

LITIGATION BOUTIQUES **HOT LIST**

A SPECIAL REPORT



STEVEN MOLO AND JEFFREY LAMKEN
MOLOLAMKEN

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They may be small, but their cases are as big as they come. This week, we spotlight 10 litigation boutiques with up to 50 lawyers who enjoyed stand-out accomplishments in 2015. These firms, located on either coast or points in between, secured key victories—whether in monetary terms or by establishing important precedent at the trial or appellate level. Most of the wins were on the defense side, and the outcomes affected banking and finance sectors, pharmaceuticals and life sciences, international law, employment law, technology, manufacturing and more.

Their clients often are heavyweights, including major sports leagues, pop artists and industry leaders. We also asked these attorneys to provide some insight into what's made them successful, and the advice they've found most useful in steering their careers. Some practitioners received words of wisdom while they were mere children; others did so when they were still in law school or just starting to practice law.

The NLJ based its Litigation Boutiques Hot List selections on nominations submitted by the firms themselves and our own reporting.

MoloLamken

MoloLamken is a boutique with big bandwidth. In 2015, its 26 lawyers took on clients ranging from former National Football League players to the former speaker of the New York Assembly and the central bank of Iran. The full gamut of litigation—from intellectual property to securities and white-collar defense—came through the firm's doors in New York, Washington and Chicago.

But the mix of cases is not that new for the six-year-old firm, co-founder Steven Molo said. "We're advocates first, subject-mat-

ter experts second." Co-founder Jeffrey Lamken said the variety of cases is part of "what makes it a fun practice."

Fun was on Lamken's mind when he left Baker Botts to create the boutique firm with Molo in 2009. Recalling the days when he was at a seven-lawyer firm in D.C., Lamken said at the time, "We want to do something that was that fun, that high-powered."

Some of the firm's marquee cases involving unpopular clients last year were high-profile as well

as high-powered. Molo represented Sheldon Silver, the former New York Assembly speaker in what The New York Times described as the biggest corruption trial in New York in decades. Silver was convicted Dec. 1, though Molo said "the case is not over."

As for Lamken, he argued before the U.S. Supreme Court for Bank Markazi, the Iranian central bank, in a dispute over compensating the victims of Iran-backed terrorism. He told the justices that Congress interfered with the judiciary's powers by

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passing a law that required certain frozen Iranian assets to be made available to victims in pending litigation. "Congress cannot limit its legislation to one and only one case such that it dictates the outcome," Lamken argued.

Both houses of Congress joined the Obama administration—a rarity—in filing briefs against Lamken's client. Some legislators thought it was remarkable that the Iranian government was even allowed to appear in U.S. courts.

"It didn't occur to me for a moment that the bank was not entitled to make its case before U.S. courts," Lamken said. As for representing an unpopular client, Lamken said, "For the system to work right, people need to be represented."

The families and victims seeking compensation in the Iran case were represented by former U.S. Solicitor

General Theodore Olson, now a Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher partner. Olson had high praise for Lamken, who worked for him in the SG's office.

"Jeff is an outstanding lawyer with excellent judgment, poised, thoughtful, highly professional, gracious and a good friend," Olson said. "We often work on the same side, and he has helped us often with moots."

Also last year, Molo represented former football players who objected to the class action settlement with the NFL over the lingering effects of concussions. Lamken argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in a closely watched software patent case in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2014 *Alice v. CLS Bank* decision.

"It was an incredible year, but one to be proud of," Molo said.

—TONY MAURO

FIRM FACTS

■ **Largest offices:** D.C., New York

■ **Total attorneys:** 26

■ **Partners:** 8

■ **Associates:** 13

BEST ADVICE
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Paul Larkin and Irv Gornstein, former assistants to the U.S. solicitor general, provided Jeffrey Lamken with some valuable insight into the profession, he said. "Advocacy is truth serum, so it is not enough to understand, to explain, to argue," they told him. "You have to believe. And you have to know what made you believe, so you can help others come to believe as well."

