

2021

THE AMERICAN LAWYER

TRAILBLAZERS

NORTHEAST

ROBERT L. WEIGEL
GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER



What was the genesis of the idea that has made you a trailblazer?

The enforcement of judgments and arbitral awards has long been an important part of my practice. I have designed and managed worldwide enforcement campaigns against Venezuela, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Rosneft and numerous other private parties. My partner Matt McGill also has a thriving enforcement practice having collected substantial sums from Iran, Argentina and others. Together with our partner Jason Myatt, we have collected to date more than \$7 billion for our clients. It takes a specialized expertise to design and implement successful global enforcement strategies. As the number, and size, of arbitral awards and judgments continues to grow, particularly against foreign sovereigns, we realized that there was a market need for a dedicated team in this space.

What sort of change has resulted from the concept?

An effective enforcement strategy requires a robust analysis of the debtor's assets and cash flows, a sophisticated understanding of financial transactions and a knowledge of the jurisdictions that are receptive to enforcement. By creating a dedicated practice area we can leverage our experience as sophisticated commercial litigators to design and implement worldwide enforcement strategies that actually work. Our group is currently working to enforce judgments and awards totaling more than \$22 billion, for clients as diverse as mining companies, a major consumer products company, and over 800 victims of state sponsored terror attacks.

What bearing will this have on the future?

We expect this area to grow as commerce becomes more global and interconnected. In today's world, a straightforward breach of contract can lead to international arbitration and substantial awards. Those awards need to be collected. By creating this group, we are well-positioned to shape the law as it evolves and we often end up utilizing the law we have created in one action to collect subsequent awards.