

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Charline Yim

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (August 5, 2024, 2:03 PM EDT) -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Charline Yim helped rapper Jay-Z's SCLiquor LLC settle its dispute with Bacardi over the value of their joint cognac venture, earning her a spot among the international arbitration law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

Why she is an international arbitration attorney:

As she was figuring out what her legal career would look like, Yim said an important component was it had to involve international law, noting that during law school, she focused primarily on international human rights and criminal law.

The eventual segue into international arbitration came after conversations with other private practitioners. Yim said she learned that the practice touches on her favorite aspects of international law such as complex global issues, working with different legal traditions, and working with people across different cultures and jurisdictions.

"To be totally frank, I didn't actually know much about international arbitration specifically, and I never took a course on international arbitration or anything of that sort, but my basic understanding from conversations with folks in private practice was that it would give me the opportunity to practice dispute resolution and act as an advocate, almost like a litigator," Yim said.

On the biggest case of her career:

Yim represented a subsidiary of public utility Exelon Corp. in a \$1 billion dispute against a subsidiary of French energy company Electricite de France SA, or EDF, over the process used for assessing the sale price of three nuclear power plants in New York and Maryland.

Despite EDF bringing a rarely used International Chamber of Commerce pre-arbitral referee proceeding in an attempt to obtain an early resolution, EDF's requests were dismissed, and it was ordered to pay the costs of the proceeding. Following a traditional ICC arbitration, the suit was settled in Exelon's favor in November 2021.

2024



Charline Yim

Gibson Dunn

Age: 38

Home base: New York

Position: Partner

Law school: Harvard Law School

First job after law school: Fellowship with the president the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

"What this case represents is the full power of the work I get to do as an arbitration practitioner alongside my colleagues across different practice groups," Yim said. "They've given me a wonderful sense of strategic consideration beyond just arbitration proceedings as well as thinking more holistically about my clients' interests and how to achieve them."

Other notable cases she has worked on:

More recently, Yim represented SCLiquor LLC, owned by Jay-Z, in a feud with Bacardi over the value of D'Ussé LLC, the cognac company SCLiquor and Bacardi have 50-50 ownership of since 2012. Following multiple arbitrations and court cases in both New York and Delaware, Bacardi agreed in February 2023 to buy out a portion of the rapper's stake in the company while he retains a smaller ownership stake.

In a throwback to her initial reasons for pursuing an international-focused legal career, Yim also has worked on a number of different matters related to human rights. She partnered with the Clooney Foundation for Justice to prepare a submission to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on behalf of Crimean human rights advocate Server Mustafayev, who has been detained by Russia since 2018 and was sentenced to 14 years in maximum security prison in 2020.

The Working Group released an opinion in 2022 ordering Russia to release and compensate Mustafayev for the violations of his human rights, determining that the Russian court that convicted him failed to show impartiality and didn't respect his right to legal counsel, among other issues.

"It was incredibly gratifying to see how the Working Group reached the findings that it did based on our complaints," Yim said.

On what motivates her:

"This is probably extremely boring but my clients and team are probably what motivate me the most. I've been lucky in many ways not just to work on interesting and complex cases but also to work with clients and team members who I genuinely enjoy spending time with and collaborating with. It's what inspires me to put in all the time and energy I can to succeed."

On how the practice will change over the next 10 years:

Yim said the advent of artificial intelligence will have a major impact on how arbitration is practiced. She said she also hopes for, and expects, increased diversity among the practitioner ranks.

"I think my greatest hope is that we will see a substantial increase in diversity among the practitioners and arbitrators appointed to decide disputes," Yim said. "There's an incredible amount of interest from people of all backgrounds and walks of life, and my hope and expectation is that we'll see it translate to the more senior levels of practice and among our arbitrators."

--As told to Adrian Cruz. Editing by Lakshna Mehta.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2024 Rising Stars winners after reviewing nearly 1,200 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2024, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed. All Content © 2003-2024, Portfolio Media, Inc.