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2019

“LAWYER of the YEAR” H O N O R E E S

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Peter S. Strassner

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

St. Louis, MO

Peter Strassner, a partner in Thompson Coburn's St. Louis office and co-chair of the firm's environmental group, sees himself as a problem solver. When it comes to the most rewarding areas of his practice, he says, "The things that jump to my mind are helping clients achieve their goals." Looking at his record, it's clear that Strassner and his team have solved plenty: They won a unanimous decision in the Supreme Court over a case for Exxon Mobil, successfully represented BNSF railways regarding a derailment near Illinois that spilled crude oil, and assisted pro bono in the cleanup of a 10-acre superfund site for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater St. Louis.

Central to Strassner's commitment to solutions is his drive for success, in no uncertain terms: "I like winning, and environmental [law] gives me that chance. There are definitely situations where you win or lose, and I get a great deal of satisfaction out of winning for a client."

In large part, he credits his proven record to his colleagues at the firm. "I practice with an incredibly strong group of environmental lawyers," Strassner says. "We're collaborative; we work together; we staff things lean, but there's always someone to talk to if I have unique problem. That sort of collegial, collaborative practice with a group that I regard as being among the most talented environmental lawyers in the region is just tremendously rewarding."

If Strassner and his group make it look easy, he will admit that the law itself is anything but. Stringent rules and regulations often stack the rules against the client, and it's the attorney's job to bring a rational approach to proceedings where the stakes are often high. The EPA might implement policies that work on a macro level but are difficult to implement on a micro level, and solutions to these problems are rarely—if ever—one size fits all.

Those hardships aren't something to shy away from. In fact, Strassner says he finds motivation in the most difficult cases.

"You get to bring some creativity to move things along in a constructive way, and that's kind of neat," he says. "Sometimes what I like about environmental law is the flipside of the challenges, so to speak." **B**

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