



## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

# EVAN CHESLER

CHAIRMAN OF CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE

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**BY KEVIN J.  
ORSINI**

*Partner at Cravath,  
Swaine & Moore*

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Evan's successes in the courtroom demonstrate why he is such an obvious candidate to receive this prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, but stopping there would be to ignore much of who Evan is and what he has accomplished in his remarkable career. I first began working with Evan as a second year associate at Cravath. The one thing I knew for sure was that I had little idea what I was doing, and the prospect of working with Evan (then Head of Cravath's Litigation Department) was just a tad intimidating!

Our very first experience involved flying to a town in Tennessee to interview a string of witnesses so that we could advise the client as to its obligations under a series of long-term requirements contracts. We were accompanied all day by one of our client's in-house lawyers. The moment the interviews were over and Evan and I were alone together, he turned to me and began to explain why he had approached each

witness the way he had that day. It was in that moment that I knew Evan—who had taught history prior to attending law school—never actually stopped teaching. As much as Evan lives for the courtroom, some of his greatest contributions to the legal profession have been in training the next generation of Cravath lawyers.

In the more than 15 years since that experience in Tennessee, I have had the privilege of trying cases with Evan in state and federal courts. I became a partner when he was the presiding partner of our firm, and was on hand to see him elected into his current role as Cravath's chairman. As a leader of our firm and a lead partner on many of the largest, most complex cases in the country at any given time, Evan consistently gives everything of himself to his partners and his clients.

I will never forget walking into court together for the first day of what was likely his 30th or 40th trial (and my first as partner). I asked Evan if he still felt the charge of excitement and nervous energy that was coursing through me. His response—which was classic Evan—was that the day I stop feeling that energy should be the day that I stop practicing law. That is Evan's conceptualization of the profession: one does not deserve to practice, never mind win a case, without passion. That undying

passion is what makes Evan the rare breed of trial lawyer he is.

Evan's passion is evident every day in the office, as he counsels clients ranging from financial institutions to cutting-edge pharmaceutical companies to technology firms of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Evan has imbued in all Cravath lawyers that have worked with him the core tenet that it is a privilege to do what we do, to guide this country's greatest institutions through their most difficult times.

Along with his passion for the law, the other constant in Evan's life is his beautiful wife Barbara and their wonderful family. There has not been a single case that I have tried with Evan that Barbara has not attended at some point. As Evan argued his first case before the U.S. Supreme Court, Barbara was there, and I have little doubt that her steady hand and love have played an enormous part in all of Evan's accomplishments. I could not imagine writing about Evan without recognizing Barbara as well. Barbara, we all thank you for sharing Evan with us.

Finally, as one would expect from a lawyer born and raised in the Bronx, Evan's contributions to New York go far beyond his legal accomplishments. Among many other roles, Evan chairs the Board of one of the city's greatest cultural institutions: the New York Public Library. He has also made countless contributions as a Trustee of both New York University and New York University School of Law and has devoted his time, energy and resources to an extensive list of charitable organizations. Evan takes much of his limited time each year to teach a course on trying cases at NYU School of Law and willingly shares his love of the legal world with

anyone and everyone. His commitment to civic leadership is one we can all aspire to. No matter what hat Evan might be wearing—lawyer, father, grandfather, mentor, partner or board member—one thing is constant. Evan has never stopped teaching, and he approaches every personal and professional endeavor with passion, integrity and humility. For that, generations of Cravath lawyers and their clients are grateful.



**EVAN CHESLER**

## **CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE LLP**