

APPELLATE HOT LIST



A SPECIAL REPORT

Law firms small and large every day send teams of lawyers into state and federal appeals courts across the country when the stakes are at their highest. The 20 firms on these pages represent appellate advocacy at its strongest—winning the big cases and changing the law. These lawyers fought for some of the country’s most prominent companies, argued landmark constitutional issues, and tackled complex patent cases and class actions, among other areas. And many advocated pro bono causes.

BANCROFT PLLC

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Bancroft PLLC

The firm does not always win but in the last 18 months it has had more than its shares of victories.

Partner and former U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement won a

new trial for its client, now called HSBC Finance Corp., in a securities class action that had resulted in a \$2.46 billion judgment against it. In August, Clement represented numerous sports organizations in a successful challenge against sports gambling in New Jersey casinos. And in late 2014, Clement represented Integrity Staffing Solutions in a case that has since shut down several class actions seeking damages under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The firm is now on the team representing the NFL in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in the

controversy over Brady's use of deflated footballs in a 2014 conference championship game.

How can such a small shop handle so many complex cases?

"Appellate litigation is different from other types of litigation," Dinh said. "One of the fallacies of modern practices is that you need a lot of people" to handle appeals. Most cases, he said, are handled by two or three lawyers.

The firm has grown enough, however, that it moved into new quarters that fill an entire floor at an office building near Georgetown University Law Center, where Dinh and Clement teach. "It's a more collegial workspace," Dinh said.

And there's another bonus: After years of sharing a corner office in their prior location, Dinh said he and Clement now have offices in two different corners.

—TONY MAURO

With only 18 lawyers, Bancroft sometimes turns away potential clients "when the demand on our bandwidth is highest," founder Viet Dinh said.

But without hesitation, Dinh said that all the cases the firm does take on are "high profile and high stakes."

The boast is not far off the mark.

From challenging the Affordable Care Act to defending the National Football League's suspension of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, Bancroft's cases often make headlines.