

THE 2020 D.C. LITIGATION DEPARTMENTS OF THE YEAR

General Litigation Winner

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld

■ DESCRIBE YOUR FIRM’S APPROACH TO LITIGATION AND YOUR STRATEGY FOR BUILDING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS FOR TRIALS OR OTHER MATTERS.

We focus on helping our clients meet their business goals. We have first-class litigators who can tap into the subject matter expertise of a fully integrated law firm to craft a targeted strategy tailored to meet each client’s goals. The types of matters we handle typically involve lean, hands-on teams that regularly operate under tight deadlines, take ownership over matters and offer early-case assessments. We also encourage our attorneys to consistently communicate with and leverage our clients’ subject matter expertise to ensure that our approach and strategy are in line with our clients’ expectations and goals throughout the litigation process.

■ DISCUSS THE TWO BIGGEST LITIGATION CASES YOUR FIRM WORKED ON IN 2019 AND HOW YOU REACHED SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES.

In one of the highest-profile national security cases of 2019, our white-collar and appellate teams partnered to secure an acquittal on all counts following a 1 1/2-week trial for Bijan Rafiekian, a former business partner of ex-National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who had been charged in a federal grand jury indictment with conspiracy to act as an unlawful foreign agent in the United States.

Our Supreme Court and appellate and labor and employment practices worked hand in hand to score a complete victory for fast-food giant McDonald’s in one of the most closely watched labor law appeals at the Ninth Circuit. Agreeing with our argument, a divided three-judge panel ruled in McDonald’s favor on all claims. Beyond just winning the case, the victory sets critical precedent that staves off far-reaching liability for franchisors in wage-and-hour class actions.

■ WHAT ARE THE MOST CHALLENGING AND SATISFYING ASPECTS OF YOUR WORK IN LITIGATION?

We sit at the intersection of law, commerce and government. So, while we have a broad litigation practice with highly accomplished trial lawyers, the breadth of our D.C. litigation practice gives us an advantage. On any given day, we can be found on the Hill defending clients before the various congressional committees; in the courtroom, protecting our client’s business interests; before the Supreme Court and courts of appeals throughout the country; and in front of government prosecutors and regulators, navigating complex investigations and issues. This positions us to offer clients unique solutions to their problems.



CHUCK CONNOLLY



TONY PIERCE

■ WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE YOU’D SHARE WITH YOUNG LAWYERS?

This is a very sophisticated and demanding profession. Clients are willing to engage us for our services because of our minds. Don’t be afraid to use them. Speak up and share your thoughts, your analysis, your strategy and your concerns.

*Responses submitted by Chuck Connolly and Tony Pierce, litigation partners at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld. Connolly is an experienced trial attorney and investigator, whose practice focuses on representing companies and individuals in government and corporate investigations, he wrote. Pierce is the partner in charge of the D.C. office. With more than three decades of litigation experience, clients look to Pierce as a problem-solver and aggressive advocate, he wrote.*

firm facts

- Number of Partners in Firm’s Litigation Department in D.C.: 32
- Number of Associates in Litigation Department in D.C.: 43
- Number of Other Attorneys in Litigation Department in D.C.: 9
- Number of Partners Litigation Department Firmwide: 95
- Number of Associates Litigation Department Firmwide: 171
- Number of Other Attorneys Litigation Department Firmwide: 24
- Percentage of Firm Represented by Litigation Department: 32%

DIEGO M. RADZINSCH/ALM(TONY PIERCE)