

Rising Star: Susman Godfrey's Rocco Magni

By **Cara Salvatore**

Law360 (September 20, 2019, 4:30 PM EDT) -- Susman Godfrey's Rocco Magni has amassed victories over his career including assisting in the largest verdict ever awarded in Bexar County, Texas, after a jury agreed that a Quicken Loans affiliate brazenly stole proprietary data recipes for home appraisals and comparisons from another company, earning a spot among the top trial lawyers under age 40 honored as Law360 Rising Stars.

THE BIGGEST CASE HIS CAREER:

Magni said the Quicken Loans case took the cake by far. He was given responsibility for certain key depositions, trial examinations and discovery tasks in the case, among other things. Susman's client, the home appraisal app HouseCanary, won \$706 million when a jury found that a Quicken Loans affiliate — then called Title Source, now called Amrock — took HouseCanary's appraisal algorithms.

“It was the trial of a lifetime because it was so fun,” Magni said. “For some reason, their witnesses were willing to stick their necks out and go out on a ledge for positions that were very contrary to evidence ... I still have [one] deposition video on my laptop that I watch for fun sometimes.”

WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:

Magni said his motivation is pure and simple — it comes down to wowing the client.

“I would say the biggest motivator for me is winning in a way that exceeds the client’s expectations and leaves them thinking that we got a result that they did not think was possible ... It could be a trial; it could be dialing up the pressure on the other side and getting a settlement they never thought they could get.”

RISING
 ★★★★★
STAR



Rocco Magni
Susman Godfrey

Age: 32

Home base: Houston

Position: Associate

Law school: University of Texas School of Law

First job after law school: Clerk for Fifth Circuit Judge Edith Jones

WHY HE BECAME A TRIALS ATTORNEY:

Magni appreciates the variety of learning a whole new subject matter with each trial that comes along. He also said he's very competitive, even in elemental trial scenarios like taking depositions.

"I think Susman's a little different than a lot of firms" in terms of lawyers being sophisticated about "what you need and what you don't need," Magni said. "So many cases involve a lot of lawyers trying to grab a lot of discovery [even] when they don't need it. You don't need to spend seven hours in a deposition unless you need those admissions, you need every single one of them."

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CASES:

Magni's first trial ever as a practicing lawyer was defending an elderly couple named as defendants alongside others who were not Magni's clients in what he called a "wild" penny-stock case where the plaintiffs alleged a \$140 million pump-and-dump scheme.

"The plaintiffs ginned up this \$140 million damages model. And I wrote a brief attacking it, and on the eve of trial, we got the damages model struck," Magni said. "We were heading into this thing and we'd already killed their damages model."

— *As told to Cara Salvatore*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2019 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,300 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 years old as of April 30, 2019, in order to be considered for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.