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# TRAILBLAZERS

## LITIGATION

### KEVIN PUVALOWSKI

SHEPPARD, MULLIN, RICHTER & HAMPTON

**PIONEER SPIRIT** Kevin Puvalowski always knew he wanted to be a litigator. "I'm competitive, and I enjoy trying to win my case. I believe that litigators or tax lawyers are born that way."

**TRAILS BLAZED** Puvalowski recently scored a complete victory on behalf of Abacus Federal Savings Bank. "It was the biggest trial accomplishment of my career." Abacus and 11 former employees were charged with conspiracy and substantive fraud charges. "It was the only bank to go to trial on criminal charges in connection with the financial crisis and the first bank indicted by the Manhattan district attorney's office since 1991." Puvalowski had 28 counts dismissed against Abacus, and after a four-month trial, the jury acquitted on the remaining 80 counts. "In terms of real importance, Abacus was the first bank to be indicted and survive in a long, long time. It was one of those rare situations where the client is willing to take it to the mat." Before joining Sheppard Mullin, Puvalowski served as deputy special inspector general in the Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program. "At first it was just Inspector General Barofsky and me. Every day was high stakes. We had to deal with the press and banks and Congress. We were building an organization from scratch. We didn't even have wastebaskets. It was fun, important and challenging all at the same."

**FUTURE EXPLORATIONS** "Fewer and fewer cases are getting tried, both criminal and civil. If I had to guess, I think it will reverse to some extent." He predicts more companies like Abacus will push back against government overreach and refuse to settle. "More people hopefully will realize that the best place to settle a dispute is in front of a smart judge. They are finding that arbitration can be just as expensive and time-consuming as litigation."

