

Rising Stars: Shook Hardy & Bacon's Jon Strongman

By **Emily Field**

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Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP partner Jon Strongman's win last year for Boston Scientific Corp. in the first pelvic mesh case tried against the company, the first defense verdict for any defendant in the sprawling litigation, landed him a spot on Law360's Rising Stars list of top attorneys under 40.

Since 2010, Strongman has led the firm's Boston Scientific pelvic mesh litigation team, managing all parts of the litigation, from roles in a number of bellwether trials last year to arguing before the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation to developing strategy, navigating Boston Scientific through the mass tort case.

At trial, he cross-examined key expert witnesses for the plaintiff and directly examined defense experts and company witnesses. After a monthlong trial, the jury took two days to reach the verdict in one of the nearly 500 Boston Scientific pelvic mesh cases consolidated in Massachusetts court.

That win "highlighted more than anything the great lawyers I've had a chance to work with and the hard work and prep gone into getting a case ready for trial," said Strongman, who added that the trust to make the right judgment calls by his fellow attorneys was one of the most rewarding aspects of the trial.

"When you're there cross-examining a witness, you can feel all the work put into this deposition by other lawyers," Strongman said.

Strongman has been at Shook since graduating from the University of Kansas School of Law with honors in 2002 and was drawn to pharmaceutical and medical device product liability work by its intellectual challenge.

"With every litigation you work on, you get an education on the medical issues," Strongman said. "The clients are always at the cutting edge of the legal issues that are emerging in field."



Jon Strongman

Strongman's achievements also include a win for Bausch & Lomb in litigation stemming from an outbreak of a rare fungal corneal infection linked to a line of contact lens solution, when a New York Supreme Court justice in 2013 tossed claims from plaintiffs alleging different types of infections.

He also secured a pivotal win for Sanofi-Aventis US LLC in Ambien litigation in 2009, when a court ruled that a plaintiff's experts had based their conclusions that Ambien made the plaintiff drive in her sleep on anecdotal reports, not scientific knowledge.

Fellow Shook partner Rob Adams, who tried the mesh cases with Strongman, said that Strongman has a unique ability to build relationships with all parties involved in a case.

"He is tough, but reasonable. He doesn't take shortcuts and is always thoroughly prepared," Adams said. "His judgment is impeccable, and he can articulate even the most complex issues in an easily understood manner."

For young lawyers, Strongman emphasized that even in the midst of vigorously advocating for a client, respect still matters.

"You can't underestimate the worth of treating everybody, including your adversaries, with respect," Strongman said.

--Editing by Jeremy Barker.