

## Rising Star: Winston & Strawn's Sean G. Wieber

*Law360 (August 8, 2018, 3:46 PM EDT)* -- Winston & Strawn LLP partner Sean G. Wieber has amassed numerous defense victories in federal Telephone Consumer Protection Act cases, including wins for companies ranging from Travelers to Edible Arrangements, earning him a spot as one of five consumer protection law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### ***THE BIGGEST CASE OF HIS CAREER:***

Wieber recalled his most interesting and challenging case was being tapped in April 2012 as a deputy special prosecutor in the investigation the 2005 death of David Koschman in Chicago.

A nephew of former Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley was a suspect in the case, and Koschman's mother sought an independent investigation. Winston & Strawn was chosen for the job. "We convened a special grand jury at the Winston & Strawn office," he said.

After 18 months of investigation, the nephew was indicted, Wieber said. He pled guilty to involuntary manslaughter in January 2014.

The extremely rare chance to see a criminal case from the prosecution side was an "eye-opening experience," he said.

"It was a tremendous, once in a lifetime opportunity," he said.

His involvement in the case did not end there. Wieber said he is currently leading the defense in a Freedom of Information Act suit seeking access to the records from the Office of the Special Prosecutor relating to the grand jury. He said they have prevailed at the trial and appellate level and he expects to argue the case before the Illinois Supreme Court this year.

**RISING**  
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**STAR**



**Sean G. Wieber**  
**Winston & Strawn**

**Age:** 38

**Home base:** Chicago

**Position:** Partner

**Law school:** Chicago-Kent  
 College of Law

**First job after law school:**  
 Associate at Winston & Strawn

***WHY HE IS A CONSUMER PROTECTION ATTORNEY:***

Wieber said he had always been a “pure generalist,” but when he made partner in 2015 he realized he’d developed a niche as a defender in class action TCPA suits.

“I just took an accounting and realized I’ve done dozens of these cases,” he said.

He said what he finds attractive about this specialty is how dynamic it is, with thousands of cases a year being filed in different jurisdictions, involving messaging technology never considered when the law was enacted in 1991.

“I love it,” he said. “There is no other area where you can go to bed on a random Tuesday and wake up on Wednesday and the law is completely different.”

Over the last year, he’s won victories for Edible Arrangements, Hardware Resources, Travelers and Rasmussen College in suits involving text messages, faxes and phone calls.

He said the stakes in the cases can be high, as the sheer number of messages being sent cause the statutory damages to pile up.

“Every one of these can become a bet-the-company kind of case,” he said.

***PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:***

After joining Winston & Strawn, Wieber said he gained as a mentor former Illinois Gov. James Thompson, who had served as chair of the firm’s executive committee since he left the governor's office in 1991.

“I had a relationship with one of the greatest attorneys in Illinois history,” he said.

Then, in 2013, Thompson was named in a suit by a former executive director of the Illinois Sports Facility Authority alleging she had been wrongfully terminated.

“The first call he made, he called me and said ‘would you defend me in this case?’” Wieber said.

The case ended in a stipulated dismissal in 2014.

“The best thing for a lawyer is to be on speed dial when things get real,” he said.

***HIS MOTIVATION:***

Wieber said he was motivated by wanting to pass on the lessons he learned from playing football at Northwestern University and working with Thompson about the importance of teamwork and mentoring.

“BigLaw gets kind of a bad rap as disjointed and impersonal,” he said. “I have tried to develop the kind of practice that is a small firm atmosphere in a BigLaw environment.”

One step he takes toward that is letting clients know who is on their team and what they’re doing, he said.

“Instead of just saying I have a team and they’re doing things, they know who they are and what they’re doing,” he said.

***HOW CONSUMER PROTECTION WILL CHANGE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS:***

He said he expects TCPA law to continue to change as technology changes and rulings continue.

“There is a little bit of a cat and mouse game between the plaintiffs and the defense bar,” he said.

In BigLaw as a whole, he said he expects to continue to see pressure on rates by “very sophisticated” clients.

“They want to know who is on these bills and what they’re doing,” he said.

“I think we’re going to see smaller strike teams that understand the key issues clients have,” he said.

— *As told to Rick Archer*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.*

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