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THE 2025 NLJ AWARDS: PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE APPELLATE HOT LIST

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FINALIST: LATHAM & WATKINS

Answered by Roman Martinez, Global Chair of Latham's Supreme Court & Appellate Practice; Greg Garre, Samir Deger-Sen, and Melissa Arbus Sherry, Partners

Tell us about your top U.S. Supreme Court or federal appeals court victory over the past year and how you and your team achieved the win.

We secured a unanimous Supreme Court victory in *A.J.T.*

v. Osseo Area Schools for a student with severe epilepsy who was denied reasonable accommodations under the ADA and Rehabilitation Act, persuading the Court to hold that children with disabilities challenging discrimination at school have the same rights as all other plaintiffs and making it easier for families to prove discrimination and seek relief under federal law. In *Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board v. Drummond*, we secured another important win when the Court affirmed the Oklahoma Supreme Court's decision barring the creation of the nation's first religious public charter school in a landmark Establishment Clause decision. –Roman Martinez

What was your firm's key to appellate success over the past year?

Teamwork. We collaborate early with trial teams and co-counsel to ensure that the key issues are identified, preserved, and developed for appeal. And our lawyers collaborate closely on all facets of the appeal in order to develop compelling arguments and achieve favorable outcomes for clients. –Greg Garre

What is the most satisfying element of appellate practice, in your opinion?

The most satisfying aspect of appellate practice is that we get to play a part in shaping the law on issues of broad significance, knowing that a well-crafted argument or brief can set precedent and impact countless future cases. –Samir Deger-Sen

What's the most valuable lesson you learned as a young lawyer?

Preparation is key to success and never underestimate the importance of clear, concise writing. Longer briefs are easier but they are rarely better. –Melissa Arbus Sherry

