and I've learned so much because of it – including more than I ever wanted to know about OMB and Paperwork Reduction Act approval! Finally, it is important to stay flexible and approach things with an open mind. You may have an idea of how you want your career to turn out, but the universe may have different plans for you. So be ready to adapt!

Q: **How has your life changed as a result of COVID-19 and what are you looking forward to doing next?**

A: One of the things that changed in my life as a result of COVID is that I became pescatarian! I had wanted to stop eating meat for a while, but never felt I had the time to figure out non-meat-based meals that were both nutritious and something I would want to eat. Working from home not only gave me the time to do that, but it also kept me away from the various temptations I would face at client meals and networking events. I now no longer miss it!

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I also learned to really appreciate and value the relationships in my life. Sometimes being bogged down in a busy career can distract you from the important things like your friends and family. When COVID took those relationships away, at least physically, it made me realize how precious it is to spend time together. My mother-in-law passed away during COVID. And because she was living in Taiwan at the time, and they had a strict 14-day quarantine period, we were unable

to attend her funeral and say goodbye. I'm now more thoughtful about nourishing the important relationships and look forward to continuing to try and stay present in the moment.

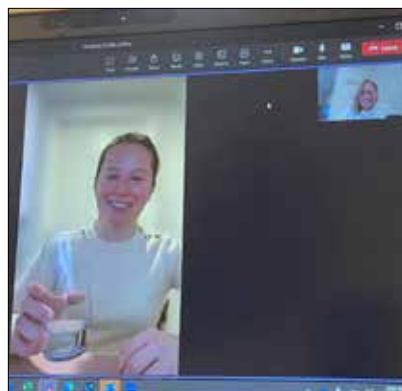
Q: How long have you been an FCBA member, and what to you is the value of FCBA membership?

A: I've been an FCBA member since I graduated from law school in 2008. I strongly believe that one of the most valuable benefits of FCBA membership is the opportunity to meet and connect with a range of folks in the communications

industry, in private practice, in companies, and in the government. I've met so many people through FCBA events and volunteering to help with the Charity Auction and with the FCBA scholarship processes. Many of those people have become dear friends. I love that I am able to chat with my FCBA friends about spectrum policy in one moment and then reality TV shows in the next!

Interested in learning more about another FCBA member? If there is a member you'd like to know better, contact Laura Phillips at laura.phillips@faegredrinker.com.

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