



## Spencer Fane Strengthens Houston Office With 2 New Attorneys

Spencer Fane LLP is pleased to announce [Merritt Chastain](#) and JaQueenett (Jackie) Wilhite have joined the firm's Houston office. Chastain will be a partner in the Labor and Employment Practice Group, while Wilhite will be an associate in the Real Estate Practice Group.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to add valuable resources to best serve the needs of our growing client base," said Brian Zimmerman, Office Managing Partner for Spencer Fane in Houston. "Our clients have shown an increased need for effective legal counsel in commercial real estate finance and labor and employment matters, and this aligns with our efforts to grow strategically to meet our clients' legal services needs. Equally important, Merritt and Jackie both bring a collaborative spirit and sense of humility that complement our firm culture and helps us serve our clients better."

Chastain's practice focuses on proactive labor and employment counseling by helping his clients avoid workplace disputes and potentially costly mistakes. Where necessary, he handles employment litigation.

Chastain has a broad range of labor and employment experience, including substantial litigation and appeal experience while also representing management in union-related disputes. His counseling work for employers of all sizes includes a thorough understanding of federal and state discrimination laws, OSHA guidelines and recommendations, federal and state wage and hour laws, and regulations pertaining to the employment relationship. He regularly drafts comprehensive employee handbooks and policies to guide all decisions related to the employer-employee relationship, employment agreements, arbitration agreements,

alternative dispute resolution programs, and executive compensation packages that assist employers in attracting and retaining top talent.

Chastain completed his undergraduate studies at Texas A&M University and earned his Juris Doctor from the South Texas College of Law. He is actively involved in both professional and community organizations, including the American Bar Association, Houston Bar Association, Texas Association of Business, Rotary Club of Houston, Habitat for Humanity and providing pro bono legal services.

Wilhite brings substantial experience in transactional matters with an emphasis on commercial real estate, leasing, development, title matters, corporate law, mergers & acquisitions, finance, and commercial transactions. She regularly advises closely held business entities of all sizes on their growth and operational matters and counsels them on related real estate matters. Wilhite has broad experience structuring, negotiating, and documenting a wide variety of real estate and business transactions across a range of industries.

A member of the Garland Walker Inns of Court and an active member of both the Houston Bar Association and Houston Young Lawyers Association, Wilhite completed her undergraduate studies at the University of North Texas before earning her Juris Doctor from the South Texas College of Law. While in law school, Wilhite completed internships with the 14th Court of Appeals, the 1st Court of Appeals, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a national pipeline company, and two national law firms, while also dedicating volunteer hours to the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.