

TEXAS LAWYER

TEXAS LITIGATION DEPARTMENTS OF THE YEAR, LABOR & EMPLOYMENT: GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER



Texas Lawyer is recognizing law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher with a 2026 Litigation Departments of the Year, Labor & Employment award. Read a Q&A with the firm below.

Responses from Karl Nelson, partner, labor & employment practice group co-chair, ERISA litigation practice group.

What was your department's most significant achievement over the past year, and why?

Our most significant achievement was achieving marquee wins across all of our signature employment litigation capabilities (including ERISA and trade secrets). First, in our trade secret and restrictive covenant work, we secured a series of decisive wins for Lockton Companies in its multi-front dispute with a competitor, including an award of Lockton's attorney fees—results that upheld our client's agreements and its chosen forum. Second, on the ERISA side, we resolved a putative excessive-fee class action for Kimberly-Clark on highly favorable terms after the court struck the plaintiffs' class allegations from the case. Third, we achieved a favorable, global resolution for AT&T following nearly a decade of wage and hour litigation involving the company's nationwide call center workforce.

What was your biggest challenge over the past year, and how did you adapt?

Our biggest challenge this year was a good one to have: Demand. The Texas market has been exceptionally active, and our labor and employment work—which includes representations at both the Texas regional and national levels—has grown exponentially, challenging our commitment to provide every client and every matter with the hands-on, partner-level attention and quality staffing from top to bottom that our clients have come to expect. A significant part of that growth has been driven by our founding and expansion of a market-leading ERISA litigation group (with two group co-chairs based in Dallas) and our deep experience and market reputation in high-stakes restrictive covenant litigation. In response to this growing demand, we have invested in the group by developing talent and deepening our bench, elevating to partner two exceptional, home-grown attorneys—Rachel Robertson and Brian Richman—and hiring several highly qualified lateral employment associates. This has enabled us to cover the full labor and employment spectrum, including employment counseling, single-plaintiff representations, class and collective actions, restrictive covenant and trade secret disputes and appellate matters.