

# ICON AWARDS

CELEBRATING DISTINGUISHED LEADERS IN LAW  
2019

## William C. Martucci



Shook, Hardy & Bacon

Bill Martucci's colleagues profess a fondness for his "laugh," but that word is inaccurate. It's a guffaw: It booms and bounces and warms the space around him. It should be a ringtone, one nominator wrote, because it's "uplifting and immediately puts people at ease." Another said that when she hears it at bar events, "I am a little more buoyant knowing my friend is somewhere to be found in the crowd."

Though endearing, that guffaw was not how Martucci amassed his client list, which includes Berkshire Hathaway Automotive, Foot Locker, GlaxoSmithKline, Liberty Mutual, Monster Energy, O'Reilly Auto Parts, and Philip Morris International. No, that he accomplished through adroitness with complex employment-litigation matters.

One of Martucci's specialties is showing jurors the human face of a corporate-giant defendant in the courtroom — sometimes against plaintiff-class sizes in the tens of thousands. The truth in these matters may seem trite, he said, but managers are, in fact, people. When they're on the stand, Martucci creates a dialogue so the jury can see that they, too, have families, they, too, struggle with decisions and they, too, have aspired to act in the best interests of all involved.

He is fluent in the argot and thought patterns of his business clients — not surprising for a lawyer who teaches a course entitled "Multinational Business Policy and the Global Workplace" at his law school alma mater, Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. (He splits his time between there and Kansas City).

Martucci's own business acumen has been on display at Shook, Hardy & Bacon, where he serves on the executive committee. He leads the firm's Strategic Practice Growth Initiative. With him at the helm, the firm has added offices in Chicago, Denver, Los

Angeles, Philadelphia and Seattle.

In Kansas City's legal sphere, according to one nominator, Martucci has been a champion of diversity for a long time, and he spoke out even "before it was popular, or P.C. or the thing to do . . . I do not know where this intrinsic notion of fairness came from, but I know that our legal community was made better by his, sometimes, lone voice in the wilderness for inclusion."

Martucci himself couldn't explain that impulse, when asked. He just knew that, from the time he was a kid in New Jersey and New York, shooting hoops with whomever would show up at the Boys & Girls Club, all the way up to his stint as a Judge Advocate General in the U.S. Navy, representing military men and women from varied backgrounds, he formed a belief that "we're all in this together, and there's a great deal everyone has to offer."

Even today, outside of the office, he not only coaches girls' basketball; he has participated in RBI, or Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, a youth-outreach program by Major League Baseball to diversify the sport, encourage academic achievement and promote teamwork.

Behind the scenes, Martucci has another kind of legacy, and only in one-on-one settings. According to one nominator, he has a special talent: He is "a master of the short, quick expression of gratitude. A call just to say, 'I really appreciate what you've done for me,' or 'Thanks for letting me help.' An email or hand-written note out of the blue with the same message."

Missouri Lawyers Media need not rely on that account. Two days after our interview with Martucci, he sent us an email.

"Just a brief note," he wrote, "to let you know it was a pleasure talking with you earlier this week."

— Nicholas Phillips