

Law Clerks Steal the Spotlight in 2024 Lawyer of the Year Award



In a competition featuring legal heavyweights such as a renowned special counsel and a lawyer celebrated for their zealous advocacy, the 2024 Lawyer of the Year Award produced a surprising yet inspiring winner. The race, conducted by *Above the Law*, showcased the legal community's brightest stars and revealed an underdog's triumph.

A Look Back at Past Winners

Since its inception, the *Lawyer of the Year* award has recognized influential figures shaping the legal landscape. Here's a snapshot of past recipients:

2007: Loyola 2L
2008: President Barack Obama
2009: Justice Sonia Sotomayor
2010: Kyle McEntee and Patrick Lynch (Law School Transparency)
2011: Professor Paul Campos
2012: Chief Justice John Roberts
2013: Roberta Kaplan
2014: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
2015: Bryan "Law Hawk" Wilson
2016: Don McGahn
2018: Michael Avenatti
2019: Christopher "Eat a Bowl of Dicks" Hook
2020: Marc Elias
2021: Mathew Rosengart
2022: Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson

The 2024 Competition: Numbers That Speak

This year's competition was decisive. The winner, Ryan Protter, a recent law school graduate and current law clerk for the New Jersey Appellate Division, secured more than 50% of the votes. Protter's margin was significant, claiming nearly 300 more votes than the runner-up. By contrast, the second-place contender earned 26% of the total tally.

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Meet the Winner: Ryan Protter

Ryan Protter's victory reflects the power of wit, determination, and humor. Referring to himself as the "dark horse candidate" on LinkedIn, Protter joked in his self-nomination that he was "completely unqualified" for the title, adding that "far less qualified people have won far more important elections this year." His candid approach and light-hearted self-awareness resonated with voters.

Protter's achievement speaks volumes about the legal community's appreciation for authenticity and a good laugh in a competitive field. Winning the *Lawyer of the Year* award is a testament to his ability to connect with his peers on a relatable level.

Celebrating the Runner-Up: Aliza Shatzman

Aliza Shatzman, founder and president of the Legal Accountability Project, claimed the silver medal in this year's competition. Her contributions to federal law clerks' transparency and accountability have been groundbreaking.

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Shatzman's crowning achievement this year was the launch of the Centralized Clerkships Database, described as a "Glassdoor for Judges." This tool empowers

fairness in the judiciary.

Shatzman's efforts, which required tremendous dedication and resilience, have fundamentally transformed how clerkship applicants navigate their careers. Her work has earned widespread acclaim and established her as a formidable advocate for systemic reform.

A Salute to All Finalists

The 2024 *Lawyer of the Year* competition featured an impressive lineup of contenders who embody excellence and innovation. While Ryan Protter and Aliza Shatzman claimed the top honors, every finalist deserves recognition for their contributions to the legal field.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate the achievements of Protter, Shatzman, and their fellow nominees, the competition serves as a reminder of the diverse talents and perspectives shaping the legal world. Here's to another year of groundbreaking accomplishments and inspiring stories in the profession.

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