

## THE AM LAW LITIGATION DAILY

### Litigation Leaders: Moez Kaba on Hueston Hennigan's 'Trial Lawyers Above All Else' Approach and New York Expansion

By Ross Todd

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Welcome to another edition of our *Litigation Leaders* series, featuring the litigation practice leaders at some of the biggest and most innovative law firms in the country.

Meet **Moez Kaba**, who earlier this year became just the second managing partner of Los Angeles-based litigation boutique **Hueston Hennigan**, while also helping launch the firm's second office in New York City. Kaba, a co-founding partner of the firm, succeeded **Brian Hennigan**, who led the firm from its founding after a spinoff from **Irell & Manella** in 2015.

Kaba was co-lead counsel alongside partner **John Hueston** for Endo Pharmaceuticals in a public nuisance lawsuit brought by three large California counties and the city of Oakland that resulted in a defense win in Orange County, California Superior Court in 2021. That win landed *Litigator of the Week* honors for the firm and three codefendants' counsel. Last year Kaba and Hueston were twice runners-up for *Litigator of the Week* representing client Monster Energy Co. The Hueston Hennigan team won damages awards of \$175 million after a Zoom arbitration and \$293 million in a jury trial, both against the maker of the Bang energy drink.

**Lit Daily: Tell us a little about yourself—perhaps even a thing or two your partners would be surprised to learn about you.**

Moez Kaba: I am the recently elected managing partner of Hueston Hennigan and a trial lawyer. Our firm was founded eight years ago, and we are now nearly 90 lawyers, with a very active trial docket. In the last two years or so, we've had approximately a dozen trials, with what others have described as historic and landmark victories. I am also married to a wonderful, brilliant, and caring man, Bjorn Lundberg, and the two of us have a four-year-old son, Liam. I'm the son of Pakistani immi-

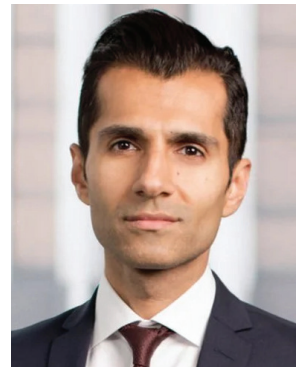
grants, who came to America with a dollar (literally) and a dream. I think my diverse background has really helped shape me as a trial lawyer. And one of the things our firm is really proud of is that our trial teams are diverse in many different ways. We think these lived experiences help our lawyers connect with judges and juries and help us translate our client's positions in the most compelling ways.

Our partnership is very close—we not only work together in the trenches but we really like each other. So I don't think anything I would say about myself would come as a surprise to them.

**What motivated the firm's decision to open an office in New York? What are the short- and long-term goals for it?**

The launch of our New York office is a natural extension of the growth of the firm. From the start, our practice has been national, with more cases outside of California than within it. Now, our geographic footprint matches our national practice. And the fact that John and I will each split our time between New York and California demonstrates our commitment to growing our New York practice.

Being in New York also expands the pool of talent we have available. Our first class of associates in New York includes six skilled attorneys who hail from the nation's finest law schools and have all completed federal clerk-



**Moez M. Kaba,**  
managing partner of  
**Hueston Hennigan.**

Courtesy photo

ships. We are already busy recruiting our next class of associates.

My expectation is we'll continue growing the New York office the same way we have grown the LA office, which is by hiring the best and brightest every year and giving them early substantive opportunities to develop as trial lawyers. Our string of trial wins has helped attract wonderful candidates and clients.

**You and John Hueston are splitting time between coasts to serve as anchor partners for the firm's new New York office. You also typically have a very active personal trial docket, and I've heard you don't see that slowing down. How do you plan to manage all that with your new duties as managing partner?**

When we launched Hueston Hennigan about eight years ago, it was always our intention to be both entrepreneurs and have a top-tier trial practice. Going to trial remains the best, most challenging, and most invigorating part of the job. And despite the additional responsibilities, I see no easing of the trial docket for any of our partners, nor would we want that.

**What do you see as hallmarks of your firm's litigators? What makes you different?**

First, we try to approach each case differently. We do not believe in paint-by-numbers litigation. So, despite knowing that many cases won't go to trial, we approach each case from the outset as if we were preparing it for trial. This focus permeates everything we do, from early motion practice to discovery to expert work. And it tends to pay off whether the case is resolved or litigated through trial.

Second, we put a premium on hiring lawyers that really want to get on their feet and develop courtroom skills. Our clients have been very gracious to let even our most junior attorneys take witnesses. We're proud that we had multiple associates taking witnesses at every one of the many trials we have had in the last few years. Having diverse trial teams has been both personally gratifying and rewarding.

Third, we do not focus our practice in any one subject matter, but rather try to develop broad and deep trial expertise. We are trial lawyers above all else. This allows us to effectively deploy on cases across the practice area spectrum. Jurors are not patent or antitrust or health care experts—and so we focus on presenting our cases in simple, compelling ways, no matter how complicated the underlying subject matter may seem.

Because of this, every single one of our partners has gone to trial and won, which I think is a pretty remarkable attribute for a law firm of our size.

**In what three areas of litigation do you have the deepest bench? (I know it's hard, but please name just three.)**

As I indicated above, we don't organize around practice groups. Instead, we work to deliver the best service and solve our client's unique business problems. We want to be fluid and adapt to the cases that our clients most care about. Our clients tell us they turn to our "expert trial lawyers" as their "go-to for a hard trial case," and we want to keep earning that trust.

**What were two or three of the firm's biggest in-court wins in the past year, and can you cite tactics that exemplify your firm's approach to success?**

We've had a great year, with wins at trial, on dispositive motions, and on appeal.

Late last year, we won a record \$293 million verdict for Monster Energy after a four-week federal jury trial involving claims of false advertising, tortious interference, and theft of trade secrets. The verdict—the largest Lanham Act award ever—reflected a complete victory for Monster Energy over its rival Vital Pharmaceuticals Inc. The jury found in Monster's favor on every single claim.

That victory came on the heels of another win for Monster Energy Company and Orange Bang in what was described as "the largest-ever U.S. trademark award." Following a two-week arbitration, the arbitrator held that Bang Energy infringed on the "Bang" trademark, and awarded \$175 million in damages, attorney's fees and costs, and a 5% running royalty.

Finally, we were able to secure over \$40 million for the Navajo Nation from the United States EPA and mining companies arising out of the devastating Gold King Mine spill disaster. After years of litigation and repeatedly beating back the U.S.'s defenses, the government agreed to finally accept responsibility for its role.

These wins were possible only through the hard work, persistence, and creativity of the lawyers on our team and our wonderful staff. In trial, we fight to win each day.

**What does the firm's coming trial docket look like?**

We have had a very active trial docket the past few years, and that is continuing into 2023 and 2024. By the end of February, we already had begun two trials, with several more to come, including for clients such as McDonald's, Amazon, PacifiCorp, Match, Chapman University, Deloitte, and Monster Energy.