

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

The 2026 DC Legal Awards—Our Rising Star Winners

APPELLATE

OCTOBER 21, 2026

Describe your biggest win or accomplishment in practice.

I led, briefed, and argued an appeal in a federal circuit court of appeals in which we prevailed in a complex statutory interpretation matter—resulting in reversal of the district court’s decision, millions of dollars for our client, and an opportunity to work closely with a new associate in one of his first federal appellate matters in private practice. This was such an accomplishment not only because it allowed me to deliver a major victory for our client in a challenging case, but also because it allowed me to train and mentor one of our most promising appellate associates.

What was the most valuable lesson you learned in your first year practicing law?

Support from just one person can make a major difference to job performance and a sense of purpose and value. I co-founded our Wellness Committee as a result—helping colleagues build sustainable and rewarding careers, not just outwardly successful ones.

Who is your greatest lawyer mentor and what has he or she taught you?

Jane Raley, my supervising attorney at the Center on Wrongful Convictions for four summers: while you can’t always give clients a legal victory, always give them your full attention, a sense of enduring support, and moments of levity wherever possible.

Please share a brief key to your success.

I ask about clients’ perspectives and priorities, and listen carefully; this allows me to tailor advice to meet them where they are and ultimately build relationships beyond any one matter.



KATIE WYNBRANDT
JENNER & BLOCK