

## Featured Alumni

### **Michelle Speller-Thurman, Vice President, Head of Legal Mergers & Acquisitions and Licensing at Organon**

#### **News**

June 2023

In February 2023, lawyers from across our global offices gathered in Chicago for C3, Jenner & Block's annual lawyers of color summit. C3 stands for Connect, Collaborate and Create. The Summit provides an opportunity for lawyers to connect with each other by cultivating relationships and enhancing business opportunities.

Alumna Michelle Speller-Thurman joined the summit virtually for an alumni panel discussion. After practicing at Jenner for four years, Michelle worked in several different roles before becoming the Vice President, Head of Legal Mergers & Acquisitions, Licensing and Securities at Organon. An excerpt of the conversation is below.

#### ***Why did you decide to go in-house?***

I've been in-house since '09—so it's been a while. I did spend about 10 years at law firms to pay off my law school loans...But all jokes aside, I love being in-house because I only have one client as opposed to multiple. As a corporate lawyer, I can get in depth on our matters and be part of the soup-to-nuts on acquiring and growing business. I've also had the opportunity to have an impact in the women's healthcare space, which is incredibly important to me personally.

#### ***What are some differences you've found working in-house as opposed to working in a firm?***

As a law firm partner or associate, I spent most of my time liaising with my client's in-house counsel. In my current role I support all aspects of the business and spend most of my time working alongside and advising teams outside of the legal department. There is a cross-functional nature to my work, focused on running the company and serving our patients.

#### ***What skills did you learn at Jenner that have been valuable to you in-house?***

Everything. At Jenner, I had the opportunity to develop and nurture mentor and sponsorship relationships. I'm grateful to still maintain those great relationships. I also gained an understanding of how a law firm worked, and how I fit into it. Jenner's commitment to their clients also taught me the importance of understanding my client and their business.

I remember a partner once saying, “Does the client want a Yugo or a Cadillac?” I suppose I’m dating myself by sharing that, but their point was that I needed to ask the client what they want. Don’t send a white paper when they really needed a handful of bullet points. That’s an essential lesson that I still use every day.

### ***What do you miss about your time at Jenner?***

I miss the people and the training. I also miss being able to walk down the hallway and get advice from someone with a completely different set of expertise than me.

Jenner’s commitment to pro bono and community service is unparalleled and something that has stuck with me throughout my career. I miss being part of that and the growth I experienced while doing that work.

### **Return to the Alumni Newsletter – June 2023**

### **Alumni Newsletter – June 2023**



Michelle Speller-Thurman, Vice President, Head of Legal Mergers & Acquisitions and Licensing at Organon

© 2026 Jenner & Block LLP. Attorney Advertising. Jenner & Block LLP is an Illinois Limited Liability Partnership including professional corporations. This publication, presentation, or event is not intended to provide legal advice but to provide information on legal matters and/or firm news of interest to our clients and colleagues. Readers or attendees should seek specific legal advice before taking any action with respect to matters mentioned in this publication or at this event. The attorney responsible for this communication is Brent E. Kidwell, Jenner & Block LLP, 353 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60654-3456. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Jenner & Block London LLP, an affiliate of Jenner & Block LLP, is a limited liability partnership established under the laws of the State of Delaware, USA and is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority with SRA number

615729. Information regarding the data we collect and the rights you have over your data can be found in our Privacy Notice. For further inquiries, please contact [dataprotection@jenner.com](mailto:dataprotection@jenner.com).

**Stay Informed**

