

MVP: Gibson Dunn's Matthew McGill

Law360 (December 12, 2018, 1:13 PM EST) -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Matthew McGill doesn't describe himself as a sports lawyer, but his part on the team that persuaded the U.S. Supreme Court to make its historic decision to lift the bar for nationwide legalized sports gambling has nevertheless won him a spot as one of Law360's 2018 Sports MVPs.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE YEAR?

Considering how much impact the Supreme Court's May decision to strike down the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act in *Murphy v. NCAA* has had so far — sports gambling legalized in six states, proposals in more, a flurry of gaming industry deals — the answer to this question seems obvious.

McGill described the state of New Jersey's attempt to overturn the law preventing it from legalizing sports gambling as a six-year odyssey through the court system, fighting the federal government and the professional sports leagues every step of the way.

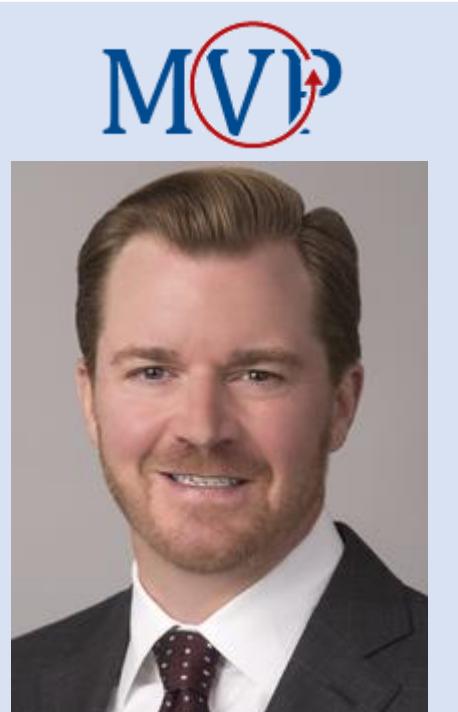
"We lost in district court, we lost before the Third Circuit," he said. "We had to lose the case five different times before we could win it."

The final challenge was getting the Supreme Court to hear the case after it had previously denied certiorari, he said.

"The way we were able to do that was to show the court how the leagues and the United States had shifted their positions over time," he said.

WHAT WAS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT?

While *Murphy v. NCAA* was McGill's 21st Supreme Court merits case and 16th win, hearing the decision was still a "great, great thrill" he said.



Matthew McGill
Gibson Dunn

"These are all important and quite meaningful cases to me and my career," he said. "This case stands beside all of them."

"We felt good after the oral argument," he said. "We felt the justices heard and understood the oral argument [fellow Gibson Dunn attorney] Ted Olson made."

WHAT ARE OTHER NOTABLE CASES YOU'VE WORKED ON?

McGill describes himself as a general appellate lawyer. Other major Supreme Court cases he has won include Citizens United and Hollingsworth v. Perry.

Some of what he's doing at the moment includes representing adoptive couples challenging the Indian Child Welfare Act, American Samoa natives challenging their citizenship status and victims of the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya seeking compensation from Sudan.

"Right now I'm working on a brief concerning a constitutional challenge to Puerto Rico's oversight board," he said, referring to the board appointed by the federal government to oversee the island's finances following its bankruptcy. "It's a very varied practice."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS?

Loving what you do is an absolute must, he said, saying he found early on he liked the process of writing briefs.

"If you don't love the process of writing briefs it's going to be hard to have a meaningful career doing that," he said. "Find the parts of law that align with what excites you and what you want to do."

— As told to Rick Archer

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 1,000 submissions.

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