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## Vorys attorney receives award for support provided to wife of deployed Army captain

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Brent C. Taggart called it a small price to pay while Elizabeth Hanning Smith says it was priceless.

Taggart, a partner at Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, recently was honored with the Outstanding Center of Influence Award by the Army National Guard and Reserve for his role in providing an alternative work schedule to Smith, an attorney at Vorys, during her husband's training and deployment to Iraq.

Smith's husband, Capt. Brian Smith, commander of the 1-137th's Headquarters Company and a Blackhawk helicopter pilot, nominated Taggart for the award, which is given to a business, group or individual that has demonstrated great support to Guard and Reserve soldiers during deployment. Capt. Smith was deployed from January-December 2009.

"It was a difficult year but because of Vorys, it was not nearly as difficult as it could have been for me and my kids," said Smith, who was afforded extended maternity leave, reduced travel time, flexible hours and remote working arrangements.

"I have been at Vorys for seven years so I have always found them



BRENT C. TAGGART

to be flexible but this was overwhelming. I'm very grateful."

Taggart, who is Smith's mentor, said he is humbled by the battalion's recognition but quickly pointed out that he didn't act alone.

"This award belongs just as much to my partners," he said. "There was absolutely no resistance (in being flexible with Smith) and it never posed a problem. This belongs to all of us and it was a small price to pay when I'm not the

one being shot at. It cannot be over emphasized how difficult it is having a loved one away in harm's way."

The Smiths have three small children and for most of last year, Smith functioned as a single parent.

"With Brent leading the way, the firm went above and beyond and they didn't bat an eye. It made (my husband's) life easier because he didn't have that extra layer of worry," she said, adding that her career provided her with normalcy while her husband was serving overseas.

"The gesture was just so generous. And really, without Brent making the effort and the whole firm, I don't know if I could look back so fondly on 2009. Even with my husband gone, it was a great year."

Taggart, who handles disputes involving business and commercial law, civil rights, employee benefits and employment law, called Smith a successful attorney and said the firm's leadership has encouraged a "team player mentality."

"As civilians, we ought to do the right thing. (Capt. Smith) knew that when he left, she was taken care of and that is so critical. She did not miss a beat and she did everything we asked," he said. "Every family matters and every person matters. That's what we here at Vorys do."