

# New England Legal Awards 2024

## Intellectual Property Attorney of the Year Winner: Sarah Gagan, Latham & Watkins

By ALM Staff

September 24, 2024

**S**arah Gagan of Latham & Watkins is the winner for the Intellectual Property Attorney of the Year category as part of the New England Legal Awards.

**What qualities are fundamental to becoming a successful IP attorney?**

Curiosity and a genuine interest in the technologies and innovations. I do not have a scientific background, as I'm fairly certain that political science does not qualify, and have had to work a little harder during my career to understand the scientific and technical aspects of my clients' technology. Understanding and appreciating the problems that your client is trying to solve helps build your client's trust and respect.

Practicality and commercial-mindedness. A successful IP attorney should understand IP's role in the transaction, whether it is material, and the practical realities and consequences of any related risks within the context of the client's commercial goals.

Clear communication. IP concepts and the legal issues associated with their development and commercialization can be complex. Clients value clear and coherent communication about risks and rewards, as it allows them to make informed business decisions.

**What accomplishments are you most proud of from the past year?**

Professionally, I am most proud of the innovative artificial intelligence projects and matters that I have worked on in the last year, helping our clients address the incredible challenges and opportunities that AI brings to their businesses. As a member of Latham & Watkins' AI task

force over the past year, I have advised emerging and established AI pioneers, creators of foundational technology, companies in industries that are undergoing AI-powered transformations, and others using that technology to grow their businesses on IP matters as well as licensing, development, collaboration, and data-sharing agreements, strategic alliances, joint ventures, and compute services transactions. I am also proud of the work that I have done in the past year to provide pro bono legal services to entrepreneurs who face systemic barriers as they navigate complex IP, data privacy and commercial contract issues.

**How do you see IP law growing and changing in the coming years?**

The convergence of AI, data privacy and evolving regulation is poised to create a complex landscape for IP lawyers. Existing IP laws and legal frameworks will have to continue to evolve to keep up with the innovative potential of AI and the creation of potentially new forms of IP. Regulators will increasingly focus on ensuring that IP and data privacy laws address the unique challenges that AI's data-intensive nature pose. We can expect a greater emphasis on cross-sector collaboration to navigate the intricate web of IP and data rights, consumer and data protection regulations, and ethical considerations in AI-driven solutions.



Sarah Gagan of  
Latham & Watkins.

Courtesy photo