

Thrown Into The Deep End, These Summers Made A Splash

By **Cara Salvatore**

Law360 (August 25, 2023, 4:22 PM EDT) -- Major trial roles rarely go to summers, who spend around 10 weeks with a firm before heading back to law school. But Law360 spoke to three law firms that took the training of these temporary ranks to another level.

Two Latham & Watkins LLP summers had that same type of tutelage this year when "amazing circumstances" cropped up, according to partner Michele Johnson, who co-led a \$26 million trade secrets trial win in California with partner Eric Leon.

When the summer cohort arrived, Yiyang Wang, Alisha Agrawal and Jiayi Liu were put to work preparing to litigate client OWLink Technology Inc.'s claims that rival Cypress Technology Co. had breached a contract and misappropriated trade secrets.

It wasn't till a bit later that Johnson and Leon realized that two of their picks, Wang and Liu, had the gift of speaking Mandarin — "when it turns out every witness in the trial spoke Mandarin," Johnson said.

That came in handy in the summers' initial roles of designating deposition transcript testimony to be used at trial.

Throughout those transcripts, the English portions were the work of certified translators. But Wang and Liu, reading the Mandarin alongside the English, "could interpret nuances in the testimony," Johnson said. In one example, "the summers were able to help us identify the translated word was 'rush,' but the nuanced word was more like pressure that the party was experiencing," Johnson said.

One of those witnesses ended up testifying live as an adverse witness called by Latham, ratcheting up the importance of Wang and Liu's help in real time. They were huddling on every break to get the summers' counsel regarding missed nuances, Leon said.

He called it simply "an added bonus" on a smaller trial team where every member's work was critical.

--Editing by Karin Roberts.