

Mini Kapoor Uses 'Young Lawyer' Rule to Obtain Federal Court Hearing for Client

July 11, 2017 Michael Mazzone, Mini Kapoor

PRACTICES Litigation

A Haynes Boone team of Partner [Michael J. Mazzone](#) and Associates [Mini Kapoor](#) and Miles Indest secured a summary judgment victory for Hess Corp. on June 29 when U.S. District Judge Alfred Bennett dismissed all claims brought against the company in a transportation dispute involving big rigs in North Dakota.

The win came after Kapoor argued the motion under a special court rule designed to provide more courtroom experience for lawyers in their early years of practice. Bennett and other federal judges in Houston, Dallas and elsewhere have adopted “young lawyer” rules in an effort to help train the next generation of litigators.

In a July 10 [story about Kapoor](#), *Texas Lawyer* reported that Judge Bennett borrowed the idea from former U.S. District Judge Gregg Costa, now a member of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, who in turn got the idea from Chief U.S. District Judge Barbara M.G. Lynn in Dallas.

[Bennett's rule](#) reads:

“The court strongly encourages litigants to be mindful of opportunities for young lawyers (i.e., lawyers practicing for less than seven years) to conduct hearings before the court, particularly for motions where the young lawyer drafted or contributed significantly to the underlying motion or response. The court believes it is crucial to provide substantive speaking opportunities to young lawyers, and that the benefits of doing so will accrue to young lawyers, to clients, and to the profession generally.”

Though it was Kapoor’s first chance to argue a motion in federal court, she has wide-ranging litigation experience in intellectual property matters and commercial disputes. She joined Haynes Boone in 2012, transitioning to law practice from a career as a faculty member at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, where she conducted federally-funded research in cancer genetics.

She called the Feb. 24 appearance before Bennett “an awesome experience.”

Mazzone said the client had readily agreed to the legal team’s proposal to invoke the rule to improve the client’s chances of obtaining a hearing on the summary judgment motion.

In the case, *Universal Truckload Inc. v. Dalton Logistics Inc., et. al.*, No. 4:15-cv-01651 (S.D. Tex. 2017), the Haynes Boone team also secured a complete dismissal of plaintiff’s cross-motion for summary judgment against Hess. The case centered on whether Hess was liable for the cost of transportation services that another defendant in the case hadn’t paid.