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You served as lead trial counsel in *Young v. Monsanto* and in September 2024, your team won a complete defense jury verdict for Monsanto after a four-week trial in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. The jury found that plaintiff, Ryan Young, failed to prove that Roundup was the cause of his injuries. Can you tell us about your trial strategy?

My strategy was simple: Teach the jury about the scientific history of Monsanto's weed killing product and the science of Non-Hodgkin lymphoma. That was the key to determining if Monsanto caused the plaintiff's cancer.

I reinforced that message during my opening statements, and during witness examinations, including of expert witnesses on cross-examinations. I made clear that the plaintiff deserved the sympathy of everyone in the courtroom and noted that many people do not trust companies like Monsanto. In my closing argument, I didn't ask the jury to choose one side, but to follow the facts, the law, and the science.

Another important point I want to make about my trial strategy is that I am only ever as good as the team that supports me. In this case, that team included up-and-coming trial lawyer and my partner Michelle Ramirez, along with the support of recently promoted partners Jaime Simon and Morgan Branch, associates Elizabeth Ertle, Amanda Blau, Tyler VanderMolen and Mike Rowley—all Sidley rising stars.

The jury reached a full defense verdict in under three hours in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas—one that bucked a trend in which high-dollar verdicts have occurred in product liability trials over the past two years, including in Monsanto Roundup trials.

Can you describe a major hurdle that happened during the course of this trial? How did you overcome it?

The way this trial was scheduled, I was originally scheduled to roll right from a previous trial into this one, both in Philadelphia. Ultimately, a summary judgment order right before the previous trial was supposed to begin caused that trial to come off the calendar, giving us a few weeks free before the Young trial. But heading up to that point, we were preparing for both trials at once. I managed this by having separate teams working together on key strategy points and witnesses so that each trial plan was moving forward in tandem.

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When did you first know you wanted to be a trial lawyer? What clicked for you?

Since I was a small child, I had an innate, very pronounced, sense of justice. It often manifested in my staunch defense of my position when I felt I had been wrongly accused of something my brother did, or I remember one quite heated debate between a little third grader and the principal about whether I had spit on the ground on the playground (I had not). As I got older, I channeled my beliefs into my work, first serving on multiple levels of state and national student council positions and, ultimately, into law school and a career in trial law.

What are the major keys to winning over a jury or a judge?

My strategies for winning over juries and judges are based in the same philosophy: I always know what I'm talking about when I speak, and I always show respect to the court, no matter whether I agree with the decisions and no matter whether I believe I am being treated fairly. This builds trust and respect. Those are the two most important things I want to foster in a judge and a jury.

What is the best advice you give young trial lawyers?

"Trials are a team sport. Never forget it, no matter what your ambition is. You will always be better as part of a strong team than on your own—and giving credit to your teammates will always reap benefits."