

Daily Journal

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Top

100

Lawyers
2022



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100 | **MICHELE D. JOHNSON**

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP
COSTA MESA
SECURITIES LITIGATION

Michele D. Johnson is the global chair of Latham’s litigation and trial department. In her own practice, she focuses on securities litigation, and in the past several years, she and her team have won some significant victories.

She won a defense jury verdict in the first case ever to go to trial in California on a “holder’s claim.” She convinced a jury that GoodRx didn’t know and so couldn’t have disclosed that Amazon would announce a competing prescription-price service. And she defeated several lawsuits by investors who lost money after following the advice of short sellers.

She is especially proud that a recent 9th Circuit ruling upholding her class action victory for Twitter is being cited frequently by others. The court held securities laws don’t require a company to say everything possible when it chooses to speak about an aspect of its business. *Weston Family Partnership LLLP v. Twitter, Inc.*, 20-17465 (9th Cir., March 23, 2022).

Johnson said she finds representing companies in the rapidly changing pharma, biotech and technology industries especially interesting. Those companies are “really doing new things,” she said, so “the legal challenges are new, and it’s fun to litigate them.”

Her highest profile litigation success recently, however, had nothing to do with securities, pharmaceuticals, or technology. She and partner Jamie L. Wine represented the U.S. Soccer Federation in a yearslong dispute with the U.S. Senior Women’s National Team over equal pay and benefits. The Latham team entered the case weeks before a scheduled trial, replacing previous attorneys and their arguments, and then won a summary judgment that led to an initial settlement.

After further litigation and an appeal, the two sides reached a settlement in May that gives current and former members of the women’s team about \$24 million and equal pay with the men’s national team going forward. A federal judge gave the deal initial approval last month. *Morgan v. U.S. Soccer Federation Inc.*, 2:19-cv-01717 (C.D. Cal., filed March 8, 2019).

It’s a good settlement for both sides, Johnson said. “U.S. Soccer and the Women’s National Team are on the same side of wanting to promote women’s soccer, wanting to promote equal pay, wanting to celebrate the sport on behalf of women and girls.”

— Don DeBenedictis