

Litigation Department Co-Chairs Linda Coberly and Tom Melsheimer Featured in *ALM*'s "How I Made It" Series

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Winston & Strawn's Linda Coberly and Tom Melsheimer were featured in *ALM*'s "How I Made It" series highlighting their appointment as Litigation Department co-chairs in June 2024. In the interview, they discuss topics including how they developed their practices, what skills are needed to be an effective leader, how their roles give them an understanding of the strategic vision of the firm, their key priorities for the department, and more.

Tom and Linda stated that the key operating principles for the new leadership team at Winston are excellence and building on the firm's strengths. Tom noted that since taking on the role, he has gained more transparency into the business of the firm and the work of individual lawyers, which has given him a deeper understanding of the firm's strengths.

"I want to help make sure our partners have what they need to thrive and, if there are challenges to that happening, to help resolve those challenges as quickly as possible," Tom said of their key priorities for the department.

"Relatedly, we need to continue our successes in attracting and retaining talent at all levels. Fundamentally, talent is what drives the success or failure of any law firm. On a more substantive level, getting our hands around AI, and how we can use it effectively, is going to be an ongoing enterprise."

When asked about how their new roles have given them insights into client needs, they stated that clients ultimately look for excellence in legal work and internal management must have a primary goal of delivering outstanding work. Linda stated that clients need predictability in terms of costs, staffing, and communications, and her role has shown her what areas the firm can further invest in to serve clients' needs most effectively.

"The most important skill set is obviously the ability to lead, inspire, and motivate people. We're in a people business," Linda said of the skills needed to be an effective leader. "As a law firm leader told me early in my career, we have to remember that our greatest assets as a law firm go down the elevator every evening and leave the building. We need to inspire them to come back the next day, to do their best work, to collaborate for our clients' benefit, to grow as professionals, and to pursue excellence in everything they do."

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Linda Coberly



Thomas M. Melsheimer