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TOP 100 2021

JOSEPH A. CALABRESE

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP
CENTURY CITY
ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS & MEDIA

— TOP 100 —



As the global chair of Latham's entertainment, sports & media practice, Calabrese is regularly involved in some of the most significant deals in those industries. Two major projects this past year saw him represent the International Olympic Committee and the Hollywood Foreign Press Association to cope with

the effects of the pandemic on their major events

"I've had a front-row seat to the collision of the pandemic and the entertainment and sports world," he said.

For the IOC, the issue was the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics from 2020 to 2021. "I helped them work through some of the rather complex — and highly negotiated — provisions of their broadcasting arrangements" including "assessing the various rights of the parties," he said.

For the HFPA, he worked on issues growing out of switching the 2021 Golden Globes broadcast from in-person to virtual. Then, he represented the association in negotiations about its efforts to improve inclusiveness.

Calabrese said he is continuing to work with the HFPA and NBC "to address the concerns that have been raised regarding the composition and organization of the HFPA and the hopeful return of the Golden Globes to the air on NBC as soon as possible."

"It's my job to help figure out where this industry is going and make sure we're there prepared to help our clients as they embark on new and uncharted territory" he said.

Recent examples include helping a South Korean company buy most of Creative Artists Agency's production company, advising chef Thomas Keller as he closed his New York restaurant due to the pandemic, representing Eldridge in its purchase of most of the Killers' music library and advising the World Surf League about creating a mixed-use development centered on a manmade surfing pool.

As a young lawyer 40 years ago, Calabrese worked on one of the first acquisitions of a home video company. He jokes that he had to ask what a video cassette was because he'd never seen one.

Last year, he represented Warner Bros. in forming a joint venture with Universal to pool their "hard goods" businesses, which sell DVDs, Blu-Rays and similar products. The expectation is the new venture will "preside over the consolidation and ultimate winding-up of the hard goods business," he said.

"Things change," Calabrese said. "It's a really fun part of what I do for a living.

— Don DeBenedictis