

## THE RECORDER



### VANGUARD AWARD WINNER Michael Rubin and Rene Mendoza, Latham & Watkins

Michael Rubin and Rene Mendoza, Latham & Watkins are among the recipients of the The Recorder's 2025 Vanguard Award. Read a Q&A with them below.

**How has your firm transformed your business in recent years in response to world events or changing demands from clients or talent?**

**Rubin:** Our clients, across nearly every sector, are developing AI, exploring ways to use it, or integrating AI into business operations to increase efficiency, improve accuracy, and automate processes. In anticipation of this revolution, we established a cross-border and cross-disciplinary AI Practice with a singular focus: maintaining a best-in-class and consistent approach to supporting the full the AI ecosystem on matters across the firm's global platform.



Michael Rubin, left, and Rene Mendoza, right, with Latham & Watkins.

As Global Chair of the Practice I lead more than 150 lawyers globally who advise at every layer of the tech stack. We leverage capabilities across IP, privacy, energy, and infrastructure, cybersecurity, consumer protection, antitrust, data ethics, governance, complex commercial contracts, and environmental to help clients as they develop, implement, or just explore the AI technologies that are transforming business. Our subject-matter experts have developed deep domain-specific knowledge of the technological details that drive emerging legal questions.



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**Mendoza:** The AI Academy we launched in 2024 was born from the Practice's work—we understood that to best position our junior lawyers to meet the moment, we needed to develop the resources for them to quickly uplevel their knowledge in this fast-moving area.

### How have the changes affected your business?

**Rubin:** Latham has advised on more than 2,000 matters involving AI since 2022, building the playbooks for leading companies and startups alike.

On the transactional front, Latham has advised on more than \$660 billion in deals for AI-driven companies since 2021. In litigation, Latham stands on the front lines of the most important disputes impacting how AI can and will be developed and deployed. Regulators often tap our Practice members' knowledge to help shape new laws in key areas that impact AI, including privacy, antitrust, IP, and copyright.

**Mendoza:** The AI Academy will extend our impact in these spaces. For the inaugural event, we had more than 100 first- through fourth-year associates from across Latham's global offices immerse themselves in skills-based training at the intersection of AI, the law, and the future of global business. No other firm offers such in-depth and comprehensive AI trainings, and the

AI Academy reflects our commitment to helping lawyers stay ahead of the curve.

### What advice do you have for law firms and companies seeking to embark on similar transformations?

**Mendoza:** Plant the seeds for your organization—whether you're in the legal industry or another sector—and identify where you can “connect all the AI dots” to organize firm capabilities, knowledge management, client communications, stakeholder relationships, and the other practical aspects to keep pace with cutting-edge developments in the AI space.

**Rubin:** Stay ahead of the curve, which requires a combination of vigilance, client engagement, and forward-thinking strategies. For us, that means cultivating long-term relationships with our clients—we don't just handle individual cases; we're deeply involved in understanding their product roadmaps and future directions and can anticipate potential legal challenges and regulatory changes. Once you have forged a community of AI innovators, you can leverage your shared experience to help clients develop products, incorporate businesses, and collaborate across the industry. And just as importantly, you can establish the resources and programming that will upskill the next generation.