

Working with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Is Dream Job for GC

News In Brief:

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Leslie R. Jones, named new general counsel for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta in October of last year, comments on her position, "Everything I've done in my professional life has led up to working [here]." Jones feels a special connection with the network of hospitals, because in 2002, they saved her daughter's life after a traumatic head and brain injury and was able to, miraculously, make a full recovery. Since 2002, Jones's family has stayed in close contact with Children's, helping with fundraisers. Children's is a nonprofit organization and gives away nearly \$100 million a year in care for which patients cannot repay them. When the GC position opened she said, "Yes, this is my dream job." Jones has had extensive experience which will serve her well and allow her to help the organization to the utmost.

From Corporate Consulting to GC and Chief Compliance Officer

Kelly C. Abernathy changed career focus when a 36-year-old associate had a heart attack in the court room. She decided to focus on business and, upon graduation from law school in 1998, took a job with Andersen Consulting. In 2001 the opportunity came up, quite unexpectedly, to work with Capital Institutional Services, Inc. (CAPIS) as their new GC. Advancement opportunities came almost immediately, and she took five exams in one year in order to get all of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority's licenses required to function in her added newly-added capacity as chief compliance officer. She

thoroughly enjoys all her responsibilities and loves the combination of law and business that she is presented and challenged with every day.

Redefining GC Roles in 2009

Due to many claims being brought against general counsels last year, with many more expected in the coming year, general counsels are seeking more protection and insurance before accepting positions. Claims have included misappropriation of confidential information, securities class action, breach of confidentiality by whistleblower, outside third-party claim of legal malpractice, bribery, and breach of contract. Many GCs claimed ignorance of wrongdoing in their company, but courts have ruled that it is GCs' responsibility to be aware of ongoing illegal practices and either report them or prevent them. GC roles have come to be defined much more as gatekeepers than as confidants.