

Appellate Group Of The Year: Latham

By **Emma Cueto**

Law360 (March 5, 2026, 4:03 PM EST) -- Latham & Watkins LLP argued four cases before the Supreme Court in 2025 and prevailed in two, securing victory for a Minnesota student denied disability accommodations and preventing the creation of an Oklahoma religious charter school on First Amendment grounds, earning it a spot among the 2025 Law360 Appellate Groups of the Year.

Latham's U.S. Supreme Court and appellate practice, which operates nationwide but is mostly based in Washington, D.C., prides itself on its deep bench, with a different attorney handling arguments before the high court in each of its 2025 cases. The firm also saw a string of victories while navigating a leadership transition as Roman Martinez took over from Gregory Garre as global practice chair.

In May 2025, the firm secured a favorable result on behalf of the Oklahoma State Attorney General in a case over whether the state was required to fund a religious charter school, which would have been the first in the nation. The justices deadlocked 4-4 after Justice Amy Coney Barrett recused herself, leaving in place an Oklahoma Supreme Court ruling that voided the contract between the Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board and St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School.

The case was considered a long shot, according to Garre, who noted that rulings on similar issues at the high court in recent years had most observers assuming that the justices would reverse the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

"These are the kinds of cases we love to work on," Garre said. "We threw everything into it, researching the issues, getting far back in the history."

Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond hailed the result at the time as "a resounding victory for religious liberty and for the foundational principles that have guided our nation since its founding."

After that razor-thin victory, the group's other Supreme Court success in 2025 was a unanimous decision last June in which the court ruled 9-0 that the Eighth Circuit had applied too high a standard when throwing out a student's discrimination suit under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The student, identified as A.J.T. and referred to in court documents as Ava, had accused a Minnesota school district of discriminating against her by failing to adjust the start time and length of her school



day to accommodate her severe epilepsy and cognitive deficits.

Although the Eighth Circuit dismissed the suit, saying Ava had not demonstrated that the school district acted with "bad faith or gross misjudgment," the Supreme Court ruled that the circuit judges were wrong to suggest that this heightened standard was required in education-related ADA suits.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the unanimous decision, "ADA and Rehabilitation Act claims based on educational services should be subject to the same standards that apply in other disability discrimination contexts. Nothing in the text of Title II of the ADA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act suggests that such claims should be subject to a distinct, more demanding analysis."

Martinez, who handled oral argument in the case, said that the victory was particularly rewarding. "It felt great getting a win and reversing unfair discrimination against kids," he said.

The group also saw key wins in cases beyond the high court. In September 2025, it prevailed at the Ninth Circuit when a panel affirmed the dismissal of an antitrust suit accusing Las Vegas casino-hotel operators of using a vendor's software to inflate room rates. The decision was the first time an appellate court weighed in on the rising tide of antitrust cases targeting alleged algorithmic collusion.

The panel found that the software in question helped the hotels compete and was purchased independently.

Melissa Sherry, a partner who worked on the case, said the appeal also exemplified how the team works with other practice groups, stepping in to defend the dismissal other Latham attorneys had achieved at the trial court.

"It was really great to get a win there," she said.

Partners with the group said that part of the key to its success is its deep bench and its tradition of training up quality lawyers.

"Greg's leadership style was to always be inclusive and build up younger partners and associates," Martinez said of Garre's time leading the group. It's an approach he said he plans to continue.

The group also has a close, tight-knit culture, he added. Even as the group has grown, he said, that has continued.

"One thing that makes our success is being at a firm and practice group where we're all supporting each other," he said. "We have a system that's a little different than some firms, where it's all really built around one person. We have multiple people capable of handling something like oral arguments."

--Additional reporting by Katie Buehler and Matthew Perlman. Editing by Kristen Becker.