

## Rising Star: Covington & Burling's Tyler Evans

By Matt Perez

*Law360 (July 8, 2021, 3:02 PM EDT)* -- Tyler Evans of Covington & Burling counseled top health care companies in contracting work with the government amid the COVID-19 pandemic, including Johnson & Johnson and its \$1 billion agreement to produce 100 million doses of its vaccine, earning him a spot among the top life sciences attorneys under age 40 honored as Law360 Rising Stars.

### ***HIS BIGGEST DEAL:***

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Evans has been involved in helping to negotiate contracts with the federal government in the production and sale of therapeutics, diagnostics and medical devices. He has assisted Moderna, Regeneron, Merck, Gilead and Lilly, as well as the pharmaceutical industry trade association [PhRMA](#), through numerous issues over the past year-plus.

His biggest deal, however, came as lead counsel for Johnson & Johnson during contract negotiations with the U.S. government that resulted in a \$1 billion agreement in August 2020 to produce 100 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine.

One of the more challenging aspects, he said, was simply the speed at which things needed to come together.

"The accelerated timeline was definitely interesting because you had multiple people all speaking to the government in various areas at the same time, and the government is trying to get everything done as quickly as possible," Evans said. "So it was a lot of day-after-day calls with the government, new issues coming up all the time as negotiations went through, and then I think also just the number of novel legal issues that came up."

### ***WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:***

Contract work can be complex, something Evans finds interesting and motivating.



**Tyler Evans**  
Covington & Burling

Age: 34  
 Home base: Washington, D.C.  
 Position: Partner  
 Law school: George Washington University Law School  
 First job after law school: Law clerk for U.S. Court of Federal Claims Judge Marian Blank Horn

"I always love getting a new novel question," he said.

In the past year, he navigated challenges around the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act — used to provide immunity from liability for individuals and organizations involved in medical countermeasures — and the Defense Production Act, which allows the president to order private companies to deliver supplies for national defense.

He also handled agreements under the Paycheck Protection Program, which provided loans to businesses during the pandemic. Since the loans were a form of government contract, Evans was well-positioned to handle the new questions presented by the program.

All of his experience in this corner of the law over the past six or seven years "suddenly became relevant in an entirely new program that was important to everybody," he said. "So just going through all those new issues, those kinds of projects or things that come up, really motivate me to put in the extra time."

#### ***HIS PROUDEST MOMENT:***

Evans joined Covington in 2013 and became a partner at the firm in late 2020, something he called "very, very important to me."

"I went to Covington immediately after the Court of Federal Claims and have not been anywhere else," he said. "And I think talking to a number of other people, just understanding how the cultures work in terms of how different practice groups work together and things like that, Covington absolutely fits my approach to practicing. It's very collaborative. And so being elevated there was kind of a big moment in my career."

#### ***WHY HE'S A LIFE SCIENCES ATTORNEY:***

Much of Evans' practice is in government contracts, the result of him taking a rare program at George Washington University and clerking for the Court of Federal Claims, both of which focused on government contract work.

Life sciences became a facet of his practice after joining Covington, which had a strong focus in the area that intersected with his contract work.

"That's kind of evolved over time where now I do a lot of nontraditional agreements with the government, where you're negotiating, for example, a clinical trial agreement or a research agreement," Evans said. "It's not your traditional, going out and buying planes. It's a much more collaborative approach. And so I think over time, I was fortunate enough to work with the right people at Covington and have the access to that client base in the life sciences industry."

#### ***HOW HE SEES HIS PRACTICE CHANGING OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS:***

Evans anticipates biodefense becoming a focal point for "quite some time." In the past, his work in the area, including contracts centered around the Zika virus and Ebola, were more "one-off" projects that came up every couple of months.

However, a pandemic at such a mass scale — with an estimated 182 million reported cases and 3.9 million reported deaths — could result in more focus on biodefense, according to Evans.

"Going forward, there's going to be a lot more investment in research and development in biodefense areas and making sure we're ready for anything that happens and have the infrastructure in place," he

said. "And so, I think a lot of my work will probably even further go down in the field there, in terms of just the type of contract and the government's commitment to these longer-term relationships."

— *As told to Matt Perez*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2021 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,400 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2021, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.*

---

All Content © 2003-2021, Portfolio Media, Inc.