

Meet Our Associates – Jeff Zalesin

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After clerking in Washington D.C., Jeff joined Selendy Gay for its diverse practice opportunities and strong mentorship programs, as well as its commitment to public service. He quickly took ownership in significant parts of his cases, gaining experience with depositions, trial appearances, and oral arguments.

Three years later, Jeff was a crucial part of the team that secured a \$1 billion victory against Johnson & Johnson after a ten-day trial.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your career before joining Selendy Gay.

My first job after college was as a journalist at *Law360*, the legal news website. That led me to law school, which led to a one-year fellowship with Campaign Legal Center, a DC-based nonprofit where I litigated cases about voting rights, redistricting, campaign finance, and the 2020 Census. After that, I was a law clerk to Judge Christopher R. Cooper of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

How did you first hear about Selendy Gay and what made you want to join the firm?

While clerking (during the COVID pandemic), I periodically received invitations to law firms' virtual recruiting events. I ignored most of them. But I was intrigued to receive one from a small but growing New York firm that pitched itself as offering exactly what I was looking for: strong mentorship and growth opportunities, a diverse practice, a commitment to public service, and a team of top-notch litigators who would be my colleagues and role models. After speaking with several Selendy Gay partners and associates, I became confident that this firm would be the right fit for me.

What has stood out to you about the firm?

When I joined this firm, I remember being struck by how hard we worked to master the facts of our complex cases. I've come to see this as one of our signature advantages: we go into depositions, motion hearings, and trials meticulously prepared because we sweat the factual details in advance. This drives outstanding results in both commercial and pro bono matters.

It's also been my experience that Selendy Gay outperforms other firms at providing substantive opportunities to junior and midlevel associates. This includes depositions, trial appearances, and oral arguments. Just as important, it applies to how our case teams run day-to-day: everyone's ideas are important and can shape strategy, regardless of seniority.

On a personal level, our firm also stands out to me for its welcoming community of associates, many of whom have become my close friends.

What was it like to be a part of the trial team representing Fortis Advisors, the former stockholders of Auris Health?

The Auris case was the biggest challenge of my career, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. We had the privilege of representing Auris's former shareholders in litigation alleging that Johnson & Johnson defrauded Auris into a merger, then failed to make the contractually required efforts to obtain eight regulatory clearances that would trigger post-closing payments. The factual record was vast and involved complex engineering, regulatory, and financial issues. Our team worked tirelessly to build a compelling and meticulously supported narrative, which we then distilled to fit into a ten-day trial. It was a hugely rewarding success: the Court awarded \$1 billion in damages and expressly agreed with our genuine belief in the "transformative potential of Auris's robots."

My role in the Auris case was a great opportunity for professional growth. Before joining the team, I had never taken a deposition, led a witness's preparation, or examined a witness at trial. After joining, I not only had these new experiences, but did so in ways that allowed me to take ownership of significant parts of the case.

How have you grown professionally during your time at Selendy Gay?

Compared to when I joined Selendy Gay three years ago, I am far more confident in my strategic judgment and more willing to take calculated risks. That comes from practice: I am involved in shaping client strategy every day, whether that means formulating positions on discovery issues or shaping the presentation of evidence at trial. I have also grown more adept at oral advocacy that requires me to think on my feet, even though I am naturally more comfortable with written advocacy. Finally, as I become a senior associate, Selendy Gay is supporting my efforts to improve my management and mentorship skills.

What are you most looking forward to in the next phase of your career at Selendy Gay?

Every case is an adventure, and I'm excited for the many challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in my diverse range of commercial and pro bono matters. Across all my cases, I'm looking forward to watching and encouraging the professional growth of our talented junior associates.

Attorney

- Jeff Zalesin