

GLOBAL AWARDS 2012

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SETTING THE INDUSTRY STANDARD
FOR PRACTICE EXCELLENCE



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The Americas Award Winners

The US and Canada have similarly modern and sophisticated economic systems. The US has the largest and most technologically developed economy in the world. Business firms in the US enjoy a greater degree of flexibility compared to businesses in other regions in terms of innovation and expansion. While the strategy for most companies in 2011 was about getting back to basics and weathering the storm of unemployment and recession, 2012 has not seen a large amount of economic success for North America.

In 2011, the democrats and the republicans fought for the definitive say on a Senate proposal to raise the US debt ceiling. The offices of Standard and Poor's were working overtime to finalise a report which would soon strip the United States of its prized AAA credit rating. According to S&P, the rating downgrade reflected the belief that the soon to be finalised plan to stabilise the country's medium and short term debt problems was likely to fall short. Credit rating agency Fitch then reaffirmed the US's triple-A sovereign rating stating that: "The key pillars of the US's exceptional credit-worthiness remain intact."

The country – and its currency, which modern economies have set their very existence to for the past 70 years – has now revealed a very large weakness in its armour. The United States House of Congress and House of Representatives is now gearing up to cut its deficit and make hard decisions regarding budget cuts and public spending reform, keeping in mind the Republican Party has already voiced a refusal to entertain any suggestions of new taxes. Since 2008, the US's debt has increased by US\$6 Trillion.

Canada is equipped with a high tech industrial economy, and resembles the US in its market orientated economic system, production pattern and high living standards. Canada's economy, which has outperformed that of the US since the beginning of the financial crisis, is showing signs of slowing down. The housing market boom, which helped drive the country's recovery from recession, is starting to stall.

However, the housing market is being replaced by other drivers such as business investment in machinery and equipment, and Canada is expected to lead the G7 nations in economic growth for another year at least. This can be attributed to several factors, including the country's sound banking system, its abundance of resources and its lower levels of government debt.

The Caribbean has not escaped the global financial crisis, but the region withstood the difficulties more successfully than in past downturns. This is due to better macroeconomic management, more efficient structural policies and a vigorous business sector.

The majority of the Caribbean's import-export business is with the United States and most of the region's tourists are US citizens. This means that the US economy has a great deal of influence on the Caribbean, particularly as tourism is the primary industry of the region.

Central America is the central geographic region of the Americas. Historically, Central American trade has been very dependent on two products: coffee and bananas. Most of these exports went to the United States, which created a strong trade link between the United States and Central America. In recent decades, Central

America has had success in diversifying its exports and diversifying its trading partners.

South America's economy is heavily reliant on the export of goods. On an exchange rate basis, Brazil, the seventh largest economy in the world and the second largest in the Americas, leads the way in total amount of exports at \$137.8 billion, followed by Chile at \$58.12 billion and Argentina with \$46.46 billion.

Brazil continues to be a most attractive emerging market country for private equity investors in the next 12 months, according to a survey by the Emerging Markets Private Equity Association (EMPE). A recent white paper from Siguler Guff, Private Equity Opportunities in the BRICs and Beyond, notes that investment opportunities in Brazil, Russia, India, and China are likely to dominate future EMPE fundraising. The BRIC countries already rank in the top 12 global economies and are projected to be in the top six by 2018, the report said.

The reasons for Brazil's success in this field can be attributed to low setup costs in comparison to competitor countries, commitment to fiscal stability, responsible state policies that encourage investment and a large domestic demand for products and services. An important factor adding to the positive situation in Brazil and other emerging economies has been the currency appreciation against the Euro and the US Dollar.

The rate of economic recovery in South America for the remainder of 2012 is expected to be significant, particularly due to increasing trade with China and the US. Other countries such as South Korea, Vietnam, Russia and India are also targeting the region as a viable investment and development proposition. Currently, governments experiencing growth are keeping an eye on inflation so as not to scare off potential foreign investors.

Renewable energy sectors in particular are giving South America new opportunities for foreign investors seeking to boost their respective nation's energy resources. Other factors have influenced the regions recovery, including the rebound of commodity prices and the fiscal stimulus measures supporting domestic demand.

Public-private partnership initiatives are also moving at a more rapid pace in South America than in the US, where investments can meet the growing demands of infrastructure development.

Takeovers in Latin America are off to the best start in at least a decade, bucking a global slump, as economic recoveries in Brazil and Mexico spur consolidation in the telecommunications, food and commodities industries.



