

Law360's Weekly Verdict: Legal Lions & Lambs

By **Aebra Coe**

Law360 (October 17, 2019, 4:52 PM EDT) -- Armstrong Teasdale made it on the legal lions list this week after an appeals court wiped out a \$110 million talc verdict against client Johnson & Johnson, while DLA Piper ended up among the legal lambs after its client, the Woodbridge Group's former CEO, was sentenced to 25 years in prison for a Ponzi scheme.

Legal Lions

First up on this week's legal lions list are **Armstrong Teasdale LLP, HeplerBroom LLC and Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP**. A Missouri appellate court on Tuesday **wiped out a \$110 million jury verdict** for a woman who blamed talcum powder made by the firms' client Johnson & Johnson for her ovarian tumors, saying the lower court didn't have the ability to oversee the case. Johnson & Johnson is represented by **Thomas B. Weaver, William Ray Price Jr., Jeffery T. McPherson** and **Paul L. Brusati** of **Armstrong Teasdale LLP, Thomas J. Magee** and **Beth A. Bauer** of **HeplerBroom LLC** and **Kathleen A. Frazier, Scott A. James** and **Mark C. Hegarty** of **Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP**.

The next legal lions to be featured this week, **King & Spalding LLP** and **Quattlebaum Grooms & Tull PLLC**, also earned the title for representing Johnson & Johnson. A **California jury on Oct. 11** cleared the company of allegations that its talcum powder contained asbestos and caused a man's mesothelioma, the second Golden State jury to find in the company's favor this week. J&J is represented by **Julia Romano** of **King & Spalding LLP** and **Steven W. Quattlebaum** of **Quattlebaum Grooms & Tull PLLC**.

Donnelly Conroy & Gelhaar LLP earned a spot on the list after client Peter Jan Sartorio, a frozen foods entrepreneur, became the first parent to plead guilty in the college admissions case and **avoid prison time** following an Oct. 11 hearing. Sartorio is represented by **Peter K. Levitt** and **Nicholas J. Ramacher** of **Donnelly Conroy & Gelhaar LLP**.

Weeks after the full Ninth Circuit heard oral arguments in a closely watched copyright case over Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven," the appeals court on Tuesday **refused a request to sanction** the band's attorney over statements made during the hearing. Without written explanation, the appeals court denied a motion for sanctions against **Peter J. Anderson** of **Davis Wright Tremaine LLP** filed by the man who's accusing Zeppelin of copying "Stairway" from an obscure instrumental ballad.

Rounding out this week's legal lions list is **Barnes & Thornburg LLP**. The Federal Circuit **concluded Tuesday** that the Patent Trial and Appeal Board relied on "classic hindsight bias" when it said certain pieces of prior art could be combined to render claims obvious in two insulation patents belonging to the law firm's client, Knauf Insulation. Knauf is represented by **Joshua Larsen** of **Barnes & Thornburg LLP**.

Legal Lambs

DLA Piper ended up on the legal lambs list Tuesday after its client, former Woodbridge Group owner and CEO Robert H. Shapiro, was **sentenced to 25 years** in prison for tax evasion and

orchestrating a Ponzi scheme that raised \$1.3 billion from more than 9,000 investors, resulting in approximately \$470 million in losses. Shapiro is represented by **Ryan Dwight O'Quinn, Elan Abraham Gershoni** and **Jordan Ziegler** of **DLA Piper**.

Venable LLP landed on the list Tuesday when a **California jury ordered** its client, media entrepreneur Alki David, to pay \$4.35 million in punitive damages for committing sexual battery against a former employee, though the billionaire told Law360 the comedy writer plaintiff will "not get one cent" of the \$5 million total damages awarded at trial. David is represented by **Ellyn S. Garofalo** and **Amir Kaltgrad** of **Venable LLP**.

Next up on the lambs list are **Consovoy McCarthy PLLC** and **Michael Best & Friedrich LLP**. The **D.C. Circuit found on Oct. 11** that President Donald Trump's longtime accounting firm must hand over business records to a congressional committee investigating the president, upholding a trial judge's ruling in favor of House Democrats. Trump and his businesses are represented by **William S. Consovoy, Cameron T. Norris** and **Patrick Strawbridge** of **Consovoy McCarthy PLLC** and **Stefan C. Passantino** of **Michael Best & Friedrich LLP**.

An Oregon federal judge on Oct. 11 **declined to trim** a jury's \$26.5 million verdict against two transportation companies and their drivers for causing a fatal highway road-rage incident, rejecting arguments made by attorneys at **Davis Rothwell Earle & Xochicua PC** that victims' counsel improperly invoked the "reptile theory" trial technique to sway the jury. Horizon and Hogaboom are represented by **Carl R. Rodrigues** and **Brandon W. Stuber** of **Davis Rothwell Earle & Xochicua PC**.

MWH Law Group LLP is this week's final legal lamb, ending up on the list Oct. 10 when a **Wisconsin federal jury** said that client Walmart must pony up \$5.2 million in a U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission suit claiming the company violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by pushing out a longtime employee who needed a job coach. Walmart is represented by **Emery K. Harlan** and **Warren E. Buliox** of the **MWH Law Group LLP**.

--Additional reporting by Nathan Hale, Craig Clough, Andrew Kragie, Y. Peter Kang, Adam Lidgett, Daniel Siegal, Chris Villani, Bill Donahue and Dani Kass. Editing by Orlando Lorenzo.