

THE 2020 D.C. LITIGATION DEPARTMENTS OF THE YEAR

General Litigation Winner

Kirkland & Ellis



DAN DONOVAN



KATE KATZ



RAGAN NARESH

■ DESCRIBE YOUR FIRM'S APPROACH TO LITIGATION AND YOUR STRATEGY FOR BUILDING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS FOR TRIALS OR OTHER MATTERS.

We immerse ourselves in the facts of the case and then build the right team. We have a deep and broad bench of talented litigators. Our lawyers get trial experience earlier than they would elsewhere, and we prepare for that with the Kirkland Institute of Trial Advocacy. Although many of our lawyers are trial lawyers and are not traditional specialists, many of them also have developed expertise in specific areas. That allows us to tailor teams to best suit the needs of a case and to ensure our clients get a trial-ready team from top to bottom.

■ DISCUSS THE TWO BIGGEST LITIGATION CASES YOUR FIRM WORKED ON IN 2019 AND HOW YOU REACHED SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES.

Kirkland won [more than \$256 million] for BNSF Railway in its dispute with J.B. Hunt Transport over the parties' joint intermodal transportation business, which ships containers of goods across the country by rail and truck. On top of the [more than \$256 million] in damages, Kirkland secured substantial going-forward value for BNSF based on the arbitrators' interpretation of the parties' contract. BNSF and Hunt are the largest U.S. intermodal providers, moving 70% of all domestic intermodal shipments annually.

After six years of litigation, the North Carolina Business Court granted summary judgment to Honeywell in a hotly-contested trade secret case concerning anti-ballistic materials used in combat helmets. The case involved a Honeywell helmet expert who previously worked for DSM Dyneema, Honeywell's chief market competitor. Following a nearly 10-hour hearing, the court issued an opinion in June 2019 rejecting all of DSM's claims and fully vindicating Honeywell.

■ WHAT ARE THE MOST CHALLENGING AND SATISFYING ASPECTS OF YOUR WORK IN LITIGATION?

Clients come to Kirkland with their most challenging problems—they come with questions that have no easy answers, and when their very livelihood is on the line. We shine when the stakes are high and the answers are hard. There is nothing more satisfying than being presented with a Gordian knot and developing a strategy to unwind it in the face of legal, factual or procedural challenges. That is what attracts lawyers to Kirkland and keeps them here.

■ WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'D SHARE WITH YOUNG LAWYERS?

Push your comfort zone. Don't look for cases with black-and-white answers; don't limit yourself to cases with easy facts. Find cases that force you to be creative, to think outside the box, to do things that you've never done before. That is where you grow as a lawyer.

Responses submitted by Kirkland & Ellis partners Dan Donovan, Ragan Naresh and Kate Katz. Donovan litigates energy, financial and technology disputes and has secured substantial victories in high-stakes matters nationwide. Naresh litigates civil matters in the energy, agriculture, telecommunications and consumer products industries. Katz focuses on complex commercial litigation and class action matters in federal and state courts.

firm facts

- Number of Partners in Firm's Litigation Department in D.C.: 86
- Number of Associates in Litigation Department in D.C.: 77
- Number of Other Attorneys in Litigation Department in D.C.: 13
- Number of Partners in Litigation Department Firmwide: 387
- Number of Associates in Litigation Department Firmwide: 362
- Number of Other Attorneys in Litigation Department Firmwide: 49
- Percentage of Firm Represented by Litigation Department: 29%