

Rising Star: Goldman Ismail's Jennifer Greenblatt

Law360, New York (July 16, 2017, 3:02 PM EDT) -- The work of Goldman Ismail Tomaselli Brennan & Baum LLP's Jennifer Greenblatt in securing wins on behalf of Merck in litigation over its osteoporosis drug Fosamax — including cases involving allegations of bone disease of the jaw and that the drug caused femoral fractures — landed her a spot as one of five product liability attorneys under 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

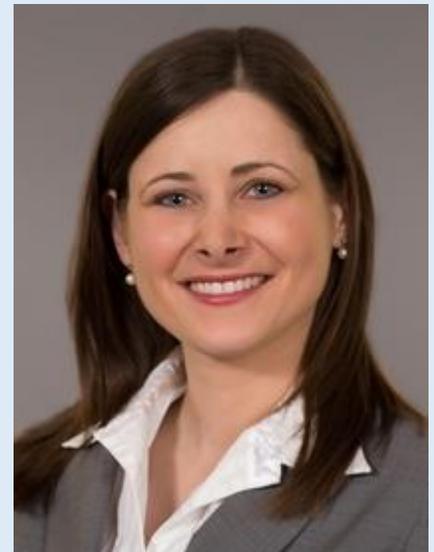
BIGGEST CASE OF HER CAREER:

Greenblatt has been extensively involved in litigation over Fosamax, including being the most junior member of a trial team representing Merck & Co. in one of the first federal multidistrict bellwether cases in New York. After a three-week trial, in which the plaintiff claimed the drug caused osteonecrosis of the jaw, the jury returned with a verdict in favor of the company. More recently in Illinois, Greenblatt managed discovery in a multi-plaintiff action that involved claims that the drug caused atypical femur fractures. Her depositions of treating physicians helped secure an agreement from the plaintiffs to dismiss their cases before trial would have started in January 2016.

Working on the Fosamax cases provided an opportunity to work with a variety of firms over the years and also afforded her the chance to see the litigation unfold throughout its course, Greenblatt said.

"When you're dealing with plaintiffs and complex medical histories, one of things I find most interesting is that you never know at the start of a case what issues might be dispositive and what issue might play to a jury or judge, whether it's in summary judgment proceedings or in front of a jury at trial," Greenblatt said.

RISING
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STAR



Jennifer Greenblatt
Goldman Ismail

Home base: Chicago

Position: Partner

Law school: Stanford Law School

First job after law school: Clerk for the Ninth Circuit in Hawaii

HER PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Greenblatt was able to put an end to the last tortious interference claim in a proposed class action over Merck's co-pay subsidy by finding a contract through online research of publicly available information before formal discovery had started on that claim. As Greenblatt explained, the plaintiffs had argued that their case should be a class action because the contracts were all uniform, but this particular contract disproved the claims alleged in the complaint. The plaintiffs ultimately agreed to dismiss their claims.

"That happened earlier in my career, and I think it was really indicative of the opportunities you can have if you are open to thinking creatively, and that's something I try to bring to all of my cases," she said.

WHAT MOTIVATES HER TO BE A PRODUCT LIABILITY ATTORNEY:

Greenblatt said that the day-to-day variety of product liability practice and representing clients that bring "incredible products to the market" is what drives her in her work. And for attorneys, it's easier when you can find something that you really enjoy doing, Greenblatt said.

"For me, product liability and trial work has been a terrific fit for what I'm looking for in my career," Greenblatt said. "I don't always play the same role in all my cases, and that also keeps things interesting. Any given day, I could be taking a deposition or appearing at a hearing or going to a trial with the trial team. The variety for me has been something that really helps me to develop my skill set."

WHY SHE BECAME A PRODUCT LIABILITY ATTORNEY:

For Greenblatt, the area provides the best of both worlds: the intellectual challenge of exploring complex medical issues and the human element of interacting with plaintiffs and judges. Joining her current firm in 2010 — which was then one year old — was also something of a leap of faith.

"When I first joined my firm, they were looking for somebody who had a medical degree, which I don't have. I did have an interest in litigating science and medical issues, and when the opportunity came up to join the firm, it was a no-brainer for me," Greenblatt said. "We have four lawyers who have medical degrees, and we're a firm of under 20 lawyers, and while I don't have a medical background, I have very much benefited from and really enjoyed working with those who do."

--As told to Emily Field.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2017 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.