

Kluwer Arbitration Blog

Interviews of Our Editors: A Fireside Chat with Kiran Gore, Mary Mitsi, Theresa Tseung and Ylli Dautaj

Benson Lim (Simmons & Simmons) · Friday, August 28th, 2020

*The third of our series continues with a fireside chat with four of our fellow editors: **Kiran Gore** (Associate Editor), **Mary Mitsi** (Assistant Editor for Europe), **Theresa Tseung** (Assistant Editor for East and Central Asia), and **Ylli Dautaj** (Assistant Editor) (Investment Arbitration).*

Good day all and thank you for joining me today!

1. *Let's start by asking you to share three adjectives that your close friends would use to describe you.*

Kiran: Rather than three words, I will respond with a description I have heard used for me in different settings. I am often told that I am “the eye within a storm.” I operate well in high pressure situations and am not easily flustered. My secret for maintaining this composure is years and years of yogic training.

Mary: Observant, patient, and proactive. I am told that I have a serene way of dealing with problems and providing solutions.

Theresa: Having tapped some of my closest friends on the shoulder for this question, the general responses are perceptive, motivated and resilient.

Ylli: I have been described as hard-working, energetic, and positive.

2. *Thanks for sharing! You all have taken different career paths in arbitration. What surprises you most about your job?*

Mary: Combining academia with the practice of arbitration has been the most pleasant surprise for me. Arbitration has challenged me to apply theory to practice but also to theorise over the nature, proceedings and transnational character of this dispute resolution process. This multilevel approach to arbitration makes me feel that I am practicing a field of law which is constantly evolving and

redefining itself.

Theresa: I second Mary's views on how working in the field of arbitration could bring pleasant surprises and lead to much personal and professional growth.

Thanks to the exposure I gained on the job, it has been immensely motivating to witness the level of dedication and skills shown by many in the arbitration community, who persistently strive for excellence and advancement in their work.

It has also led me to appreciate the importance of diligence, discipline, attention to details, as well as the ability to react responsively and constructively to even the most delicate issues with precise solutions, while staying composed and organised under pressure.

The opportunity to be closely involved in a large number of multifarious cases with brilliant minds has been inspiring, and has tremendously strengthened the appeal of arbitration.

Ylli: I would also agree with Mary in toto. Combining academic endeavours with practice makes this particular field of law very dynamic and intellectually stimulating. I happen to enjoy the comparative methodological approach applied to the procedural dilemmas that often arise in practice.

I am surprised with the enthusiasm surrounding the transnational nature of international arbitration. The sociology of arbitration is fascinating. It is truly exciting.

3. *I like how all three of you point to the challenging nature of arbitration practice as a motivation for your dedication to arbitration. Many younger arbitration practitioners regularly cite mentorship as something fundamental to them. Who is your most inspiring arbitration mentor and why?*

Ylli: A role-model or a source of inspiration is very important. In fact, in terms of personal development, I rank it above anything else. In that light, I feel that we should express appreciation where appreciation is due. I have many inspiring arbitration mentors, but will mention three here: Professor Kaj Hobér, Per Magnusson, and Professor William F. Fox.

I would be nowhere close to where I am today but for the Uppsala University program on investment treaty arbitration, founded and run by Professor Kaj Hobér. In addition, since I graduated many years ago, I have been blessed with his kind support and mentorship, culminating in various academic achievements. Per Magnusson has made me a much better arbitration practitioner. Every time we discuss matters it feels like I am partaking in enjoying the fruits of his life-long labour, achievements, and wisdom. Finally, Professor William F. Fox has been so gracious and kind with his time, we have travelled the world together on arbitration-related matters – from Hong Kong, to New York, to Delhi, to London, and so on and so forth.

I would be nowhere today but for the above-mentioned individuals. I cannot express my gratitude enough. I hope that my students and associates will feel the same about me.

