

## Illinois Powerhouse: Winston & Strawn

By Celeste Bott

*Law360 (September 9, 2019, 1:12 PM EDT)* -- Winston & Strawn has seen a particularly strong year in the antitrust space, with victories that include the defeat of an \$11 billion class action against one of its clients at the Seventh Circuit.

That win for WestRock CP LLC — which was accused, along with other large producers of containerboard, of participating in a price-fixing conspiracy — as well as several others in antitrust cases echo a strength that goes beyond the firm's roots in Chicago, said Linda T. Coberly, managing partner of Winston & Strawn LLP's Chicago office.

"Antitrust is an important area of practice for us, and it has been for some time," Coberly said. "What you see from our Chicago office is a real show of the expertise we have here in the courts in our district."

The WestRock case, in which Winston & Strawn attorneys helped secure a win on summary judgment at the district court that was upheld on appeal, is just one example that places the firm among Law360's 2019 Regional Powerhouses.

In July, an Illinois federal court granted its motion to dismiss four consolidated antitrust class actions accusing Baxter International Inc. and Baxter Healthcare of conspiring with rival Hospira to limit U.S. production of IV saline solution and drive massive price increases.

And in December, Winston attorneys were able to get a major antitrust case filed by Hytera Communications against client Motorola Solutions transferred from New Jersey federal court to Illinois. The suit accuses Motorola of orchestrating a scheme to monopolize the U.S. market for land mobile radios and will determine the future of one of its clients' most substantial market segments, the firm said.

"It's rare to actually achieve these types of victories in complex, complicated antitrust lawsuits. So we're definitely really proud," said Jim Herbison, a partner in the Chicago office. "We've really become one of the go-to firms for this not just in Illinois, but nationally."

Other victories over the past year include a review of Illinois' gambling rules, which the firm's attorneys secured in May for clients challenging a legislative licensing scheme devised by the Illinois Gaming Board.

Founded in Chicago in 1853, the firm represented the Union Stockyards and major railroads as it grew with the city. Now, there are more than 260 attorneys in its Chicago office alone, and the firm has offices in Charlotte, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and Washington, D.C.

Winston & Strawn is perhaps best known as a destination for trial lawyers, and it has a long legacy of prominent Chicago-based trial lawyers, Coberly said.

Among them is the firm's co-chairman Dan Webb, a former U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, she said. Most recently, Webb was appointed to serve as special prosecutor investigating a decision by the Cook County State's Attorney's Office to drop charges against "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett, who allegedly staged a hate crime against himself in a case that received international attention.

But there's also an emphasis on mentoring and teaching at Winston & Strawn, ensuring young lawyers can bolster their trial skills and hopefully stay with the firm long-term, Herbison said.

And building off of strengths in trial and appellate litigation, the firm has grown considerably in the private equity world and in its employee benefits practice, Coberly said.

"We've really intentionally grown our corporate practice to provide the same sort of depth and breadth that our trial practice has," she said.

The firm also points to its pro bono work over the last year, which includes securing a resentencing for David Jones, an Illinois man who might see a 40-year reduction in his sentence after the Seventh Circuit found he received ineffective assistance of counsel.

Coberly noted the firm's deep involvement in the Chicago Bar Foundation's Investing in Justice campaign, an effort by area law firms, lawyers and corporations to raise money for pro bono and legal aid organizations. This year, Winston & Strawn played a leadership role in the effort and hosted a number of events, said Coberly, who was the campaign's citywide chair.

"It was a terrific honor for us," Coberly said. "We take our pro bono commitment very seriously here at the firm. We see it as a really core part of the work we do and the role we play in the community."

Herbison recalled that the same day the firm won summary judgment in the WestRock case, it also won a pro bono asylum case for a man its attorneys believed would have been killed had he been deported.

"Both were significant results for very different reasons," Herbison said. "But they were equally celebrated internally."

--Editing by Philip Shea.