



# **Interview with Wells Fargo's**

# **MARY KATHERINE DUBOSE**

**In July, Wells Fargo & Company announced Mary Katherine DuBose as the head of the bank's secured lending division that includes asset-based lending, equipment finance, supply chain finance, and inventory finance.**

**In this role, DuBose leads key lending divisions for Commercial Banking, delivering streamlined, efficient working capital solutions to serve the needs of clients globally. Through the broad portfolio of secured lending solutions, she works directly with clients, lending on a wide variety of collateral. DuBose reports to Kyle Hranicky, CEO of Wells Fargo Commercial Banking.**

**BY MICHELE OCEJO**

**In her last role, DuBose served as Wells Fargo's Chief Credit Officer, responsible for leadership and oversight of all credit undertaken throughout Wells Fargo. In her role, she had oversight all credit risk through the company's lending activities and provided oversight of all company and line-of-business credit policies.**

**She currently is a member of Wells Fargo's Management Committee and a Nonexecutive Director of the Wells Fargo Irish Bank Board.**

**DuBose also served as the head of Capital Markets. In this role, she led teams responsible for Asset-Backed Finance (ABF), Debt Capital Markets (DCM), and Equity Capital Markets.**

**DuBose has more than 20 years of investment banking experience and joined Wells Fargo in 1998 to assist in forming the Business & Commercial Loan Securitization team. Prior to her Capital Markets role, DuBose was the head of DCM, and prior to that, she was co-head of ABF at Wells Fargo Securities. She also held positions leading Corporate Debt Finance, Subscription Finance, and Corporate Net Lease groups. Prior to joining Wells Fargo, DuBose spent three years at CapUSA, where she helped structure Capital USA Funding and Llama Retail Funding, two commercial paper conduits financing trade receivables.**

**DuBose holds a bachelor of science in business administration from the University of Arkansas with a concentration in finance. She is a member of the Board of Directors for KinderMourn and a member of the Board of Trustees for Charlotte Latin School.**

#### **Please tell us about your career trajectory.**

After completing my undergrad at the University of Arkansas, I joined a small finance company supporting retailers with commercial paper-backed financing. The company was started by Alice Walton (daughter of Sam Walton), and her vision was compelling as she was building a financing model to support Walmart vendors with more affordable financing.

I then joined First Union, a Wells Fargo predecessor, in the summer of 1998 as an analyst for the Structured Products group. There we financed pools of small and middle-market loans for non-bank loan originators through securitized lending. The work was challenging so I was learning daily, and I also had strong managers who provided opportunities for me to grow. In between my early roles, I also spent some time in mergers and acquisitions advisory. I had a tireless work ethic and a strong desire to learn as much as I could.

I built my career in the securitization business, leading the development of Wells Fargo's middle-market collateralized loan obligation (CLO) and later managing our broadly syndicated and middle-market CLO businesses. Over time, as I developed and made a name for myself, I built confidence and enjoyed bringing teams together with a common goal. Following the financial crisis, our product offering was very compelling to

asset managers building direct loan funds and that elevated my profile both internally and externally in the market.

In 2012, I led the acquisition of the bank's Subscription Finance business from WestLB. In 2013, I became co-head of the Asset Backed Finance (ABF) and Securitization business. Synergies in my prior roles led me to the debt capital markets business. Given the number of years I had spent in ABF, I was looking forward to expanding and challenging my skillset and learning a new business.

Four years later, I moved into the investment banking organization to lead our Capital Markets businesses, including high-grade, leveraged finance, and equity capital markets origination. I heard feedback from my ABF and Subscription Finance clients how, specifically in leveraged finance, we could be more impactful to the market and I wanted to make a difference. In that role I was able to partner with Kristin Leshner, who was co-heading coverage in the Investment Bank at the time, and we had a strong, trusting partnership.

In the summer of 2019, I was tapped to become the chief credit officer for Wells Fargo, leading all consumer and commercial credit decisioning and policy formation as well as loan review and allowances processes. This type of role was never in my plan and, honestly, I was extremely hesitant at first. I had extended a lot of balance sheets across my business roles and therefore I was strong in credit policy, risk rating policy, and maintaining strong regulatory relationships — all of which prepared me for the role. I was also excited to learn more about the consumer business.

Finally, I assumed my current role as head of Commercial Capital, a division of Commercial Banking, in the spring of 2022. In this role, I'm responsible for leading the secured lending and leasing businesses, including Capital Finance, Equipment Finance, Global Receivables and Trade, and Distribution Finance.

I chose to come back to the business for the people and the clients. I am motivated by finding creative solutions to serve the needs of our clients, but I also recognized our team is made up of some of the best bankers and, in many cases, we have number one market share across our product offering. I also have the opportunity to partner again with Kristin Leshner, as she leads Commercial Banking's Middle Market Banking Group, and we are already making strong progress.

