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DAMARIS Hernández, 38

Partner | CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE

UNFAMILIAR WITH BIG LAW FIRMS, Damaris Hernández almost turned down an interview for a Cravath internship. Last year she became the first Latina partner in the firm's 200-year history. Justice Sonia Sotomayor sent a letter of congratulations. "You better believe it's framed," Hernández said.

Hernández specializes in complex civil litigation. In 2016 she helped lead the team representing Argentina against holdout creditors from its \$80 billion default in 2001. In credit markets it was called the "trial of the century," and it paved the way for Argentina to issue bonds again.

"Let me break it down. Litigation has six elements: law, rules, facts, strategy, tactics and people skills," Cravath Chairman Evan Chesler said. "You can be an A student in 1 through 5 and still not be an effective lawyer. Damaris is a black belt in No. 6."

Hernández grew up in East New York, Brooklyn—one of the city's poorest neighborhoods—where her parents ran a bodega. She earned scholarships to Trinity School and Harvard College. But her dad died suddenly, and her mom lost the store; Hernández dropped out to support the family. Two years later she returned to

Harvard with her mother and younger sister in tow. Despite working 40 hours per week, she graduated and landed a prestigious AnBryce scholarship to NYU School of Law. "When you have people depending on you," she said, "you'd be surprised what you can do."



CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE LLP