

New York Law Journal

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2017
PROFESSIONAL
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

DISTINGUISHED
LEADERS

This award recognizes attorneys in leadership roles who achieved impressive results in the past year. Others may fly under the radar, but this group of 22 extraordinary lawyers had great performances while demonstrating clear leadership skills that resulted in positive outcomes.



ROBIN COHEN

Principal, McKool Smith

Q ■ What are some of your proudest recent achievements?

A ■ I think my proudest achievement this year is the win in the Court of Appeals for Warren Pumps. That got a lot of publicity. It was an issue on allocation that had an impact for my client in the hundreds of millions of dollars, but also it was a multibillion dollar issue for the industry. The issue got certified from the Delaware Supreme Court to the court of appeals and most predicted that the court of appeals would rule in favor of the industry and, in fact, it was the reverse and they did it relatively quickly.

Now you're seeing other cases copy the decision or affirm and actually broaden the Court of Appeals' decision even more.

Q: What does it mean to be a leader?

A: It's important to be a role model and it's especially important for a lot of the women at McKool Smith and in the industry to see women taking a leading role in

large, commercial cases. I'm often in a situation where it's my team, which is very diverse, against a large number of attorneys on the other side that are not diverse, and so I think it's important for the firm to support diverse leadership, and it's also important from a client perspective.

Q: Name a lawyer or mentor whose leadership inspired you.

A: When I was a first year, Randy Paar was a senior partner at Anderson Kill. She was the best trial lawyer I have ever seen and she was the best oral advocate. She was also very supportive of women and of junior associates at the firm, which was a terrific place.

Q: How are the business and profession of law changing and how should lawyers adapt for the future?

A: I think it's becoming more and more difficult to become partner, and so it becomes more and more important for an attorney to distinguish themselves, whatever that might be. Being a

great brief writer, being a great trial lawyer, being someone who understands that litigation is a means to maximize business goals.

So as the litigation is being handled more and more in-house, I think it's creating fewer opportunities for people in outside firms, and therefore more important for an attorney to distinguish themselves early on in their career.

Q: What is the best advice for someone considering a career in law or someone already in the profession who is seeking to make a greater impact?

A: I think it's important to figure out what your talent is and to be self-aware, and then explore that talent and distinguish yourself in that way.