

# Do Smaller Firms Full of Trial Junkies Have a Better Chance of Attracting and Retaining Future Trial Junkies?

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Speaking with Ross Todd at The American Lawyer, founding partner Faith Gay and managing partner Maria Ginzburg discussed the advantages Selendy Gay has in the war for future trial talent.

*(Excerpts of this article were originally published in The American Lawyer)*

Put yourself in the shoes of a young lawyer wanting to be where the action is and actually get some courtroom reps. A steady flow of cases actually going to trial and a relatively low partner-to-associate ratio would be appealing to an ambitious, newly minted attorney focused on becoming a trial attorney, right?

I recently ran that thought past Selendy Gay founder Faith Gay and Maria Ginzburg, managing partner of the firm of about 50 litigators all based in New York.

"I think the model works," said Ginzburg of the elite, litigation-centric boutique model's ability to attract, retain and train lawyers capable of handling stand-up courtroom work. "The top [recruits] are considering firms like ours because they get more opportunities. And at the same time, they're really great attorneys. So, in a few years, they function at a much higher level than if they were at a more hierarchical firm."

Of the six cases the firm has scheduled for trial in the next 10 months, Gay could already point to a couple — a high-dollar matrimonial case and a channel-stuffing case in the healthcare industry — where the firm has client signoff for associates to handle fact witnesses and possibly experts. "That is a very different situation compared to most firms. The big firm diet tends to be humongous cases that settled and then you get some experience going into court on pro bono cases," Gay said.

"It takes forever to learn how to try a case, right?" said Gay. "It is a late-maturing sport."

All the more reason for a young lawyer to want to get reps in early.

Ginzburg says that she tells young lawyers she's interviewing to ask a question that she wishes she would have been armed with when she was coming out of law school: How many trials has your office handled this year? She said when she eventually learned to ask that question as a lateral candidate, she was amazed at the answers she'd get. She said there were a number of "big prestigious firms" where there hadn't been a trial for years. "Everything settled. That's just the way it is," she said.

"When you're a litigator, you have to see the whole. You have to do a case from start to finish before you have judgment," she said. "If you're at a firm where trials come around once a decade, it gets really discouraging."

"We're trial junkies because we really like what we do," Ginzburg added. "It's not the easiest job, but we have a passion for it."

And passion can be magnetic.

Read the full article in [The American Lawyer](#).

## Attorneys

- Faith Gay
- Maria Ginzburg