4. *As society evolves, notions of success and failure are being challenged and redefined. What would you consider to be one of the characteristics of a successful arbitration practitioner today?*

Kiran: I have been a practicing lawyer for 12 years and during this period I have been through two recessions (2008 and also the current one), held a variety of full-time and part-time positions in well-established and start-up environments, and become a mother. Not only have I seen society's notions of success and failure evolve, but my own personal views have become more nuanced.

Today, I see arbitration as a field that thrives through innovation on traditional approaches to dispute resolution. I find the same to be true for arbitration practitioners. The most successful among us are intellectually curious, keen to propel the profession forward, and always looking to address the next challenge or unsolved problem.

5. *Kiran, I find it interesting you talk about always looking to address the next challenge. C.S Lewis once said, "You can make anything by writing." What is one tip you would want to share with aspiring writers for our Blog?*

Kiran: I teach written and oral advocacy in the international LL.M. program at The George Washington University Law School. Based on my work mentoring students from around the world, and in honing my own writing skills, I have two key bits of advice. First, think big picture. Research involves understanding details and forming evidentiary bases for your ideas. But strong writing entails identifying the most important pieces of information for the story or argument at hand. Second, and relatedly, as advocates and writers, we must be engaging storytellers. We should aspire to use words effectively and accurately, and revise to cut the fluff! We should tailor the story to its audience, with room for adaptation and improvisation in case the unexpected comes up. This kind of writing involves knowing the story inside and out, which brings us back to the necessity of strong research and investigative skills. We should never be caught off guard and must be so well-informed that we can manage even if left surprised.

Mary: To add to what Kiran said, not losing sight of the big picture is very important. As jurists, it is rather tempting to delve into the world of research by over-analysing laws, facts and arguments. However, this should be done in a way that is not detrimental to the consistency and coherence of our writing. Words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs should be written always with a view to the core argument and main purpose of our writing. My second advice is to 'keep it personal'. Aspiring authors should adopt their own personal writing style which will constitute the identity of their writings. How we put words together, the way we express our opinion, the courtesy with which we disagree with other opinions out there, will define the kind of authors that we are.

Theresa: Thank you Kiran and Mary for the valuable advice. I am certainly taking note myself! Over the one year I spent on our Blog's editorial team, I have observed that a key element to building the breadth of quality knowledge and insights on the Blog is the infinite intellectual curiosity of our writers and editors. Participants in the writing and editing processes are eager to understand and reflect on the dynamic development, and sometimes stagnation, of the law in the context of the ever-changing global realities. To develop meaningful contents, I would encourage aspiring writers for our Blog to stay curious, aware and analytical.

6. To end our fireside chat, name one bucket list place that you hope to visit.

Kiran: In my “free” time I am an avid yoga practitioner and I am an internationally-certified yoga instructor. I would like to one day visit the Galapagos Islands for an extended yoga retreat. I have my eye on a particular resort that allows access to local wildlife and natural preserves. Some years ago, my husband and I spent several days at an island eco-lodge (no electricity or mobile reception) in Brasil’s Rio Negro. It was a refreshing experience and I would like to experience something similar again, but more immersive!

Mary: I would love to visit Egypt. The Nile, the pyramids of Giza, the library of Alexandria, the beaches of Hurghada make Egypt an alluring travel destination.

Theresa: The Summit of Kebnekaise, the highest mountain in Sweden. This mountain has been repeatedly mentioned in conversations since I first moved to Sweden in 2013. In terms of destination, the furthest north I have reached in the country so far is Åre, which is only halfway between the southwest coast where I lived and Kebnekaise in the north even after a 12-hour drive!

Ylli: I really enjoy food, coffee, and beautiful architecture (old and modern alike, but especially university campus’). For the combined reasons, there are so many places I still want to visit. However, to mention one, it would be Cartagena, Colombia.

Those sound like amazing places to visit, and thank you all for your time! I wish you the best of health and a fruitful rest of the year for 2020.

Further interviews in this series of interviews of our editors are published [here](#).

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