

## THE **RECORDER**



### **DISTINGUISHED LEADER AWARD WINNERS:**

**Michele Johnson of Latham & Watkins**



**Michele Johnson, global chair of the litigation and trial department at Latham & Watkins.**

#### **What are some of your proudest recent achievements?**

I am proud of the successes of Latham's global litigation department, with our public trial wins, behind-the-scenes victories that avoided risk, unmatched team-based approaches to solving business challenges, and investments in the next generations of diverse litigation talent. Our record-breaking successes in the past year, marked by significant victories across jurisdictions, practice areas, industries, and regions, led the field. In 2023 and through the first half of 2024, our lawyers were featured in the American Lawyer's Litigators of the Week

column more than any other law firm—and not just a handful of our top names, but rather more than 100 partners across all of our practices. We are a destination shop for clients' toughest and most high-profile disputes.

#### **How would you describe your approach to leadership?**

Effective leaders inspire and persuade, rather than direct; build up the collective, especially when no one is watching;



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deflect praise including to the most junior of contributors; build relationships and consensus; sow trust; listen mindfully; make hard decisions with empathy, and work to make others' decisions a success.

### **How are the business and profession of law changing, and how should lawyers adapt for the future?**

AI is changing the business and profession of law. As we are yet in the dial-up-modem stage of its development, staying nimble is key. We at Latham launched a first-of-its-kind AI Task Force, comprised of leaders across our litigation, regulatory, and transactional practices, who represent leading AI companies, understand and mitigate litigation risks, and actually

help shape the AI regulation being developed across the globe.

### **What is the best advice for someone considering a career in law, or someone already in the profession who is seeking to make a greater impact?**

Invest in yourself and others, even when the impact is not immediately apparent. Many people entering, or in, the profession envision a long and arduous path to positions of success, and may struggle to find meaning in the very hard work necessary for advancement. But work hard—for your clients, colleagues, firms, organizations, and communities—but also for yourself. You will take yourself with you wherever the winding path leads.