

## New York Law Journal



### Distinguished Leaders: Thomas Cerabino and Matthew Feldman



Thomas Cerabino, left, and Matthew Feldman of Willkie Farr & Gallagher.

**W**hat are some of your proudest recent achievements? Overall, we are exceptionally proud of all at Willkie who have contributed to our success. We set out on an aggressive push to build a national platform, bring more balance to our practice mix, and achieve measurable progress

and tangible results with respect to our ESG commitment. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of many at our firm, including our staff professionals, we have met and even exceeded our goals.

Throughout this transformation, we have maintained our commitment to and involvement

in the New York civic and legal community and never lost focus of Willkie's cultural hallmarks of warmth, collegiality, inclusiveness and corporate citizenship. These are values that were passed down to us from our predecessors during our combined nearly 75 years at the firm. We take great pride

# DISTINGUISHED LEADERS

in nurturing these traditions and seeing our next generation take them forward.

We achieved record results for revenue and income in 2022. Our litigation practice in particular has soared, adding balance to our leading practices in private equity, M&A, insurance, restructuring and asset management.

We have nearly doubled our size since 2018 to more than 1200 lawyers. In this time, we opened four new offices in Chicago and California that are supercharging our results. We continue to be a destination for high-profile talent across practices and geographies.

Diversity, equity and inclusion has been a focus at the highest levels of the firm: 46% of our Executive Committee members are women or diverse, as well as 42% of Committee Chairs and 43% of Department and Practice Group Chairs. Willkie ranked ninth on AmLaw's 2023 "Diversity Scorecard," earned the 2022 Mansfield Certification Plus from Diversity Lab and achieved other top industry rankings.

We also continue to deepen our commitment to sustainability, including managing our carbon footprint through gathering third-party verified data on our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Our urban beehive program has continued to expand, and we now have hives in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington, DC.

Last, but definitely not least, we are immensely proud of our pro bono achievements. Willkie lawyers worked on more than 560 pro bono matters in 2022, including those of national prominence.

**Name a lawyer or mentor whose leadership inspired you.** We have both been inspired by

our former Chairman Jack Nusbaum. Jack led Willkie for more than 20 years. He was a masterful communicator and leader, and never lost sight of what was truly important. He encouraged others to live by his "Golden Rules" of being a good lawyer and citizen: understand your client's needs, fulfill your responsibilities promptly and ethically, have respect for the other side's position, respect your role in society and live your life the way you would like your children to live theirs. These are lessons we continue to instill as part of our leadership.

**How are the business and profession of law changing, and how should lawyers adapt for the future?** The challenges facing all of us are many, from global economic pressures, to AI, to managing multiple generations in the workplace. You need to keep your eye around the corner and be able and willing to evolve. In all of this, the fundamentals of client service remain the same: take time to learn your clients' businesses so you can address and anticipate their needs.

**What is the best advice for someone considering a career in law, or someone already in the profession who is seeking to make a greater impact?** In law or any other profession, you must take an active role in your own professional development. We will, of course, support you, but those who achieve the highest levels of fulfillment tend to be those who speak up. Also, look for a firm that has values that align with your own. You can usually feel the culture where you are. Pay attention to that and make sure it is a culture you want to be part of.