

ISHAN: BEING CREATIVE, BUSIER THAN EVER

Ishan Bhabha would be the first to say that his success is due to the good fortune of having tremendous mentors who generously gave him opportunities to shine and his seizing those opportunities when they arrived.

He's also creative, thoughtful, and committed to his clients.

"But perhaps most of all," says Partner David DeBruin, who has served as a mentor to Ishan, "he approaches his matters with a great love for his work and life in general. There is nothing more fun and enjoyable than working on a case as a colleague with Ishan!"

Indeed, Ishan doesn't forget the fun. And he recognizes the importance of mentors like David and Partner Ian Gershengorn, chair of the firm's Appellate and Supreme Court Practice.

Ian points out that Ishan himself, a partner since 2017, is a valued mentor to many associates in the firm's Washington, DC office. He

has supervised associates in nearly a dozen court of appeals arguments; often, the associates are doing their first appellate argument.

"That's the thing that's cool about this firm – we're not small, but we're not a multi-thousand-lawyer firm either," Ishan says. "If a junior associate can take ownership over their work, they will get more and more responsibility."

If Ishan has any advice for associates, it's to care about the work product. "Take ownership. Take the extra time to really strive for a work product you're proud of and would put in front of anyone from a fellow associate, to the GC of a major company, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The truth, as I've learned, is

that you never know who will end up reviewing and relying on your work."

Ishan credits mentors for instilling that pride of ownership in him. In addition to David and Ian, Judge Merrick B. Garland of the DC Circuit is another valuable mentor. "I really enjoyed every minute I worked with him, and during that year there were many minutes! I adored him," Ishan recalls.

Ian praises Ishan's skill. He highlights Ishan's work as lead counsel successfully defending a university against a First Amendment challenge to its bias response policies. Ishan defeated a motion for a preliminary injunction in district court and then argued for the university on appeal in the Seventh Circuit.



He was lead counsel for another university in a similar First Amendment challenge, filing a response to a motion for a preliminary injunction that led the plaintiff to drop the lawsuit.

“Unsurprisingly, clients love him,” says Ian. “The same gifts of judgment, intellect, and communication skills that serve him so well, both in oral argument and in litigation, generally serve him well with clients. He takes their problems as his own, and he works creatively and tirelessly to develop creative solutions.”

“First and foremost,” Ishan says, “I want to be creative.”

For Ishan, there’s never been a better time to be creative. He’s busier than ever.

For example, he co-chairs the firm’s growing Education Practice with Partner [Terri Mascherin](#). Clients look to the team to help them navigate complicated matters around re-opening campuses in the wake of the pandemic.

Work in the education space often involves issues related to equity and justice – including numerous amicus

briefs the firm has filed on behalf of more than 100 colleges and universities on issues related to immigration policy.

Education is a natural fit. Ishan’s parents – his father Indian and his mother Italian – are both academics. Born in London, he came to the United States in seventh grade, when his father became a professor at the University of Chicago. He has spent his life in college towns, including those that are home to schools like Harvard, the University of Chicago, Princeton, and Georgetown. “I have an affinity for being around college campuses,” he says. “I guess it’s in my genes.”

Ishan is a member of the Appellate and Supreme Court Practice, with his practice focused on complex issues of regulatory, constitutional, and commercial law. In 2019, *Law360* named him a “Rising Star” in the appellate category.

An appellate practice demands a range of skills, and Ishan loves the “pure challenge of it.” Among high-profile challenges he’s pursued: fighting to preserve the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

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program. In June, the US Supreme Court ruled against the Trump administration’s bid to rescind DACA, agreeing with firm arguments that the government’s decision to end the program was arbitrary and capricious.

More recently, he has been working on a case that challenges Georgia’s attempts to suppress voters, particularly African American voters.

He has practiced in appellate courts nationwide and argued once before the US Supreme Court.

“I didn’t feel nervous, just excited,” he says of his high court experience. “It was something I worked towards for eight months – or perhaps in reality for since I’d entered law school – and it was among the 30 most fun minutes of my legal career.”