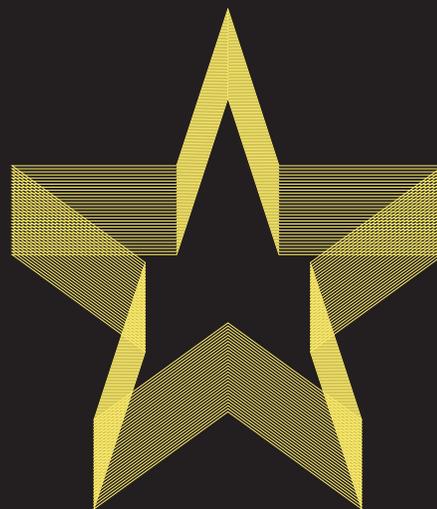


## D.C.'S RISING STARS

Washington, D.C., is a magnet for the top graduates from the top law schools in some of the most sophisticated practices in the nation, including appellate and antitrust. So for the NLJ's 2017 Rising Stars list, how did we go about reviewing a large pool of smart, young nominees? Very carefully. We looked for key elements including success on the highest stages, diversity of practice groups and law firms. We also looked closely at recommendations. We are proud to present our 2017 Rising Stars. This year, we share their keys to success in their own words, edited for clarity and length. —*Lisa Helem, managing editor*

A SPECIAL REPORT



### STACEY VANBELLEGHEM, 39

FIRM: LATHAM & WATKINS

PRACTICE: ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

TITLE: PARTNER

- **WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU LEARNED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE?** Success may look like a closed deal or a litigation win, but I learned early on that the outcome that achieves our client's strategic and business objectives may be a subtler victory. Understanding a client's goals is essential to being able to achieve success.
- **DESCRIBE YOUR BIGGEST WIN OR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN PRACTICE.** Helping a client successfully navigate a complex environmental review process involving six federal agencies, two tribal governments, and at least six environmental statutes was a professional milestone. Sophisticated issues and matters of first impression tested my problem-solving skills.
- **WHO DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR GREATEST LAWYER MENTOR?** Claudia O'Brien, a partner in my practice group, taught me achieving effective collaboration requires being a respectful and supportive supervisor and fostering a team spirit among colleagues.
- **PLEASE SHARE A KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS.** I have always focused on understanding the unique dynamics that drive a matter, including the players and their motivations. And of course lots of preparation—nothing can substitute for [that.]