

# Daily Journal

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## Honoring the Top Performing Attorneys in California



### Michele D. Johnson

Latham & Watkins  
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**M**ichele Johnson's 26-year career has been spent at Latham & Watkins. Her journey at the firm began as a junior associate, where she worked on a variety of cases, gaining a broad range of experience. As she progressed to a mid-level associate, Johnson became involved in extensive trial work, particularly in

groundwater contamination cases, until legislative changes brought those cases to a halt. "I quickly became a securities litigator, then an M&A and Delaware litigator bringing and defending deal cases, then finally a generalist once again, trying the cases that need trying," Johnson said.

In 2019, following a four-year term on the firm's nine-member executive committee, Johnson was appointed as the global chair of Latham & Watkins' litigation and trial department, which now boasts 1,100 members.

Some of Johnson's notable recent cases include co-leading the team representing high-profile clients such as Tom Brady, Gisele Bündchen, Larry David and Shaquille O'Neal in litigation related to their advertisements involving the cryptocurrency FTX.

Additionally, she played a pivotal role in securing a trial win for NextGen Healthcare, resolving a long-standing dispute between the company and an investor, resulting in a complete defense verdict.

"Five failed proxy contests and eight years of litigation later, we won a complete defense verdict against the investor's claim that he

would have sold his shares, but instead held them, in reliance on the company's statements, thereby forgoing \$400 million," Johnson said. "After one of the first in-person jury trials in California during COVID, and the first time in 86 years a holder's claim went to trial, we upheld the verdict in the California Court of Appeal, in a key victory for public companies nationwide."

Johnson also achieved a significant summary judgment win for the global sports and entertainment company Endeavor. This precedent-setting decision effectively dismissed a plaintiff's claim that he was entitled to credit for key ideas underpinning Endeavor's \$10 billion IPO based on an unsolicited email he had sent to company executives.

"The plaintiff sought access to top executives, both in discovery and leading up to trial, but we were able to develop the record sufficient to win as a matter of law – establishing important precedent regarding unsolicited submissions in advance of IPOs and M&A transactions – while minimizing disruption to the company and its leaders," Johnson said.