The National Law Journal Names Salvatore Graziano and Hannah Ross 2019 Plaintiffs' Lawyers Trailblazers

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The National Law Journal (*"NLJ"*) has named two BLB&G partners, Salvatore Graziano and Hannah Ross, as "Plaintiffs' Lawyers Trailblazers," recognizing them among the top practitioners in the nation "who continue to make their mark in various aspects of legal work on the Plaintiffs' side" and "are truly agents of change."

The profile highlights Mr. Graziano's involvement in cases under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act, which has endured several critical challenges in the Supreme Court in recent years. He notes that numerous decisions have been "5-4," thus making it "a concern to make sure our cases are presented in the most favorable light." The unpredictability of securities litigation is "what keeps the field engaging after so many years of practice," adds Mr. Graziano. "Fraud by nature is secretive, until it causes harm. It's impossible to predict, but we'll be ready to respond." His path to the plaintiffs' side began after participating in a yearlong legal aid clinic in his last year of law school, which led him to become a prosecutor – saying, "after that, defending big corporations seemed wrong." In 1995, he was introduced to plaintiff-side securities law, and found it "satisfying to hold wrongdoers accountable while facing well-credentialed and well-funded lawyers. In hindsight," he contends, "I couldn't conceive a better fit."

Ms. Ross, the firm's senior female partner, was also featured by *NLJ* for her work on behalf of institutional investors in securities class actions and fiduciary cases. "The work I did on financial cases following the crisis was particularly groundbreaking and fulfilling. For example, I was a senior lawyer in the cases that came out of the Bank of America-Merrill Lynch merger. Eventually the case settled right before trial for $2.4 billion – the largest shareholder award out of the financial crisis and one of the biggest of all time….There wasn't a criminal conviction or a restatement, yet we were still able to get this big settlement." She too became a prosecutor after law school, where she enjoyed being "in court almost every day, fighting for victims." Transitioning to private practice at Bernstein Litowitz she described as "the civil analogue to being a prosecutor. Every day we protect and recover the savings of teachers, firefighters, laborers, and others who've lost their money due to wrongdoing."

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