Press Coverage | March 31, 2023

Supreme Preparation

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Christopher G. Browning, Jr.

Chris Browning, a partner in Troutman Pepper's Appellate + Supreme Court Practice Group, was quoted in the March 31, 2023 *ABA Journal* article, "Supreme Preparation."

"I've just been so fortunate to be able to do something like this," says Christopher G. Browning Jr., who as a high schooler dreamed of one day appearing at the court and won 7-2 on his first go-around in the 2010 False Claims Act case Graham County Soil and Water Conservation District v. United States. (Hallward-Driemeier also made his first argument in that case as amicus curiae on behalf of the United States.) "Once you argue your first Supreme Court case, you're addicted and want to go back. There's nothing that compares in the practice of law."

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On the morning of his argument, Browning looped his lucky blue tie around his neck. He walked from his hotel to the court, following tradition as he placed his hand on the foot of the bronze statue of Chief Justice John Marshall, which was worn down from all the other advocates having done the same thing.

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Browning says an argument always has the potential to go badly. But the justices treat everyone with respect—unless they come to court unprepared or can't answer basic questions, he says. He notes that even Chief Justice Roberts had a 9-0 loss when he was a practicing lawyer.

"One of his clients asked, 'How was it that this ended up being 9-0?' And the response was, 'There were only nine justices.' Our job as attorneys is to be the most effective advocates we can be. But there's an awful lot beyond your control," Browning says.

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