



Archer Partner John C. Connell Named LAW360 “MVP”

Press Releases

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Archer Law Partner **John C. Connell** has been named an “MVP” in Intellectual Property by Law360 for his role in *Matal v. Tam*, the groundbreaking U.S. Supreme Court trademark case decided last year.

Mr. Connell, who heads Archer’s Media & Communications Law and Appellate Advocacy groups, was awarded the distinction for successfully persuading the Court to rule unanimously that the federal government’s ban on offensive trademark registrations was unconstitutional, Law360 said in announcing the award.

Matal v. Tam was one of the most important cases considered by the U.S. Supreme Court last term. The Court’s decision is expected to have far-reaching effects on the government’s involvement in and regulation of trademark registration. One prominent case in particular, involving the PTO’s decision to revoke the trademark of the Washington Redskins football team, has already been impacted directly by the Court’s decision.

Mr. Connell successfully represented Simon Tam, lead singer of the Asian dance-rock band THE SLANTS, who sought and was denied federal registration of the band name by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) in 2011. The PTO based its denial on a Lanham Act provision from 1946 that prohibited registration of disparaging trademarks. Tam took the case to federal court in 2015, arguing that the Lanham Act’s disparagement clause violated the First Amendment. Following an *en banc* Federal Circuit Court decision in 2016 that the disparagement clause was unconstitutional, the PTO appealed the case, petitioning in 2016 for a writ of *certiorari*.

Mr. Connell argued the case before the U.S. Supreme Court in January 2017, defending the Federal Circuit’s decision. On June 19, the Supreme Court affirmed in an 8-0 decision that Tam’s trademark was a form of free speech and thus was protected under the First Amendment. Archer provided *pro-bono* legal services to THE SLANTS since spring of 2015.

Constitutional law has been an interest of Mr. Connell’s throughout his 32-year career. “Constitutional law involves principles that have an impact on the structure and organization of society as a whole as well as the relationship between citizens and the government,” Mr. Connell told Law360.

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.

John C. Connell is a Shareholder and Partner at Archer Law, and practices civil litigation as a first-chair attorney in jury and bench trials and appeals in State and federal courts. Mr. Connell's clients range from Fortune 100 companies to individuals in an array of complex commercial, employment, civil rights, communications law, healthcare, and intellectual property matters. Mr. Connell's work has resulted in precedential reported opinions on issues of constitutional jurisprudence, as well as statutory and common law.

Archer & Greiner, P.C. is a full-service regional law firm with more than 175 lawyers and eight offices in Haddonfield, Hackensack, Princeton, Flemington and Red Bank, N.J.; Philadelphia, Pa.; New York, N.Y.; and Wilmington, Del. The firm has been serving Fortune 100 clients, small to medium-sized businesses and individuals for over 85 years. Each office provides full-service litigation and transactional capabilities in nearly every area of law, including corporate, estate & trust, family & matrimonial, labor & employment, litigation, medical & personal injury, and real estate services. For more information, visit www.archerlaw.com.

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