

MVP: Bracewell's Kevin Ewing

Law360, New York (December 15, 2017, 2:47 PM EST) -- In the last year, Bracewell LLP's Kevin Ewing has advised Statoil on its winning bid for a highly competitive federal wind lease and secured a ruling that clarifies the scope of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, landing him among Law360's 2017 Environmental MVPs.

NOTABLE WORK THIS YEAR:

Ewing, who has been at Bracewell for 25 years, has kept busy working on a broad range of significant environmental issues over the past year, which he called "exhilarating."

For one thing, he led the team that represented offshore services contractor Island Operating Co. Inc. in a fight against an enforcement action the federal government brought under the OCSLA's environmental and security provisions in 2013 — the first such action brought in decades. The battle culminated in March, when a federal judge held in a groundbreaking ruling that the offshore services sector is not regulated under those provisions.

Additionally, he represented Statoil Wind US LLC in its successful bid of more than \$42 million in an auction for a federal wind lease of nearly 80,000 acres off the coast of New York state. The lease, which was executed in March, gives Statoil the opportunity to explore the potential development of an offshore wind farm.

HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:

Ewing said he has had the opportunity to guide his clients toward several major successes in the past year. One that stands out, though, is helping Statoil secure the federal wind lease.

"The auction for that lease reflected a substantial commitment to renewable energy by New York state and the federal government," he said. "It was also the most competitive and hotly competed auction for a renewable energy lease in history. It was a signal achievement for the government, for Statoil and,

The MVP logo features the letters 'MVP' in a blue, serif font. The letter 'V' is partially enclosed by a red circle with an upward-pointing arrow on its right side.

Kevin Ewing
Bracewell

ultimately, for the people of New York, if a project can be built.”

Ewing said the ruling in favor of Island Operating was exceptional, as well, noting that at stake in the dispute were constitutional principles of wide importance.

Additionally, the ruling further clarified the distinct roles and responsibilities of different actors offshore, which Ewing said had “gotten muddied” as a result of the OCSLA enforcement initiative begun under the Obama administration.

“It’s very important to un-muddy it because having clearly established roles is critical to ensuring offshore safety, which is everyone’s goal,” he said.

ON FACING CHALLENGES:

Ewing said that every year brings its own set of challenges and that the last one has been no exception.

“The shift in presidential administrations has created uncertainty as new ideas and new people have come to Washington,” he said. “This shift has put a premium on being able to develop trust,” which he described as necessary for resolving misconceptions and thoughtfully exploring opportunities.

“Focusing on becoming and being a reliable resource to clients and decision makers in new Washington has been a paramount of mine this year,” he added.

As part of that trust-building exercise, he said, he has focused on remaining “absolutely disciplined” about facts and legal principles, listening as opposed to merely speaking, and being present and available.

WHAT HE IS MOST PROUD OF:

Ewing has spent his entire career at Bracewell, having started there during law school.

And he said that while he has been fortunate to help a number of clients achieve specific objectives, what he is most proud of professionally is, “without a doubt,” working with his colleagues “in a team environment, where we complement one another and make decisions together for a client’s benefit.”

ADVICE FOR YOUNG ATTORNEYS:

Ewing said his advice for attorneys looking to excel is straightforward.

“Focus on learning and on being inquisitive and curious,” he said. “That’s the thread that will pull you forward and pull you into new issues and opportunities for growth.”

Additionally, he said, always ask yourself whether you’re doing the best you can and, when possible, reach to make something better.

And sometimes, Ewing said, it’s just a matter of believing in yourself.

“You have talent,” he added. “Make that talent count.”

— *As told to Christine Powell*

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 2017 MVP winners after reviewing more than 1,000 submissions.

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