

Rising Star: Cohen Milstein's Sharon Robertson

Law360 (July 31, 2018) -- Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll PLLC's Sharon Robertson has played leading roles on complex multidistrict litigation, including as co-lead counsel for a class that recently inked a \$104.75 million settlement over allegations drugmakers delayed the entry of generic versions of the pain patch Lidoderm, earning her a spot among five competition attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

WHY SHE IS AN ANTITRUST ATTORNEY:

Robertson said she's drawn to antitrust because it offers a chance to work on interesting and novel issues while having a real impact. As an example, she pointed to pharmaceutical MDLs like the the Lidoderm case, which she said deal with challenging legal concepts and can also help get affordable medication into the hands of consumers.

"In my view, antitrust law represents the perfect marriage between complicated, challenging legal issues and a worthy, underlying cause," Robertson said. "That intersection is so important to me personally, that you have that mix of doing something that's challenging while simultaneously providing a tangible benefit to the public."

WHAT MOTIVATES HER:

Early in her career, after helping prepare a nurse for her deposition in a suit alleging that wages were being suppressed by a conspiracy among hospitals, Robertson received a note from the nurse thanking her for pursuing the case and telling her how much it meant.

"I keep that card on my desk as a reminder of the work we do

RISING
 ★★★★★
STAR



Sharon Robertson
Cohen Milstein

Age: 36

Home base: New York

Position: Partner

Law school: Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

First job after law school: Associate in Cohen Milstein's antitrust practice

and who we are ultimately fighting for — that we're trying to provide a really meaningful voice to folks who otherwise might not be able to represent themselves,” Robertson said.

Another motivating factor for Robertson is her family. She said that both of her parents immigrated to the U.S. from India and that growing up they made many sacrifices for their children in order to give them a chance at a bright future.

“My parents came to this country with nothing, and they worked really hard, sacrificing a lot, to make sure that my siblings and I could accomplish more than they had,” Robertson said. “That’s another motivation for me. I want to work hard and succeed so that they can have the satisfaction of knowing that their hard work paid off.”

HER PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Robertson said her proudest moment as an attorney came while representing a class of direct purchasers in an MDL alleging a nationwide price-fixing and market allocation scheme for urethane chemicals. She began working on the case in 2007, and in 2013 a jury returned a \$400 million verdict against Dow Chemical, a moment she said was the culmination of many years of hard work.

“While we felt very confident about the strength of the case, and the way in which it was presented to the jury, you really never know what a jury will do,” Robertson said. “And antitrust trials are fairly rare, so I feel really grateful having had the opportunity to participate in a case where we were able to secure such a great result on behalf of the class.”

Dow appealed the \$1.2 billion in treble damages and eventually settled for \$835 million rather than continuing to seek Supreme Court review.

ON WHAT ELSE MATTERS ABOUT THE LIDODERM CASE:

In the Lidoderm case, Robertson is co-lead counsel for a class of end-payors along with a pair of attorneys from Heins Mills & Olson PLC and Girard Gibbs LLP. The suit alleges that Teikoku Pharma USA Inc. and Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc. reached an improper deal with Watson Laboratories Inc. to stymie a generic version of the blockbuster anesthetic.

In March, the class moved for preliminary approval of a settlement with all three defendants totaling \$104.75 million. Robertson said this is one of the largest End-Payor settlements of its kind in a federal antitrust case involving pay-for-delay allegations, but that it’s also important for another reason: all three lead attorneys for the class are women.

“The case feels like a career milestone to me in that it’s one of a very small number of complex MDLs that was run, on the indirect side, by an all-female leadership structure, where we were able to reach a pretty successful resolution — one of the largest indirect settlements in a federal pharmaceutical antitrust case in recent history,” Robertson said.

WHAT SHE IS WORKING ON OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM:

Robertson is co-chair of Cohen Milstein’s professional development and mentoring committee and also serves on the firm’s diversity committee. She said that helping young attorneys build up the skills they need to succeed in antitrust is “near and dear” to her heart, as is working to make the profession more diverse.

“There's been a shift toward getting more women into leadership positions, and as the judiciary, the bar and our clients become more interested in seeing leadership structures that are more representative of the legal field in general and of the world in which we live, I think we're going to start seeing more women and diverse attorneys leading complex MDLs, and I'm excited about that prospect.”

— As told to Matthew Perlman

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.

All Content © 2003-2018, Portfolio Media, Inc.

WWW.COHENMILSTEIN.COM

COHENMILSTEIN

Powerful Advocates. Meaningful Results.

Chicago, IL | Denver, CO | New York, NY | Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Philadelphia, PA | Raleigh, NC | Washington, DC