

GWYN WILLIAMS

Partner, Latham & Watkins, Boston
Boston University School of Law



When Gwyn Williams jumped from Goodwin Procter to Latham & Watkins in 2012, she was charged with starting a litigation practice from scratch in the firm's new Boston office while revitalizing its global product liability and mass tort defense group. This challenge is why she took the job.

Barely five years later, she has two dozen Boston-based litigators handling a broad variety of disputes. Williams plays a key role in the group's direction.

"I'd had nothing but a great experience at Goodwin and was never looking to leave," says Williams, who came to Latham with two other litigation partners. "But we had the opportunity to start a group here in this office and build it in whatever way we wanted. To have that degree of responsibility and control was really appealing."

Latham's product liability and mass tort group had been hit by the recent retirements of many of its leaders. So Williams had to learn quickly how the different attorneys doing such work interrelated with one another despite being based in multiple offices in the U.S. and in Europe, and how their work intermeshed with other practice areas, and then find the right people to fill the gaps.

But despite all her leadership responsibilities, Williams says she still spends at least 85 percent of her time working on her own cases. She's proud of the creative arguments she and her colleagues have developed around the area of proximate cause, enabling them to dispose of a number of cases at the motion stage.

"We've been successful in defeating a bunch of different types of cases this way," she says. "The largest number are in the tobacco litigation space, but we've been successful in other areas too."

Meanwhile, Williams maintains a pro bono practice centering on juvenile justice issues. This included co-authoring amicus briefs in the cases that led the Supreme Judicial Court to abolish mandatory life without parole for minors.

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— Eric T. Berkman



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