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Lifetime Achievement 2024: Judge Eduardo Robreno

Check out the professionals who are winners in the Lifetime Achievement category as part of the Pennsylvania Legal Awards.

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Judge Eduardo Robreno, McCarter & English

What's the most important thing you've learned during the course of your career that you wish you knew as a young lawyer?

Mastery of the law requires a commitment to lifelong education. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. put it, the law is, at any one time, a prediction of what courts will do in the future under particular circumstances. Therefore, in the law, there are no permanent or forever settled answers to questions. Each case is unique and the law is organic. Application of the law thus requires a full appreciation of the circumstances in which the case arises.

Change in the legal field seems to be ever accelerating. What's the biggest change you've seen in the profession during your career?

Technology. Looking up the law has taken us from books to digital research. We no longer have to go to warehouses to look at musty documents—all are now available in a flash drive at the office. We now have Zoom depositions, hearings, and even trials. While convenient, this technology has impacted the way we deal with each other. We are now less likely to meet in person and to share informal moments like waiting in the hallway to have our case called or chatting on the phone rather than exchanging emails. And yet, AI lurks in the wings for better or for worse.

What is one thing about the profession that has remained unchanged over the years?

In a philosophical sense, the profession remains committed to the rule of law as the foundation of a civil and democratic society. The practice of law is not solely a business or a way to make a living. It requires the dedication of lawyers to the rule of law.

What do you wish you could see more of?

I would like to see more diversity in the profession, with more balanced representation across the board reflecting our country's diversity in every respect—ethnic, gender, religious, political, etc. We have recognized this need, and firms, educational institutions, and the legal system are moving forward to address the persistent lack of diverse representation, but implementation has been a challenge. Consensus is needed on efforts to bring about long-term, positive change.