

## Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Gabrielle Levin

*Law360, New York (July 19, 2017, 5:13 PM EDT)* – Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Gabrielle Levin knocked her first-ever jury trial out of the park recently, winning a potentially costly retaliation suit for HSBC and helping earn herself a spot as one of five labor and employment attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### **WHY SHE BECAME AN EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEY:**

Gibson Dunn associates don't specialize in their first few years at the firm, instead they explore different areas of law. Levin had tried her hand at several by her third year with the firm, but nothing stuck.

"I got a call out of the blue from Eugene Scalia, who is the son of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice and one of the senior partners in our labor and employment practice group," she said. "He said 'I have a matter for a client in New York, and I'm in D.C., so I'd like someone in the New York Office to help me. You were recommended to me by one of the other partners.' I said, 'Well, I don't really know anything about labor and employment law, but I don't really feel like I should turn down the chance to work with Gene Scalia.'"

"I felt like that was a no-brainer, so that one case turned into three, turned into five, turned into working with other partners in the group," she said.

### **THE BIGGEST CASE OF HER CAREER SO FAR:**

Though already a veteran only a decade into her career, a December case involving HSBC offered Levin an important first.

**RISING**  
 ★★★★★  
**STAR**



**Gabrielle Levin**  
**Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher**

**Age:** 35

**Home base:** New York

**Position:** Partner

**Law school:** University of Pennsylvania Law School

**First job after law school:** Associate at Gibson Dunn

"It was an employer retaliation case," she said. "I've done other trials in arbitration, but that was my first jury trial in a federal court. Employment cases infrequently get tried to a jury, and jury trials are inherently unpredictable, so there was a lot of pressure. It was certainly something that we very much wanted to win for the client, and we thought we were on the right side of the facts. Fortunately, it worked out for the client. We were able to secure a win for HSBC."

**OTHER NOTABLE CASES:**

Levin played a key role in one of the higher-profile employment suits in recent years, working on the Gibson Dunn team that helped Sony Music Entertainment and Kemosabe Records defeat pop singer Kesha's bid to be freed from her recording contract over allegations the companies turned a blind eye to her alleged sexual assault by producer Lukasz Gottwald.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Levin is currently juggling several big cases. She is part of a Gibson Dunn team defending direct sales and marketing company Credico in a series of high-stakes wage-and-hour class actions.

"These are cases that really challenge the heart of the client's business model," she said. "So it's a wage-and-hour case, but it's a bet-the-company case."

Levin and another Gibson Dunn partner are representing the former chief operating officer of bankrupt renewable energy company SunEdison Inc. in a number of cases, including a securities suit, government investigations and a whistleblower suit.

**ADVICE FOR YOUNG ATTORNEYS:**

There's no substitute for experience, in law or anything else. The earlier a young attorney gets it, the better, Levin said.

"Try to get as much good experience as you can early on in your career. I was doing arbitrations with a partner when I was a fifth-year associate, and that was in large part because I was able to prove that I could handle substantive work at a young age," she said.

For attorneys looking to go into employment, Levin said it pays to study up.

"Labor and employment law is so varied, you have so many different topics to master. When you get to my level, I have clients who call me with questions every single day on a variety of things, whether it be wage-and-hour, [the Family and Medical Leave Act], compensation disputes, discrimination, hiring, et cetera. Most of my practice is litigation, but a small part is advice. Sometimes that advice turns into litigation, so I think being able to master the broad scope of employment law is important if that's something you want to do long term," Levin said.

— *As told to Braden Campbell*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2017 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.*

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