

## Rising Star: Latham & Watkins' Marissa Boynton

By Ben Kochman

*Law360 (June 9, 2021, 3:10 PM EDT)* -- Latham & Watkins LLP's Marissa Boynton helped guide Facebook through its global response to a data breach that affected nearly 50 million accounts and is representing a subject of a novel Federal Trade Commission inquiry into the technology industry, earning her a spot among the top cybersecurity and privacy attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### ***THE BIGGEST CASE OF HER CAREER:***

Boynton was a member of the Latham team that represented Facebook as the tech giant navigated the fallout of a September 2018 data breach in which hackers gained access to nearly 50 million user accounts, exploiting a vulnerability tied to a profile preview feature.

Working around the clock, the Latham team helped coordinate Facebook's disclosures to data privacy authorities across the globe, including multiple U.S. state attorneys general and the Irish Data Protection Commission, the company's lead privacy watchdog in Europe.

"Helping to coordinate a global investigation on such a tight timeline felt like a very big turning point for me," Boynton said of the data breach response.

"It was challenging to juggle responding to different laws all over the world, which all required a very fast turnaround," Boynton added. "There were certainly lots of late nights."

### ***HER MOST INTERESTING CASE LATELY:***

Boynton is representing one of the nine technology companies that the FTC ordered in December to produce information about their data-gathering and advertising practices, and to detail how these policies affect children and teens, in a first-of-its-kind inquiry.

The orders do not have a law enforcement purpose, but the investigation's findings could influence how legislators approach the digital advertising, social media and video streaming industries going forward.



**Marissa Boynton**  
Latham & Watkins

Age: 38

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Counsel

Law school: University of Virginia  
School of Law

First job after law school: Clerked  
for U.S. District Judge Liam  
O'Grady in Alexandria, Virginia

"Given the breadth of what the order has asked for, it's been a challenge to figure out how to scope our client's responses knowing that the information may be used in a public report in an anonymized form," Boynton said.

***HER PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:***

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Boynton says she was able to help many clients, including pro bono clients, deal with the privacy implications of moving their businesses online.

Boynton said she helped craft new privacy and data collection policies during the pandemic for entities like StoryCorps, a nonprofit storytelling initiative run by National Public Radio, or NPR, one of the firm's pro bono clients.

"A lot of our clients are now collecting data in a completely different way, and it's made me really proud to help in a lot of that work and to make sure that they are considering privacy at every step," Boynton said.

What motivates her:

Boynton said the fast-changing scope of data privacy laws around the globe has her constantly on her toes.

"You can't sort of sit back and relax in this area, you have to always be on top of things," she said, noting that she's always keeping an eye on what FTC commissioners are saying in order to "read the tea leaves" about the agency's evolving approach to privacy issues.

She's also constantly driven, she says, by the desire to not let down either her clients or her colleagues.

"I'm a bit of a people-pleasing-person by nature," Boynton said.

— *As told to Ben Kochman*

*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.*