

# My White & Case Story

Binoy Dharia shares his career journey to date.



**P**artner Binoy Dharia has spent his entire career at White & Case in New York since joining the Firm in 2006, but becoming a lawyer was not his initial plan.

Binoy, who is a member of the Debt Finance team and Chair of our Global Diversity Committee, explains: "Growing up, I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I realized a law degree would be valuable for a variety of careers.

"So, I went to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and really enjoyed it, deciding to start off in big law and to see how things went.

"Like many people, the plan was to do big law for a couple of years and then decide, but here I am 16 years later, still loving my job."

Binoy's first experience of the Firm was as a summer associate, before he joined full time the following year.

He says: "I was attracted by the Firm's culture, which made it stand out from the rest. During the interview process I just liked the people. It seemed like a nice place to be."

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Like all associates at the time, Binoy spent his first year in two practice areas, Capital Markets and Debt Finance, before choosing a specialism. He decided to opt for Debt Finance.

Binoy says: "The first year was a whirlwind as I was asked to work on a massive IPO for Visa, which was a lot of fun and really interesting. It was nice to get involved with something so big, so quickly.

"At the end of the year though, Debt Finance seemed the right fit for me."

A week after making his decision to join the Debt Finance team, Lehmann Brothers crashed and the global recession began.





Binoy says: "It couldn't have been worse timing, but it helped that the team had a great culture, so there was enough work to go round until things took off again six months later.

"The financial crisis also endorsed my decision to join the Firm, as the caring and collegial culture is part of the reason I've stayed here so long."

For the next few years, Binoy was involved in multiple complex and important deals, gaining valuable experience along the way.

He says: "One particularly tough and memorable project was when I worked with a senior partner to complete a two-step merger for a fertilizer company (one of the biggest of the time).

"It was so challenging that, once we'd completed it, everything else seemed not as stressful in comparison. This gave me confidence, until the next time I was taken out of my comfort zone making the step up to partner in 2016."

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Despite that initial nervousness, becoming partner was a career highlight. "Apart from getting married and having kids, it's probably the achievement I remember the most," Binoy says.

"In many ways it was like starting all over again, but I was well supported and mentored by people including then Head of Debt Finance Eric Berg, as well as Eliza McDougal, David Bilkis and Eric Leicht."

Today, the Debt Finance team has grown to almost 50 associates.

Binoy says: "While we're a lot bigger than when I joined the team, we've retained the collegial atmosphere. That's why I've never considered leaving the Firm.

"White & Case has provided so many opportunities to progress and, because the Firm is constantly evolving, it feels like the job keeps changing, without the need to move on.

"The people are brilliant and the work is always challenging and never mundane."


When it comes to delivering a distinct client experience, Binoy believes close teamwork is vital.

He says: "It's about thinking about the bigger picture rather than staying in your own silo. Winning one large, high-profile matter serviced by five partners is definitely better than doing five small matters as individuals.

"The collaborative, cross-border, cross-practice mentality sets us apart. For instance, I know that I can put a client in touch with a partner in, say, Australia or a different practice, knowing we'll have an answer within hours even if it isn't my area of expertise. Very few firms can do that."

Binoy offers the following advice to anyone trying to make the most of their career at the Firm.

"You have to get out of your comfort zone," he says. "Join a group, try to speak to everyone, talk to as many partners and associates as you can.



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"Get out of your office, go to another floor, ask someone to lunch. You'll discover that the people are the best part of the job."

## A passion for diversity

Alongside his other work, Binoy serves as Co-chair of the New York Summer Associate Program and was recently asked to chair the Global Diversity Committee, a role he sees as an honor as well as a challenge.

He says: "Being Chair has pushed me out of my comfort zone. I'm diverse myself but that doesn't mean I had any idea what diversity means in a law firm. My only experience was living it, but I quickly found that diversity and inclusion covers things you don't even think about, and the terminology is ever changing.

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"We're not perfect (we wouldn't need a D&I team if we were), but in comparison we're doing phenomenally well.

"It's about ensuring everyone feels there is a path open to them and can see that path reflected in our leadership, so they have role models to aspire to.

"I'm humbled to have been offered the opportunity to play a small part in contributing to our progression on D&I in my role as Chair."

