

Rising Star: Latham's DJ Moore

Law360, New York (July 28, 2017, 4:26 PM EDT) - Latham & Watkins LLP's Duncan Joseph "DJ" Moore has had a hand in several recent high profile environmental matters in California, from shepherding a desalination plant in San Diego through the approval process to working on a team bringing the Los Angeles Football Club's 22,000-seat stadium to fruition — earning him a spot as one of three environmental law practitioners under 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

BIGGEST MATTER OF HIS CAREER:

Beginning in 2007, Moore helped bring to life an ambitious \$1 billion ocean water desalination facility in San Diego that would provide 10 percent of San Diego County's water supply. The Claude "Bud" Lewis Carlsbad Desalination Plant in Carlsbad, built by Poseidon Water, began delivering water last year, capping what Moore said has been his biggest challenge yet.

He said seawater desalination is not common in the U.S. or California, and Poseidon had to deal with the full panoply of necessary government approvals, from entities including the regional water board, the California Coastal Commission and the federal government. Moore helped with all those, while simultaneously managing responses to the strong objections of several well-established environmental groups.

"The project's biggest challenges are the public relations and environmental sides of it," Moore said. "It's very difficult to convince folks that you're not having adverse impacts on marine organisms, even when the science

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STAR



DJ Moore
Latham & Watkins

Age: 38

Home base: Los Angeles

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Virginia School of Law

First job after law school: Associate at Latham & Watkins

supports your conclusion. But we were able to successfully accomplish that for that project at that time.”

PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Moore said his proudest moment stems from the pro bono and community work that is encouraged by Latham & Watkins. He said lawyers at the firm do pro bono in the fields in which they practice.

“I represented the Hollywood Community Housing Corp., which is a nonprofit affordable housing provider. They wanted to develop a project that was 54 units of very low-income housing in the Hollywood area of Los Angeles. The neighbors did not want this project built,” Moore said.

He said he spent five years fighting off attacks based on environmental and other grounds.

“Once I had the project approved and we negotiated some agreements, receiving the call from the executive director that the funding had closed and the project was moving forward was probably my proudest moment,” he said.

HIS MOTIVATION:

Moore said he loves the challenge of bringing the development world and the environmental world together on matters, and finding how the various competing interests intersect.

“Navigating that complex web, coupled with myriad legal issues that come up and finding solutions to them, motivates me everyday — putting the puzzle together,” he said.

ADVICE TO YOUNG ATTORNEYS:

Moore said it’s important for young attorneys to find a practice they love, and that they should try different areas until they find a subject matter that interests them that they find challenging.

“If you’re going into the field of environmental law, particularly in BigLaw, where you tend to be representing developers or established companies, what’s important is to not just understand the law, but to understand the viewpoints of the other side,” he said. “I think that’s where a lot of lawyers falter — they use the law both as a sword and a shield, but they don’t take the time to sit down and understand what their opponents might be thinking to see if there may be another option.”

— *As told to Juan Carlos Rodriguez*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2017 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.