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For The Best Federal Criminal Defence ... Follow "The Road Not Taken", Robert Frost

NiaLena Caravazos has earned the reputation nationally and internationally as one of the top federal criminal defence lawyers in Philadelphia. She is known for not being afraid to separate her controversial client list which has included CEOs, high-ranking government officials, medical doctors, lawyers, alleged mobsters and drug traffickers, Arab Americans, and many other fellow citizens while fighting strategically, creatively and relentlessly both in and out of court. In the words of her federal clients, Ms Caravazos is: "the person who gave me a new life...fighting the prosecution like a rabid pitbull," and "is not your typical attorney...she will go well beyond her professional mandate and help you as a person...she will defend your rights and protect you when the prosecution attempts to exploit your weaknesses."

Ms Caravazos is humbled and honoured not only by the praise from clients, but also by the recognition from colleagues. Ms Caravazos has

been repeatedly honoured by peers as a "Pennsylvania Super Lawyer" and was recently selected as the only female criminal defence attorney in Pennsylvania invited to join the "Top 100 Trial Lawyers", where membership is obtained by special invitation from The National Trial Lawyers only to those who exemplify superior qualifications of leadership, reputation, influence, stature and profile as trial lawyers.

Ms Caravazos was the youngest and only female attorney to defend a reputed mafia figure in the nearly five-month federal trial of United States v. Merlino and, following her client's acquittal of RICO and attempted murder charges, her closing argument was selected among nationwide submissions and spotlighted by the Center for Criminal Justice Advocacy. Ms Caravazos was also the only female member of the defence representing Senator Vincent Fumo, long regarded as the most powerful politician in Pennsylvania, in his five-month high-profile federal political corruption trial, where she was the co-author of an emergency motion that made headlines in The New York Times and ABC News.

Ms Caravazos is often lead counsel in sophisticated multi-defendant cases and has substantial experience in extremely complicated high-profile federal criminal cases involving extensive electronic surveillance and wiretaps.

Described by Washington, DC lawyer, Mark Schamel, as "a woman at the top of her game," Ms Caravazos is known for thinking outside the box, for not taking no for an answer, and for taking "the road less travelled by" (Robert Frost). She is also known for her intensely personal and innovative approach, expressed best by one of her clients as follows: "She sees me as a person and not a criminal ... undoubtedly one of her strongest weapons in the courtroom."

US - Islamic Finance Law Firm of the Year in Washington, DC



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PATTON BOGGS LLP

Patton Boggs LLP is an international law firm, based in Washington, DC, with a diverse range of practice areas focused on business, foreign sovereign representation, corporate finance, public-private and infrastructure financings, public policy, litigation, administrative and regulatory law, intellectual property and bankruptcy and liquidation laws. The strength of our legal practice is grounded in the exceptional capabilities of our more than 600 lawyers and other professionals who concentrate in nearly 40 legal practice areas at offices throughout the United States and in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Patton Boggs is at the forefront of international law firms working in the complex field of Shariah-compliant finance and investment. Attorneys in the firm's international finance and business practices, including attorneys in the firm's Washington, DC and Middle Eastern offices, work closely to develop strate-

gies to assist our clients with financings and other transactions that comply with Islamic law. Our experience includes dealing with all major Islamic finance structures, including the issuance of sukuk and the structuring of ijara, istisna'a, musharaka, mudaraba and murabaha transactions. Our Islamic finance attorneys have served as counsel to a number of Shariah-compliant investment funds and capital providers for businesses controlled by such funds on a broad range of real estate, infrastructure and other financings. On the regulatory side, our attorneys have advised in government-to-government negotiations intended to expand the range of Islamic banking products and services and improve governance and transparency in Islamic financing, as well as simplification of Shariah-compliant accounting, reporting and approval requirements.

Patton Boggs has been honored as a finalist for the "Best Islamic Finance Law Firm" at the Islamic Business and Finance Awards in Dubai – one of very few non-Middle East-based institutions to qualify as a finalist in any category for these awards, which celebrate corporate and individual excellence in the global Islamic finance industry. Patton Boggs is a leader in Islamic finance, supporting internal development projects and overseas investments for our clients throughout the MENA region.

Our clients, serviced from our Washington and MENA offices, include sovereign wealth funds, as well as US and international financial institutions and commercial enterprises wishing to take advantage of various Islamic finance structures in today's competitive world.

Our attorneys have published numerous articles regarding Islamic finance and have participated in panels throughout the world addressing issues of Islamic finance to audiences in the Middle East, Europe and the United States.