
WilmerHale Named Appellate Group of the Year by *Law360*

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Law360 has recognized WilmerHale's [Appellate and Supreme Court Litigation Practice](#) as Appellate Group of the Year, profiling the practice's 2016 success in a recent article. The practice, co-chaired by Partners [Seth Waxman](#) and [Paul Wolfson](#), achieved four major wins before the US Supreme Court in 2016 in addition to several victories before the Federal Circuit and appeals courts.

The article notes that “The group's success springs from what firm partners describe as a collegial and supportive atmosphere in which younger attorneys are exhaustively mentored and given unparalleled opportunities to tackle major cases on the country's most prestigious legal stage.”

The profile quotes Partner [Danielle Spinelli](#), vice chair of the practice, calling the team a “very tightly knit group, we encourage each other, we help each other, and we like each other.” The article also noted Spinelli's role in persuading the Third Circuit to void a \$62 million verdict against firm client Avaya Inc., a major win in September.

Partner [Mark Fleming](#), was highlighted for successfully leading the *Mathis v. United States* case before the Supreme Court. His defense of an Iowan facing a sentence enhancement under the Armed Career Criminal Act not only prevented his client from receiving an enhanced prison sentence, but also clarified and limited the situations in which state-law convictions can be used to enhance federal sentences and serve as grounds for deportation in immigration cases.

The *Law360* profile also highlighted the firm's success in persuading an *en banc* Federal Circuit panel to reinstate a \$120 million jury verdict win for firm client Apple. In fact, the *en banc* Federal Circuit not only agreed with WilmerHale's arguments in every respect, but ruled based solely on Apple's petition and asked for no additional briefings or oral arguments.

The story also spotlighted Partner [Thomas Saunders](#) for his Supreme Court victory for Kingdomware Technologies, a veteran-owned small business. In a unanimous decision, the court ruled that the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must give first priority to veterans on VA contracts, which will impact about \$18 billion in these contracts each year. The preference applies to all VA contracts.

Saunders also noted the strength of the firm's next-generation attorneys and the effort the practice makes to provide them with experience. "In the last three years, we've had eight different people argue in the Supreme Court and six of those people were in their 30s or 40s," he told *Law360*. "Five of those six were already doing their second, third, fourth or fifth Supreme Court argument."

[Read the full *Law360* article.](#)