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2019 Ones to Watch: Benjamin Williams



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What do you consider to be your greatest professional accomplishment in the past 12 months?

My greatest professional accomplishment in the past year is joining one of the largest (and best) NYC real estate law firms as a member, and starting their Property Tax Department. In just four months, we've grown this real estate tax certiorari practice from zero cases to now

representing hundreds of properties throughout NYC. I'm fortunate that the firm is so supportive and has the same goal of providing the best client service.

I'm excited for the future of the firm and this practice. Watch out for us—we have several cutting-edge property tax solutions in development.

Who or what do you attribute to your success?

I'm successful because I love what I do. I invent creative ways to provide greater property tax reductions more efficiently. I enjoy teaching clients how the City's tax system works so they can better plan for the future. Lately we've been using "big data" to help clients make evidence-based business decisions regarding their sophisticated property tax problems. For example, we've been optimizing the timing of 421-a exemption and ICAP tax abatement benefit pro-

grams, advising on RPIE and Tax Commission income & expense reporting, and negotiating advantageous real estate tax escalation clauses in leases.

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry?

To be successful, you must understand the business so you can be your property taxpayer-client's trusted advisor. Always read the real estate news, especially the *NYREJ*. Follow legislators on social media to learn the development climate and what changes to expect in the laws. I got started in this career as an engineer-appraiser. I wore a hardhat and toured hundreds of properties around the world. I learned about property economics by walking and talking with the people—building managers, operators, engineers, and superintendents.

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