



RECOGNITIONS

Barnes & Thornburg's Robert Sikkel Named To National Law Journal 2020 Employment Law Trailblazers List

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GRAND RAPIDS - *The National Law Journal* (NLJ) has named Labor and Employment partner Robert Sikkel to its second annual list of Employment Law Trailblazers. The [Employment Law Trailblazers](#) publication recognizes attorneys who have made significant marks on the profession through new legal strategies and unique case outcomes.

Sikkel was recognized for the successful representation of a large chemical manufacturer following a violent strike – one which involved considerable union corruption and a murder that went unresolved for 20 years. With Sikkel's help, the strike concluded with the union walking away and leaving the company union free. For over 30 years, Sikkel has continued to craft and execute collective bargaining strategies for large manufacturing and healthcare clients with facilities throughout the U.S.

Additionally, Sikkel works with clients to develop relevant labor strategies during mergers and acquisitions. Predominately representing asset purchasers, he counsels clients on the assumption or non-assumption of an existing collective bargaining agreement and related successor obligations to recognize an existing union. The NLJ recognized Sikkel's guidance on a multibillion-dollar joint venture transaction, for which a new collective bargaining agreement was negotiated and the joint venture was not bound by the prior collective bargaining agreement of one of the joint venture business units.

The list not only honors attorneys' past achievements, but their understanding of where the profession might be heading. Sikkel noted that he expects more legislation at state and local levels regarding

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individual employee rights – from paid leave and expansion of civil rights, to wage and hour issues.

He emphasized that traditional labor and employment law likely will still be trying to keep up with the burgeoning gig economy and technological advances. “I anticipate that struggle to continue,” he said in the publication, “and we’ll see additional regulatory and legislative activity to react to those changes.”

Equally important to Sikkell for the future of employment law is guiding younger attorneys interested in this area of law. He has mentored several young lawyers over the course of his career, many of whom have grown and developed into highly skilled and successful labor and employment attorneys.

Barnes & Thornburg partner Ken Yerkes was recognized as an Employment Law Trailblazer on the inaugural 2019 list.

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