For the fifth year, we’re recognizing Washington lawyers for work that has advanced the practice of law. The trailblazers profiled here have won cases at the U.S. Supreme Court and influenced policy at the Justice Department. They’ve charted new courses for their firms and in-house legal departments, and spent hundreds of hours on pro bono cases that made a difference. The results of their work often can be felt far beyond the Beltway.

Selections are made by the editors of The National Law Journal, based on nominations from the legal community as well as our own research and reporting. The selections have been divided into two categories: Champions, those who have upheld the profession’s core values through public service, pro bono work and advocacy for civil liberties, and Visionaries, attorneys whose business foresight or legal acumen has expanded their firms, advanced the law or improved government.

We will celebrate their achievements at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 1150 22d St. N.W. in Washington, on Sept. 20. Stay tuned to these pages and NLJ.com for more details.

—DAVID L. BROWN, EDITOR IN CHIEF
Visionaries

These attorneys saw further ahead. They guided firms through a stagnant economy, revamped public corruption prosecution efforts and guided federal agencies through legal thickets.

DANIEL LENNON
Latham & Watkins

It’s not often that when clients need high-end corporate legal work, they think of Washington. Daniel Lennon is trying to change that. As the global chairman of Latham & Watkins’ corporate department and a partner in the firm’s Washington office, Lennon has bulked up the corporate practice in D.C. in part by embracing the international side of corporate work.

“It’s very rare you see a billion-dollar transaction that is just in the U.S.,” Lennon said. “Clients are increasingly becoming global.”

Lennon said that the international reach of Latham & Watkins, with 20 offices in Asia, Europe and the Middle East, helps gain clients that the firm might not otherwise have been able to attract. The team boasts a client list that includes Allison Transmission Holdings Inc., HCR ManorCare, Highbridge Capital Management LLC, Ciena Corp., The Carlyle Group L.P., Apollo Global Management LLC, Onex Partners L.P. and Platinum Equity LLC.

Lennon said that bulk up the firm’s D.C. corporate law presence was also important because it boosted Latham’s ability to be a full-service firm. “Our clients were used to calling D.C. lawyers for regulatory work or communications work,” Lennon said. “We have always thought it’s just more efficient if you have other practices to offer as well.”

It was Lennon who recognized the need for a private-equity finance practice group, a relative rarity even among large firms. The group is led by two Washington partners, Patrick Shannon and Jennifer Van Driesen.

Lennon has kept himself busy by advising on transactions, including the $4 billion leveraged buyout of Pharmaceutical Product Development Inc. by Carlyle and Hellman & Friedman LLC. He also has advised on the $1.4 billion merger between Vought Aircraft Industries Inc. and Triumph Group Inc.

In the future, Lennon foresees increased activity in the private-equity realm and an increase in regional specialization.

“We see our clients moving into different asset classes beyond private equity,” Lennon said. “All these areas are under more regulation.”

—Matthew Huisman