

# 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 Lori Arakaki.

## One-on-One With Hicks Johnson Partner Lori Arakaki



[Lori Arakaki](#) is a partner at Hicks Johnson who focuses her practice on complex commercial litigation. Below, she discusses what she likes about the culture of a boutique firm, and how a variety of backgrounds and perspectives yields more creative solutions for clients.

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

**A:** As I considered where to build my career, I was looking for a place where I could both develop my skills and make lasting connections with clients. I knew I wanted to find a firm that married top-quality work with the flexibility to be able to serve your client well and customize the solutions they actually need. I chose Hicks Johnson because it was immediately clear that everybody was someone I would want to work with. The lawyers here are incredibly smart, and they have a lot of experience actually going to trial. The focus on excellence and creativity make them great colleagues, and these qualities also build trust with clients.

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

**A:** I genuinely enjoy finding creative solutions for clients. Obviously, it's always satisfying to deliver a win in court. But even just finding a creative solution to a problem that leverages my and my team's experience, something that creates long-term positive outcomes for the client in their business, is an important way we partner with our clients and continue to develop our relationships with them.

**Q: *What have you learned so far about business development?***

**A:** In a boutique firm, we are all responsible for developing business for the firm. That can be intimidating because “getting business” is an amorphous idea. Younger lawyers know it involves building their network, but they may not know how to take a more targeted approach. I have learned so much from watching how my partners view their client relationships and create opportunities to grow them. They take a long-term view that is always focused on how we can be of service and help our current clients achieve their business goals. With careful thought, and by always keeping the focus on the clients’ needs, these relationships can grow over time in an organic way, and our role can expand.

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

**A:** The first thing that comes to mind is the people. Of course, everyone says this about their firm, but here it is really true. The lawyers at Hicks Johnson are just nice, genuine, kind people who are very intelligent and take great pride in their work. Mutual respect and collegiality really matter, especially with a smaller team. People work with their doors open. Everybody is willing to bounce ideas off one another. We are also different from other firms in that we have the willingness and ability to go to trial when needed.

And then we just have a breadth and depth of experience that makes our work for clients stronger than what comes out of other firms. The lawyers here come from many different backgrounds and perspectives — different law schools and parts of the country, with experience at many different kinds of firms and in government — as a result, we approach problem solving in different ways. This leads to better ideas for both clients and for the development of the firm.

**Q: *What advice would you give to a lawyer just beginning his or her career?***

**A:** Take ownership of your role on any case you are working on. At this stage, you won’t be able to take ownership of the whole matter, but you can take full responsibility for the portion assigned to you. Provide good ideas and show good judgment in assessing the bigger picture in order to make decisions about where your work fits in. That’s how you can really bring value to the team. I am fortunate to work with many junior colleagues who possess these skills.

### 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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