

Legal Spotlight: Cravath, Swaine & Moore Lawyer Draws on Engineering Past

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Sharon Goswami
Courtesy of Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

As a lawyer with a chemical engineering background, Sharon Goswami feels at home flexing her scientific muscle at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP.

“Everyone is maybe a little bit nerdy, but I think that’s one of the things I like the most,” she said.

Goswami, who is a partner at the firm’s New York office, mostly works on patent cases, focusing on biotechnology and medical devices. Those kinds of cases draw on her college education in materials science and engineering biology.

“Almost everything that I’ve studied, in kind of surprising ways, has come up in my legal career,” she said. For example, learning materials science helped her understand what materials a company might use to create medical devices that aren’t rejected by the human body.

As a general litigator, she said, there are many cases where her engineering background has come in handy, whether it’s determining a genetic testing product’s market before a merger or talking to scientists about their patent for manufacturing a drug.

Goswami also represented NCR Corp. in Superfund litigation related to the cleanup of the Fox River in Wisconsin and the Kalamazoo River in Michigan.

In an environmental pollution case, she found a mistake in an expert report’s calculation of mass balance, a method that can be used to determine how much of a substance has been discharged into the environment. The method was a “simple engineering technique” she had learned in her formal education, and she was able to recommend a fix.

“In litigation, it’s often a battle of the experts,” she said. —*Sylvia Carignan*