

# Daily Journal

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# TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2019

## LITIGATION

### DONNA L. WILSON

MANATT, PHELPS & PHILLIPS LLP | LOS ANGELES

SPECIALTY: PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

When Wilson took over July 1, 2019, as Manatt, Phelps & Phillips' CEO and managing partner, her predecessor, William T. Quicksilver, marked the transition.

"Bill took Linda and me out to dinner," Wilson said, referring to her life partner Linda Kornfeld, a prominent insurance recovery partner at Blank Rome LLP. "He literally passed me a torch." She described a mini-tiki torch, "a tacky, kitchy little thing" that "wasn't lighted, thank god." Quicksilver, a Manatt senior partner who now is the firm's CEO and managing partner emeritus, also presented Wilson and Kornfeld with matching captain's hats.

"They went to show that I may be captain at the firm, but not necessarily at home," Wilson laughed.

The lighthearted leadership transfer came as Wilson expanded Manatt's privacy and data security practice, which she co-leads. She oversaw the launch of the firm's newest office in Boston and the establishment there of Scott T. Lashway, who co-led the cybersecurity and privacy practice at Holland & Knight LLP. He now shares with Wilson the privacy and data security co-leader role at Manatt.

Wilson also brought aboard former U.S. Steel Corp. general counsel Suzanne R. Folsom, a government and reg-

ulatory partner in the Washington, D.C., office; venture capitalist and entrepreneur Lisa Suennen, to lead the firm's digital and technology and venture capital/emerging companies practice from San Francisco; and former state Department of Business Oversight commissioner Jan L. Owen as a senior advisor in the Manatt financial services group in Sacramento. The aim, Wilson said, is to advance the firm's broader, hybridized legal and consulting model across a range of industries. She presses that goal even as her data and privacy work grows.

"The big news for me is that I now have a day job and a night job," she said. She advises numerous clients on the new California Consumer Privacy Act, set to take effect Jan. 1, 2020. It's a busy time as companies scramble to comply with the law. "There are legislative amendments in the mix whose outcome is so far unclear," Wilson said. "We work closely with our Sacramento office to stay current."

Companies would like one national regulatory scheme to avoid the patch-



work of state laws now developing. But Wilson notes there is no silver bullet to protect privacy. "Events are overtaking legislation across the country," she said, as technology changes and new situations arise — as with emerging facial recognition techniques, for example, that have been largely untested by litigation.

"I'm at a wonderful firm with great colleagues," she said. "I'm a lucky lawyer."

— John Roemer