Lesli Harris, attorney, Stone Pigman Law Firm

Lesli Harris’ life was checkered with visits to New Orleans before she arrived at Tulane Law School in 1999. Since then, she’s moved away again and returned, this time for keeps. She is no co-lead of the emerging companies practice group at Stone Pigman and has found a new vibrancy in the city’s business community.

“What really excites me about New Orleans today is the number of mid-size and startup companies run by people who really care about the work they’re doing and the city they’re doing it in,” she says.

She might not have had the same opportunities in New York, despite a positive experience. “I had a great time in New York – it’s a fantastic market,” Lesli explains. “But in New Orleans, I had a firm that welcomed me back, made a place for me. I would still be doing document review in some firm in New York, rather than being a partner and having a full practice of my own.”

She finds the city’s entrepreneurs energizing to more seasoned professionals as well, noting that her co-lead in the emerging business group is one of the firm’s most senior partners. “I know he’s very excited about making connections between his peers, who have the resources to fund these new companies, and young entrepreneurs. It’s wonderful to see a generation with so much knowledge and experience engage with these startups. It’s very energizing.”

She encourages anyone unfamiliar with New Orleans today to take a closer look. “A lot has changed in a very positive way. We’re still building those places that were heavily damaged, but the city is really vibrant and there are very exciting things happening.”

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“New Orleans cultivates people to be leaders. That’s facilitated by being thrust to go get your clients, go do your work, go create your practice. The same is true for startups here.”

-Lesli Harris, attorney, Stone Pigman Law Firm

“I would say to anyone who hasn’t bene here before or hasn’t been since Katrina – you should come visit. A lot has changed in a very positive way. We’re still building those places that were heavily damaged, but the city is really vibrant and there are very exciting things happening in New Orleans.”

-Lesli Harris, attorney, Stone Pigman Law Firm

“If you want to cultivate a business, there is a system and a network for doing that here. Once you get into it, you’ll be supported and you can really get to know people who can help you. There are just two degrees of separation in New Orleans. It may take only two phone calls to call the mayor in an administration trying to push for good growth in the city.”

-Lesli Harris, attorney, Stone Pigman Law Firm