

Rising Star: Davis Polk's Emily Roberts

By Emily Sides

Law360 (July 12, 2021, 3:17 PM EDT) -- Emily Roberts of Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP made partner right after advising underwriters related to San Francisco-based Uber's \$8.1 billion initial public offering in May 2019, earning her a spot among the technology practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 Rising Stars.

THE BIGGEST DEAL OF HER CAREER:

Roberts said working on Uber's IPO was a highlight of her career.

"The business was unlike any other; you couldn't look at a different business and just copy that, for example," she said.

Roberts said she enjoys working on deals in the technology industry, because that's where she finds new business models.

"In terms of describing [Uber's] business to investors, we had to start from scratch and work with the company to describe who they were as a business," she said. "One of the most fun things about this job is learning about a new business and helping a company tell its story to the public."

When Uber went public, the company was constantly seeing "tremendous organizational change," Roberts said.

"Even though it was a large company, it also in some ways felt like a startup company, because they were in the process of finding who they were as a company, and they were also in many different lines of business," she said.

THE MOST INTERESTING DEAL SHE'S WORKED ON RECENTLY:

In January, Roberts served as co-leader for the firm's group that counseled the underwriters on Fintech startup Affirm, which bills itself as a flexible alternative to credit cards, on its \$1.2 billion initial public offering.



Emily Roberts
Davis Polk

Age: 36
Home base: Silicon Valley
Position: Partner
Law school: Stanford Law School
First job after law school:
Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP

Working on IPOs for companies that have a large consumer brand, such as Uber and Affirm, increases the focus on the IPO as a branding event, too, Roberts said.

"It was another fun [deal] to help a company tell its story," she said.

HER PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Roberts said she's proud of times when she helps clients. For example, the firm represented cybersecurity startup CrowdStrike Holdings Inc. in its \$612 million IPO in June 2019.

"They're on the cutting edge of cybersecurity, protecting companies from cyberattacks," she said. "I'm really proud to be a part of both their success and their mission in a very small way."

Other notable cases she's worked on:

California electric car company Lucid Motors Inc. went public in February by merging with Churchill Capital Corp. IV, a special purpose acquisition company backed by a former Citigroup executive, in a transaction valued at \$11.75 billion. Davis Polk advised Lucid.

"SPACs are a relatively recent resurgent phenomenon, and the Lucid transaction was very interesting to be a part of," Roberts said.

In June, an investor in Churchill Capital launched a proposed class action in New Jersey federal court, claiming Churchill and Lucid misrepresented the automaker's production goals, driving up trading prices for Churchill's shares as rumors swirled that the SPAC would buy Lucid to bring it public.

Roberts was also part of the legal team counseling financial advisers for Palantir Technologies Inc. when it went public via direct listing in September 2020.

HOW SHE THINKS THE LEGAL INDUSTRY WILL CHANGE:

Roberts said she thinks that due to the pandemic, the industry has seen the feasibility of remote work.

"I think remote work will probably be a trend that's not going away," she said.

Roberts said she's seen the legal and tech industries make some progress in diversity and inclusion and expects those efforts to stick around.

"I think both the legal industry and the tech space in particular will get more diverse, and I think that's a long-term trend," she said. "There's obviously a ton of work to do, but I think there has been some change."

— *As told to Emily Sides*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2021 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,400 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2021, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.