

## Recap: BCLB Leadership Lunch Talk: “Vice Chancellor Tamika Montgomery-Reeves – The Corporate Judge”

By Carlota Sáenz, LL.M. Candidate 2018 | March 5, 2018

Berkeley Law students had the privilege to meet the Honorable Tamika Montgomery-Reeves at the Leadership Lunch Talk hosted by the Berkeley Center for Law and Business ([BCLB](#)) on February 14, 2018.

Vice Chancellor Montgomery-Reeves received her law degree from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2006 and a B.A. from the University of Mississippi in 2003. She started her career as a law clerk for Chancellor William B. Chandler III of the [Delaware Court of Chancery](#) and then practiced in the securities and corporate governance department of [Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP](#). Before she was sworn in as a Vice Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery on November 25, 2015, she was a partner at [Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati](#) in the Wilmington, Delaware office. As a partner, she focused on corporate governance, navigation of corporate fiduciary duties, stockholder class action litigation, derivative litigation, and complex commercial litigation.

While practicing in Delaware, the Vice Chancellor was able to focus on corporate governance issues, while in New York she had to do other types of work (i.e. securities, capital markets) even as part of the corporate governance group at Weil. She also shared that since the practice in Delaware is small, you end up running into the same people over and over again which creates a higher expectation in terms of diligence.

The Delaware court system is also very unique because it is a court with limited jurisdiction by statute and is formed by five judges: Chancellor Bouchard and four Vice Chancellors. The Delaware Court of Chancery does not have juries, a feature valued by businesses, and the judgments can be directly appealed to the Delaware Supreme Court. Consequently, the litigation timeframe in Delaware is shorter (normally 2 or 3 years) than in other states. From a substantive perspective, litigation in the Court of Chancery consists of three main categories of cases: commercial and contractual matters in general, corporate matters and corporate governance cases, and disputes related to property.

Vice Chancellor Montgomery-Reeves always wanted to do something related to public service and her current job is allowing her to do so. She is very happy to be back in Delaware, where she was a law clerk. Moreover, her actual position allows her to do what she loves: research and write what the law is, figuring out the solution for each case. However, she is facing new challenges such as living in the public eye and the limitation of resources. Her decisions are public and consequently, scrutinized by the public opinion. Also, when she was working in private practice, she used to work in teams of approximately ten lawyers but now she has to produce her decisions with the help of just two clerks. Nevertheless, she described her two years of experience as Vice Chancellor as absolutely amazing.