

MVP: Williams & Connolly's Enu A. Mainigi

By James Mills

Law360 (November 3, 2023, 1:06 PM EDT) -- Enu A. Mainigi of Williams & Connolly LLP's litigation practice led Fifth Third Bank to victory against a certified class action amid a nationwide banking crisis, secured a win for Cardinal Health in a trial over distribution of opioids leading to the nation's opioid crisis, and shepherded CVS to triumph over a certified consumer class action regarding the prices of generic drugs, earning her a spot as one of Law360's 2023 Trials MVPs.

HER BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PAST YEAR:

Without hesitation, Mainigi, who has been with Williams & Connolly for 27 years, named the jury trial representing Fifth Third Bank in a certified class action claiming \$444 million in damages for one of the bank's consumer products as her top accomplishment. Adding to the pressure of the case was the fact that the trial was happening in March just as Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank were collapsing, and no one knew how many more might follow.

"A certified class action can be tough because it's a David and Goliath situation that's set up from the get-go as that just by virtual of the mechanism itself," Mainigi said. "We tried this case against the backdrop of some high-profile bank failures, which I think stir sentiment against banks sometimes. You have Silicon Valley Bank stuff swirling in the background. We'd had nearly a decade where there wasn't necessarily any banking crisis or issue. To have to open up and begin this case with that as the backdrop, it was a little bit of a challenge. You don't know whether that's going to color people or not."

HER PROUDEST MOMENT OF THE PAST YEAR:

Mainigi would not limit herself to a single, standout moment, because it's been an incredible year with much to be proud of, she said. She named the victory after a three-month, 70-witness opioid trial in West Virginia that resulted in a complete defense verdict for Cardinal Health. She also pointed to CVS Health's win in the consumer class action jury trial in the Northern District of California, where plaintiffs claimed the drugstore chain charged inflated prices for generic drugs.

"We were fortunate enough, on the Fourth of July [2022], to get a 182-page opinion in the first of the



opioid cases that I tried on behalf of Cardinal Health. That was pretty amazing for us to be able to secure that on the Fourth of July," she said. "We also got a decision in December from a jury trial that I had won in a different certified class action a year and a half ago for CVS Health."

But she's also proud of her track record in general, with seven trials or arbitrations ending favorably for her side, she said.

"Because of COVID, I have wound up trying seven trials or arbitrations in the last three years. Everything that went to verdict, which was four out of the seven, we've won. The three that resolved were resolved fairly favorably," she said. "I'm very proud of that."

WHAT ELSE SHE'S HAPPY ABOUT:

Mainigi said she is honored to be selected as a Law360 MVP. However, she is very quick to note she would not have achieved that recognition without the team supporting her.

"I'm the one lucky enough to be recognized here, but there is absolutely no way that I would have gotten to this place without the tremendous teams that we have and the tremendous clients that we have," Mainigi said. "All of us have worked together, many of us working together for years and years on particular matters and on other matters. It really does take a large group of people to pull it off and pull it off well. I'm cognizant of that every single day. Everybody that I work with makes my existence possible."

HOW SHE CAME TO BE A TRIAL ATTORNEY:

Mainigi was born in New Delhi, India, to two research scientists. The family immigrated to America when she was 5 years old and moved around the country, from research assignment to research assignment, wherever the grants took them. She now very much appreciates stability.

"I've been at Williams & Connolly 27 years," she said. "My kids have gone to the same school since pre-K. I just like staying put."

Ironically, when she joined Williams & Connolly in 1997, she figured she'd only stay for a couple of years. She had graduated from Harvard Law School in 1994 and worked on the 1996 presidential campaign and wanted to continue in politics.

"In law school, I never even really heard of Williams & Connolly, which is crazy. I did not think I wanted to be a lawyer, let alone a trial lawyer, at the time I was in law school. I didn't really think that either my first few years at Williams & Connolly," she said.

"I do love the thrill of the trial and the thrill of being in the courtroom, just like I love putting the strategy together," she added. "I am just very much a doer. I like jumping in. I like being a part of the battle and the game. I like taking a side and I like ultimately figuring out how to get from Z to A and working my way backwards so I can get where I want to be with Z. I expected to stay here [at Williams & Connolly] a year or two, but found I loved what I was doing and that I kind of got the same high from working on litigation matters that I had from being involved in the political world."

WHAT MOTIVATES HER:

Mainigi said there's nothing more satisfying than helping her clients solve a problem or an issue.

"I have been blessed to work with a great set of clients for many years and I always like working with the

new ones, too. I worked with a variety of clients in one capacity or another for a number of years. I love the comfort of that, the camaraderie of that, the 'We're all in it together' type of feeling," Mainigi said. "For many of those clients, I've had the same or similar teams assisting with those cases. To me, it's so much fun to have both the old and the new, so perhaps the old in a client that I've worked with forever but a new something that they need to solve."

HER ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:

Mainigi tells young lawyers that they know more than they think: Every experience counts, and they shouldn't discount those experiences.

"I think many of us who studied for a long time think it might be years and years and years before we're an expert in something," Mainigi said. "I found when I was starting out that even just working on a couple of health care cases, I was shocked that made me a knowledgeable person with expertise in the eyes of senior partners as well as clients that I was working for. It didn't take a lot to necessarily do that."

"Don't underestimate what you bring to the table by having to be the lowest person on the totem and therefore the person who may be digging through all the documents and know all the facts," she added. "Or maybe the person doing all the legal research and therefore [you] know the landscape of the law. I think you bring an expertise to the table that a lot of us who don't have that amount of time available to us can bring to bear."

— *As told to James Mills*

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 2020 MVP winners after reviewing more than 900 submissions.
