

One-on-One With **Hicks Johnson**

One-on-One With Hicks Johnson is a series featuring conversations with our attorneys about their legal practice and career path. Next, we talk with Hicks Johnson Partner Persis Dean.

One-on-One With Hicks Johnson Partner Persis Dean



[Persis Dean](#) is a partner at Hicks Johnson. She focuses her practice on complex commercial and energy litigation. Below, she discusses how the firm's collaborative culture leads to better outcomes for clients and offers a piece of advice to lawyers at the beginning of their careers..

Q: **What made you choose a boutique over the Big Law path, and what made you choose Hicks Johnson in particular?**

A: I was looking for a firm where collegiality and mutual respect are part of the culture. Not only is it nice to be friends with your colleagues, but it really does improve the quality of everyone's work. I could see right away that Hicks Johnson was a firm where the lawyers genuinely respected each other and liked working together. I also liked the firm's size. The teams are lean, and the cases are very complex. That means there's nowhere to "hide," so to speak. Everyone has to learn fast and contribute meaningfully to the work. That was the kind of challenge and engagement I was looking for.

Q: **What aspect of your work for clients do you find most satisfying?**

A: I find it challenging and rewarding when I can successfully align the legal strategy with the business reality. Essentially, that is what we are trying to do on every matter. You have to understand more

than just the contract or the claim; it's about understanding the broader commercial context, what the client is trying to achieve, and helping them get there. When you can craft a legal solution that works in support of those business goals, you know you are truly delivering something that is of value to the client. In many cases, we start with a situation that feels very messy, but through the work that we do we can ultimately create a path to clarity, where the legal and business outcomes align.

Q:

What have you learned so far about business development?

A:

I've learned that developing business is really about building trust with your clients, and so I try to do the best work that I can, be curious about what my clients need, and always be thinking of how I can help them solve those problems. Beyond the work itself, finding genuine points of connection (whether through shared community involvement or similar family experiences) can also help build that trust. These personal connections often lay the groundwork for long-term relationships that may eventually lead to business, either directly or through referrals. I have also come to appreciate the importance of being intentional about what you are known for in the legal community, because you never know who might hear about your work and pass your name along.

Q:

What do you think sets Hicks Johnson apart from its peers?

A:

This is a firm of trial lawyers who want to try cases, and that shapes everything we do. We have a small team by design — that is intentional, because it means that everyone working on a matter owns their piece of the case. This creates accountability, but it also creates a sense of ownership that is not always present on larger teams. We have a team of people who are really committed to achieving the objective and getting the best results possible, and they understand that their contribution is crucial to that endeavor.

Q:

What qualities and skills do you most value in your HJ colleagues?

A:

At a firm like this, where the cases are complex and the teams are lean, collaboration is critical. What I value most in my colleagues is their generosity with their time and knowledge. In preparation for a recent hearing, I worked with a group of attorneys who helped me think through strategy by reviewing the pleadings and running a mock Q&A session. Their input helped me refine my approach and ultimately deliver a stronger argument. That kind of teamwork is typical here. Everyone is invested in each other's success, and we all understand that a positive outcome on any case is good for the firm overall.

Q: *What is one piece of advice you would give a young lawyer starting out?*

A: It's easy when you're starting out to feel insecure because there's so much you don't know, and you see what your peers are doing and achieving. The best thing you can do is stay focused on doing good work, building your skills, and learn from each assignment. If you keep improving and stay consistent, people will notice and that's how you can earn better opportunities and take on more meaningful work.

About Hicks Johnson PLLC

Hicks Johnson PLLC is a premier boutique law firm with offices in Houston and Chicago, specializing in complex commercial litigation, arbitration, and appeals. Known for delivering results, our trial and appellate lawyers are well-versed in handling high-stakes cases.



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