

MVP: Gibson Dunn's Jason Schwartz

By **Grace Elletson**

Law360 (November 14, 2025, 4:04 PM EST) -- Jason C. Schwartz, co-chair of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's labor and employment practice, convinced Maryland's Supreme Court to create new case law in favor of his client Amazon clarifying the state's wage and hour statutes, earning him a spot as one of the 2025 Law360 Employment MVPs.

His biggest accomplishment:

Schwartz successfully argued before the Maryland Supreme Court justices in July that the state's wage and hour laws incorporate the de minimis doctrine — which says that employers are not beholden to keep track of insignificant amounts of work time that are difficult to record. While the federal Fair Labor Standards Act incorporates this standard, it hadn't yet been decided if the Old Line State's wage and hour laws also followed the de minimis doctrine before July's ruling.

The question arose in a suit claiming Amazon failed to pay its workers for the time they spent undergoing security screenings, prompting a district court judge to seek the justices' input. Schwartz said the victory has bolstered his team's arguments that the case should be tossed, a position that is currently being reviewed by the district court.

The case also wasn't litigated in an ordinary courtroom. Instead of hearing arguments in its traditional location based in the state's capital, the Maryland Supreme Court justices took their show on the road and held a special session at Montgomery College, where more than 300 students, state officials and judges listened in.

"The arguments were on a stage, so it was almost like you were in a play," Schwartz said. The special session aimed to open up the court to the community, Schwartz said, by using the case as a learning experience for students, who got to meet the justices and ask them questions after arguments had been presented.



His biggest challenge:

Schwartz has been tapped to represent a number of colleges and universities that are being investigated by the Trump administration for their diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The president has claimed the institutions could be in violation of antidiscrimination law by pushing race- or gender-based preferences in certain programs.

These probes are requiring colleges and universities to tackle a number of complex legal questions that Schwartz said are compelling, but also challenging to navigate. He said he's advised his clients to identify their "North Star" of core values to determine the best path forward.

"I think a lot of their goals in terms of academic freedom, diversity of their faculty and student body, a lot of those things can be accomplished using programs and methods that create much less legal risk," Schwartz said.

His proudest moment:

When the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission sent demand letters to 20 law firms in March requesting they hand over information about their diversity, equity and inclusion practices, Schwartz said many of those firms contacted Gibson Dunn's labor and employment practice for help.

Schwartz said he was proud his peers thought to call his team when faced with a government inquiry. The practice group ended up representing 10 of those firms, Schwartz said.

"These are all people that we know and respect immensely," Schwartz said. "To have them call us to ask for us to help, that felt great."

Why he's an employment attorney:

"I love helping people solve people problems," Schwartz said.

He said he particularly enjoys getting new cases from clients because he gets to learn about a new cast of characters and events, and helping them takes the burden of these disputes off their shoulders.

His advice for junior attorneys:

Schwartz said green attorneys should focus on picking a practice area they love, adding that they'll be much more motivated if they're working in a subject area that intrigues them. He also said attorneys should surround themselves with people who are smarter than them, and remember to build their careers with humility.

"Don't get a big head," Schwartz said. Lawyers should be client-centered, just as if they were helping a customer find the perfect pair of shoes while working at Nordstrom, he said.

"What nobody is going to tell you in law school is that you're coming to work at Nordstrom," Schwartz said. "You should come to work every day focused on what your clients need."

--As told to Grace Elletson. Editing by Michael Watanabe.

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 2025 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.

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