

How I Made Partner: 'The Forest and the Trees Are All Important. Put the Details and the Big Picture Together,' Says Jason Gott of Latham & Watkins

"So much of the learning process in law is informal—we learn by observing and doing and making mistakes and correcting them. But having a vibrant, official mentoring program is critical to provide a "space" where both mentor and mentee come together."

By Tasha Norman

Jason Gott, 34, Latham & Watkins, Chicago.

Practice Area: Restructuring and special situations.

Law school and year of graduation: University of Chicago Law School (2012).

How long were you an associate at the firm before being promoted to your current position? Five years. I was promoted to partner on Jan. 1, 2022.

Were you an associate at another firm before joining your present firm? Yes, I was an associate at Kirkland & Ellis LLP (Chicago) for four years. I left Kirkland and joined Latham in January 2017.

What was the biggest surprise you experienced in becoming partner? The biggest surprise was the expectations, but not in a bad way. The firm wants me to

keep doing what I've been doing, which is simply to do great work, manage our matters, supervise and mentor associates and continue to be a reliable friend and colleague. It was a welcome surprise that I was not expected or asked immediately to start finding new clients or mandates on my own.

What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you partner? I think my role working for our client Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals was significant in the firm's decision. It has been a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate my leadership and abilities in all facets of the restructuring practice, and it was a particularly notable matter for our group that has lasted almost three years at this point with several milestones of



Jason Gott.

(Courtesy photo)

success along the way. It is one of the most complex bankruptcies in history, and I co-led the Latham team and broader group of advisers helping to develop the initial strategy, negotiate the settlement and navigate day-to-day operational issues and litigations.

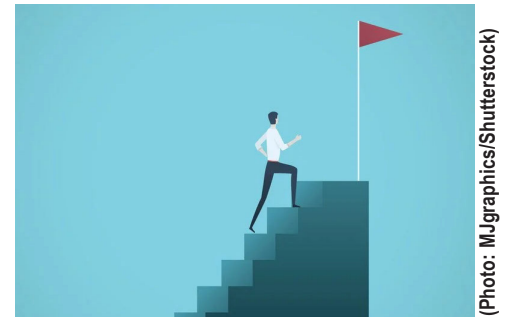
Describe how you feel about your career now that you've

made partner? I'm excited for the road ahead. While the near-term goal is to keep learning and growing as a lawyer, it is exciting to have the charge and heightened ability to think and act like a business owner that go with being honored with a partner title.

Who had the greatest influence in your career that helped propel you to your leadership role? Caroline Reckler: a partner at Latham & Watkins. Caroline and I have worked together on a significant portion of my matters since joining Latham. She has multiple traits that both facilitated my growth and advancement and engrained in me leadership characteristics that I want to emulate. Things like trusting her team, making an effort to mentor and teach and treating her colleagues and her opponents with equal measures of respect and decency—those are critical elements of leadership in a law firm, and I'm grateful to have Caroline as my example to follow.

What's the best piece of advice you could give an associate who wants to make partner? The forest and the trees are all important. You should be striving to put the details, and the big picture together in every facet of your practice and your career. For example, I try deliberately to be firm but respectful in my communications with opposing counsel. Being overly friendly or conciliatory could be doing your own client a disservice in the immediate term, but being rude or disrespectful can quickly earn you a bad reputation and dampen your profile in the industry.

If you had a chance to advise or mentor your younger self (at any stage), what advice would you give to yourself? My advice would be to put more time into relationship-building across the board. Get to know your internal and external colleagues but also make more connections completely outside of the professional context. It helps make life more well-rounded and enjoyable.



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What initiatives are you working on at the firm that you are most proud of? I'm involved in the firm's official mentoring program, which pairs junior attorneys with more senior ones to help them grow and find their career paths. So much of the learning process in law is informal—we learn by observing and doing and making mistakes and correcting them. But having a vibrant, official mentoring program is critical to provide a "space" where both mentor and mentee come together, knowing that their purpose is to discuss softer aspects of professional growth and the practice of law. It encourages more direct and productive dialogue, and I am proud that the firm devotes significant time and attention to that aspect of mentoring.