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# Holwell Shuster & Goldberg LLP

## Madison Gardiner, Associate, and Priyanka Timblo, Partner— Commercial Litigation

As an associate at HSG, Madison Gardiner advises both plaintiff- and defense-side clients in complex commercial cases. She also has experience with matters involving corporate restructurings and has represented creditors' committees and other parties in large Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. She served federal clerkships at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Madison graduated from Harvard Law School and received her B.A. from Vanderbilt University.

Priyanka Timblo is a partner and trial lawyer at HSG who represents clients in high-stakes commercial litigation and arbitration on both sides of the "v." She has particular experience in antitrust and contract disputes and has secured eight- and nine-figure judgments on behalf of her clients in bench and jury trials. Priyanka also serves on HSG's Hiring Committee. She graduated from McGill University Faculty of Law and received her B.A. from the University of Miami.

### Describe your practice area and what it entails.

**Madison:** I work on a diverse range of commercial litigation matters in federal and state court, as well as arbitration. My practice spans the full life cycle of cases, from the pleading stage through discovery, dispositive motions, trials, and appeals. I am currently focused on preparing for a two-week arbitration hearing in Delaware, an eight-week trial in the Southern District of New York, and an appeal before the Second Circuit.

**Priyanka:** My practice is focused on high-stakes commercial litigation of all kinds on both the plaintiff and defense side. Lately, my docket happens to be focused on antitrust defense matters.

### What types of clients do you represent?

**Priyanka:** We are fortunate to count many of the most successful and innovative companies in the country among our clients, such as the payment card network Visa, the insurer Chubb, and the video-game company Valve. We represent smaller companies as well, often as plaintiffs when they are going up against much larger companies. For example, HSG has represented a small New York home goods supplier against Walmart and an aerospace startup against Boeing.

### What types of cases/deals do you work on?

**Madison:** When I started at HSG about a year ago, I joined the Visa antitrust defense team at an exciting stage of the

case: litigating to enforce a \$5.5 billion settlement in various tagalong suits while gearing up for trial in October 2025 against merchants that opted out of the settlement. I am also working on an arbitration in which we represent an industrials company as the claimant in a breach of contract dispute.

**Priyanka:** In 2024, I was one of the two lead trial lawyers in a three-week jury trial against Walmart. The trial took place in Arkansas, Walmart's home turf, and we won a \$101 million jury verdict. That was a classic breach of contract case with a compelling storyline but with a twist: Walmart brought counterclaims that had elements of product liability and fraud, which made it a highly complex case to litigate. In 2022, I was co-lead in contract litigation for a hedge fund against the former billionaire Philip Falcone. We won a \$69.8 million award in a damages trial.

I also have a trial coming up this year. Madison and I are both on the HSG trial team defending Visa in a hotly anticipated antitrust case brought by six large retailers challenging certain rules and processes at the heart of the modern-day payment system.

### How did you choose this practice area?

**Madison:** I began my legal career in the financial restructuring group at Akin. I loved the complexity and fast pace of Chapter 11 proceedings, but I especially enjoyed diving deep into the businesses and stories at issue in each case to creatively and effectively advocate for our clients. After my

clerkships, I was eager to replicate the rigor of my prior firm experience while expanding my practice to encompass a broader range of commercial disputes. At HSG, I am working on a rewardingly diverse set of litigation matters.

**Priyanka:** Earlier in my career, I had a mentor who was a senior antitrust attorney and an innately brilliant trial lawyer. As I learned the ropes, his example ultimately motivated me to deepen my study of antitrust law (while continuing to flex my muscles as a generalist) and to get as much experience as I could on my feet at trial.

### What is a “typical” day like and/or what are some common tasks you perform?

**Madison:** The beauty of my job is that there is no typical day, but I generally split my time between substantive workstreams and big-picture case management. I am almost always working on some type of written work product—lately, deposition and trial examination outlines, an appellate brief, and discovery requests. I have been given the opportunity to take on a leadership role in my cases, so I also actively participate in strategy calls internally and with co-counsel and help manage case priorities.

**Priyanka:** My day starts before dawn, a couple of hours before my kids wake up. I set priorities for the day, coordinate priorities with my teams, and work on pending drafts. In the office, the bulk of my time is taken up by strategy meetings and conference calls with colleagues and clients. In the evenings, I review drafts and catch up on email. Importantly, I try to carve out a couple of days every week for deep work. On those days, I try to avoid calls and meetings (to the extent possible) so I can immerse myself in the facts of my cases.

Then, of course, there are the weeks when I am either at trial or in the run-up to trial, and those weeks look very different!

### What training, classes, experience, or skills development would you recommend to someone who wishes to enter your practice area?

**Priyanka:** It is important that all trial lawyers find their own authentic style. Early on in your career, you should observe as many different styles of taking depositions and witness examinations as possible. Different lawyers, different firms, different levels of experience—it's important to see that there are many ways it can be done well. I would also encourage aspiring trial lawyers to get on-their-feet experience as early as possible. Take advantage of programs that bar associations offer, such as trial training and seminars. At HSG, we make it a priority to give our associates early experience on their feet arguing in court or taking depositions.

### What are some typical tasks that a junior lawyer would perform in this practice area?

**Priyanka:** At HSG, we do not look at class year that closely when assigning projects. Junior lawyers who show that they are capable of punching above their weight will get those assignments early. They might take the pen on drafting important motions and briefs, second-chair depositions, and in many cases, take their first deposition in their first few years at HSG. We have had junior lawyers play central roles on our trial teams, including working closely with witnesses.

### What kinds of experience can summer associates gain at this practice area at your firm?

**Priyanka:** HSG tries to give summer associates the most realistic experience possible. We assign summer associates to a home team for the duration of their time with us. That means they attend all meetings and participate in team workstreams, just like our full-time associates. If there is a court appearance or deposition during their time at the firm, they would attend (and contribute to the preparations) as well.

But they certainly are not restricted to what their home teams are working on, and our summer associates will work on projects across a variety of matters. We want our summer associates to work with as many people as possible within HSG and get exposure to a diverse range of assignments. They might write amicus briefs along with our four former Supreme Court clerks, for example. They also could travel to assist a partner in arguing a motion on a case or deposing a witness.

### What do you like best about your practice area?

**Madison:** As a generalist commercial litigator, there is nothing rote about my practice. I love that I am always encountering new legal issues and case twists that keep me in constant learning mode.

**Priyanka:** I love trial work because it is fundamentally about storytelling—weaving the facts and law together into a narrative that is intended to persuade. I also love trial work because it involves working closely with people: witnesses, clients, and team members alike. You form strong bonds and truly connect, not merely as an incident of the work but because those relationships put you in the best place to win.

### How is practicing litigation in a boutique different from practicing in a large law firm?

**Madison:** The ethos of a boutique like HSG is divide and conquer: Case teams are flat and lean, and from first-year associates on up, every member of the team takes owner-

ship over substantive parts of a case. At HSG, associates are expected to play an active role not only in the execution of tasks but also in case strategy and problem-solving: No one is simply coasting! This fosters a collaborative, tight-knit work environment and enables associates to achieve major career milestones on expedited timelines, including early client exposure.

As a boutique, HSG's open-door culture is quite literal. I regularly find myself in impromptu brainstorming sessions

at my desk with passersby. Our nimble size enables us to have events like firmwide monthly luncheons for associates and partners to keep lines of communication open and help ensure everyone is empowered to succeed. And those successes are shared and celebrated widely because everyone is invested in the firm and our colleagues. It is a wonderful place to be.

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*Priyanka Timblo, Partner*