

## ▶▶ DISTINGUISHED LEADERS

### ERIC LEON

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#### What are some of your proudest recent achievements?

I would say I am most proud of what our associates have been able to accomplish in trials and arbitrations over the past several months. We have made a concerted effort to provide our associates with increased responsibility, and it has been very rewarding watching those efforts bear fruit. We have had several associates play major roles on important trials and arbitrations, including examining witnesses and giving closing arguments, and their performance has exceeded even the loftiest of expectations.

**What does it mean to be a leader?** I view leadership as an ongoing effort to try to build consensus among a group of what at times can be discordant opinions. It's not easy and it's not always successful, but that's the goal.

**Name a lawyer or mentor whose leadership inspired you.** I clerked for Judge Dennis G. Jacobs on the Second Circuit, and he taught me the importance of always being forthright and honest with people. They may not always like you for it, but they will always respect you. Another mentor has been Joe Serino, one of my partners at Latham & Watkins. Joe has taught me the importance of maintaining grace under pressure, something I strive to do in all aspects of my career (with varying degrees of success).

**How are the business and profession of law changing, and how should lawyers adapt for the future?** Clients are increasingly seeking a "one-stop shopping" solution for their legal problems. This has put pres-



sure on law firms to demonstrate excellence across a wide array of disciplines in order to serve their clients' needs. While some firms can still survive having niche specialties, those firms are becoming fewer and fewer. I believe firms, particularly large firms, need to have a deep, elite bench in multiple practice areas to thrive in today's marketplace.

**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?** For someone considering a career in law, I would say never underestimate the difference an individual can make. One lawyer, even a very young one, can change the entire course of a case through diligence and dedication. For those already in the profession, I would say find the right mentor who will invest the time and energy to help you hone your craft and maximize your potential. Ideally, that would include providing you with hands-on experience at an early stage in your career.