

APPELLATE HOT LIST

A SPECIAL REPORT

When the stakes were high, the 20 law firms featured in this year's special report delivered—winning big in federal and state appeals courts across the country. They won landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions on closely watched cases including those over affirmative action, patent infringement and a labor dispute. They also represented some of the most well-known companies in the land, among them Bank of America Corp., Chevron Corp. and the National Football League. These are their stories.

Ropes & Gray

Success in appellate litigation often can be measured in dollars and cents or societal impact, or both. Ropes & Gray's appellate team captured both—scoring a U.S. Supreme Court landmark on same-sex marriage and protecting \$8.3 billion in pension-fund payouts.

Douglas Hallward-Driemeier, who leads the firm's appellate and Supreme Court practice, successfully argued in April 2015 one of the two key questions before the high court in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the same-sex marriage challenge. Then, in that same month, he argued, and subsequently won unanimously, *Bullard v. Blue Hills Bank*, an important bankruptcy case.

"The experience of arguing two cases in the same month is a challenging one, especially when one of those is somewhat in the public eye and had a lot of people involved," he said, referring to *Obergefell*. "It was a lot of fun and great."

Along with partner Ross Martin and lawyers from Wilmer Cutler

Pickering Hale and Dorr, Hallward-Driemeier in March persuaded the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit that Tribune creditors could not claw back \$8.3 billion paid to public shareholders in Tribune's 2007 leveraged buyout in *In re Tribune Co. Fraudulent Conveyance Litigation*. His opponents have filed a Supreme Court petition for review.

Partner Doug Meal and Hallward-Driemeier in October convinced the Supreme Court to decline review of their Third Circuit victory in *In re Google Inc. Cookie Placement Consumer Privacy Litigation*—a putative class action alleging that Google and third-party advertisers evaded web browser privacy settings, causing cookies to be placed on plaintiffs' computers. Other team members, including Jim Batchelder, Michelle Visser, Matthew Burke, Joan McPhee and Gregg Weiner, notched wins in areas such as patents, criminal law and insurance law.

The appellate team added new firepower recently when Justin Florence,



DOUGLAS HALLWARD-DRIEMEIER

DIEGO M. RANZINSCHI

former special assistant and associate counsel to President Obama, joined as counsel. "He is a great addition to the practice and brings experience on the Hill and in the White House," Hallward-Driemeier said.

—MARCIA COYLE