

## MVP: Morrison & Foerster's Arturo Gonzalez

*Law360 (December 12, 2018, 3:44 PM EST)* -- Arturo Gonzalez of Morrison & Foerster LLP filled his plate this year with complex and high-profile trials, securing a favorable settlement for Uber in its industry-defining trade secrets dispute with Google over self-driving cars, landing him among Law360's 2018 Trials MVPs.

### ***WHAT MOTIVATES HIM TO STAY AT THE TOP:***

After 32 years at Morrison & Foerster, Gonzalez isn't resting on his laurels, and he said that remembering how he started — as the firm's only Latino lawyer at a time when big firms didn't hire many — keeps him driven.

"I actually believe that practicing at the highest level is good for the Latino community, I just do," he said. "I look around, and I don't see very many Latino lawyers practicing at the highest level, and so I worry that when I stop, it'll be not only a blow to the firm, but a blow to the Latino community, to those Latinos who look up and try to find role models."

Gonzalez said he's also motivated by Morrison & Foerster's support for his pursuit of public interest cases, including his work representing the mother of a 10-year-old boy who was shot and killed in Mexico by a U.S. Border Patrol officer who was on the U.S. side of the border. The U.S. Supreme Court is mulling that case, *Rodriguez v. Swartz*, after a Ninth Circuit panel held that the officer is not entitled to immunity.



**Arturo Gonzalez**  
**Morrison & Foerster**

***HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE YEAR:***

Gonzalez didn't betray any scintilla of a crisis in motivation when it came time to set his trial calendar this year, taking several high-profile cases before a jury. In addition to leading Uber's defense in the trade secrets trial with Google unit Waymo, Gonzalez also secured a total defense verdict for cloud computing company VMware in a copyright case with \$110 million at stake.

Gonzalez was also lead trial counsel for music icons Andre "Dr. Dre" Young and Jimmy Iovine as they faced an entrepreneur's claims that he was owed \$109 million in unpaid royalties from their iconic Beats headphones. The Beats jury awarded the entrepreneur \$25 million.

"Just those three cases are good examples of cases that require an enormous amount of time, an enormous amount of focus and an enormous amount of coordination with the clients, and they're all cases that were extremely important to the clients," he said. "To have clients of that stature hand you the ball and say, 'Run with it, don't fumble,' it's actually an enormous amount of pressure but also very rewarding."

The key to taking this many cases to trial, and securing this many favorable results, was being able to lean on three "outstanding teams" of other lawyers, Gonzalez said, shouting out his colleagues at Morrison & Foerster, the in-house attorneys for his clients and his co-counsel in the Beats trial.

***HIS PROUDEST MOMENT OF THE YEAR:***

Gonzalez said his proudest moment was when Google decided to settle its trade secrets case against Uber just days into their February trial.

"When Google decided to settle on the terms that we ended up agreeing to, because those were substantially different from Google's position during three mediations ... that confirmed what I already knew, that our team had done a remarkable job of taking a case that could not possibly be won, and taking it to the verge of victory," he said. "And Google was smart enough to see that."

Gonzalez said that while he was disappointed not to get to see the trial through to the defense verdict he knew was coming, he was proud to see his client vindicated with a settlement.

Adding to the rewarding feeling, Gonzalez said that on the last day of trial before the settlement, he had cross-examined three Google witnesses "and did significant damage" to each of them.

“I knew those cross-examinations contributed,” he said. “The case was headed in a good direction from our standpoint, and I was proud about that.”

### ***WHY HE’S A TRIAL LAWYER:***

Gonzalez said his path to becoming a trial lawyer started his senior year at Roseville High School, near Sacramento. Gonzalez wouldn’t reveal the details of what occurred, except to say that it opened his eyes to the justice system and set him on the path to becoming a lawyer, instead of a dentist.

“I was just exposed to what I thought was injustice as a kid in high school,” he said. “And I saw a lot of lawyers, in court, and I said to myself, I can do that, and I can do it better.”

Gonzalez said he got it into his head that Harvard Law School was the best — pointing to the 1973 film “The Paper Chase” as a possible culprit — and he painted “Harvard or bust” on his 1963 Volkswagen Beetle, even though “at the time I did that, I couldn’t even tell you where Harvard was on the map.”

Gonzalez, who graduated from Harvard Law School in 1985, said the other lesson he learned from his high school experience was the importance of preparation.

“I saw what could happen if lawyers are not prepared, and I told myself, I will never go to court unprepared. That will never happen. I will always be the best-prepared lawyer in the courtroom,” he said.

### ***HIS ADVICE TO ASPIRING TRIAL LAWYERS:***

Gonzalez said there’s no substitute for learning on the job, and young attorneys have to seize opportunities to get into court.

Gonzalez said young attorneys have to be assertive and let their colleagues know that they’re interested in trying cases. They must find the lawyers going to trial and offer to do “whatever it takes” to help the trial team, even if it means writing off their hours or coming in on weekends.

“Don’t wait for it to fall into you lap, or you’re going to be 45 years old, 20 years out of law school, and if you’re lucky you’ll have one trial, like 80 percent of the lawyers,” he said. “If you want to be a trial lawyer, you have to go find it, you have to go get it.”

— As told to Daniel Siegal

*Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 1,000 submissions.*

---

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