#### **What are your short and long-term goals in your new position?**

Short term, we are building plans and strategies for 2023 to achieve both the capital and profitability goals of the firm. We're excited to increase our collaboration with our middle-market and investment banking partners. We plan to build an aggregate commercial banking syndicated finance team, expand our lending and payments offerings to many of our dealer clients, and integrate our products via structure and legal documents.

Longer term, we have opportunities to develop new products, enhance our technology, and strengthen how we go to market and connect with clients. We're looking at how to collaborate more across Commercial Banking to serve some of our unique clients, but also possibly integrating processes and procedures of certain activities within the Commercial bank.

#### **What was it that attracted you to this role?**

Having a background in secured lending, I crossed paths with a lot of great individuals and companies in this business. It might sound cliché to say I was attracted to the role because of the people, the products, and the clients, but in this case I truly was.

The team is seasoned, hardworking, smart, and creative. They are also hugely supportive of building and innovating these businesses, focused on the needs of and feedback from our clients. We have strong businesses that continue to outperform year-over-year and that is a testament to the talent and leadership that is ingrained in the team. Multiple times over the years, Wells Fargo has been the number one asset-based bookrunner, number one largest factor in the U.S. by factor volume, number two bank-affiliated equipment finance provider, and number two vendor finance provider in the U.S. What is not to love about a business that puts their heart and soul into everything they do to achieve such great success?

We have a unique set of products and mature, best-in-class businesses, with an opportunity to integrate more holistically across Commercial Banking and the enterprise. That opportunity gives us room to grow.

It's also very rewarding to work with some of the best companies in their industries and have the chance to provide them with the financial solutions they need to achieve their goals.



**I believe Wells Fargo is doing a good job of building out strong programs and partnerships that are helping us recruit incredible talent; such as the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, targeting thousands of undergraduate and graduate students; Building Organizational Leadership Diversity (BOLD), which sponsors high-potential, diverse talent; military hiring programs.**

#### **What aspects of the industry challenges are keeping you up at night right now?**

There are a few things that keep me up at night, but I believe I have a great team that is helping to navigate those challenges and dig deep to find the opportunities. Attrition and attracting the right people to the financial services industry has been challenging in the first part of 2022. We are seeing this ease, but it is still a watch point for our team as we continue to grow, build, and develop core talent.

Continuing to increase diversity on our team is also an important focus, both for me personally and for the bank. Having an organization of people from many different backgrounds and perspectives only makes us stronger and positions us better to serve our clients.

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cultivate economic opportunities for Black talent in America; and many more great initiatives.

Along with our companywide programs and partnerships, we're putting in significant time and energy into recruiting, developing and participating in industry sponsorships, associations, and conferences.

Finally, the economic environment with continued supply chain disruption and increased inventory levels is both an opportunity and a watch spot for us.

**What challenges and opportunities do you see for ABL in the next six months?**

These are interesting economic times. Like many, we are watching what is happening in the broader economy and how it impacts our clients. What's unique about ABL is that when there are economic challenges for companies, we tend to see a migration of clients from cash-flow solutions to ABL solutions. We are also seeing significant opportunity to help our clients meet their environmental, social and governance goals through our financing across equipment finance and ABL.

In the last six months, we have seen loan utilization rebound back to historic levels due to the inflationary and supply chain pressures that our clients are experiencing. In addition, the amount of excess inventory levels are a challenge and it will be very important to see how the consumer behavior changes as we approach the holiday season. This is critical to monitor as this will create an opportunity, especially for ABL, to offer flexible working capital solutions that companies will need.

As a leadership team, we are monitoring very closely the potential challenges and opportunities that face companies so that we are ready to help our clients navigate the right financial solution for their working capital needs.

**What are your passions outside of work?**

I love spending time with my family. I am blessed with a husband who enjoys life to the fullest with me through travel and activities.

We have two daughters, in their freshman and junior years of high school, who also enjoy sports and lots of activities. We love to travel as a family and spend time at the beach with loved ones — in the water, on the tennis court, and on the golf course — as often as we can. I also enjoy supporting my girls' school through service, as a member of the board and volunteering in the school community.

Finding a work/life balance can be hard, but it's important. I think one challenge that women face is that when their kids are very young, they assume the physical and mental challenge will always be the same, so they find themselves stepping back or stepping out of the workforce. My advice would be to ask for help, be willing to be out of balance either professionally or personally, and, most importantly, communicate rather than harbor guilt or frustration. I have found often when I am out

of balance, I am actually the happiest as I am prioritizing my attention in the right places. ■

*Michele Ocejo is SFNet director of communications and editor-in-chief of The Secured Lender.*



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