

THE APPELLATE HOT LIST

A SPECIAL REPORT

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THE 2012 APPELLATE HOT LIST

The U.S. Supreme Court arguments over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act — Obamacare, if you must — figure prominently in this year's list of hot appellate firms. Scarcely a marquee name in the business wasn't on the case in some way, shape or form. We also looked for firms that won big-money victories and landscape-shaping precedents in the federal circuit and state appeals courts, where thousands of cases are decided every year.

We asked our readers to nominate firms with at least one significant appellate win between May 2011 and May 2012 and that had an impressive track record overall. We supplemented the results with our own research to arrive at the list of 16 firms you'll find here.

SAMPLE FILE

AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD

Akin Gump: A good year on both coasts

The U.S. Supreme Court and appellate practice at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld has had a good year on both coasts.

On April 24, co-leader Patricia Millett achieved an enviable milestone, arguing her 31st case before the Supreme Court — more than any other woman in history. She represented tribal interests in an Indian land case called Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians v. Patchak.

A few days earlier, her Los Angeles-based co-leader Rex Heinke was savoring a long-awaited California Supreme Court labor decision: Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court. The ruling clarified California's law requiring employers to give their workers meal breaks. Representing Brinker, Heinke won the point that employers need not ensure that workers do no work during the breaks.

"There was great interest in the case," Heinke said. "It affects every employer in the state."