

Best Lawyers® has named

2016 LAWYER OF THE YEAR

recipients in Indiana based on their particularly high level of peer recognition.



Miriam Smulevitz Dant

"One of the best pieces of advice I got was: 'Don't go out on your own unless you're willing to accept the possibility that it won't work out,'" Dant says. "That was a really important hurdle for me to overcome—if this didn't work out then I would have to update my resume and figure out what would be next. I went back and forth—I had a position I was really happy with at the law firm I was at,

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PRACTICE IN INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Miriam Smulevitz Dant is not your run-of-the-mill attorney. She started her own firm, Dant Advocacy, a state-certified Women's Business Enterprise, in 2006 to act as an advocate for her clients not in a courtroom, but in the Indiana statehouse, where the laws governing the Hoosier State are written. Preceding this, highlights of Dant's experience include a leading role in former Indiana Governor Evan Bayh's administration, where she was his advisor on energy and environmental policy, serving as counsel and securities commissioner under former Secretary of State Joe Hogsett, and her litigation, regulatory, and lobbying work with Baker & Daniels (now Faegre Baker Daniels), where she served as partner from 1998 until starting Dant Advocacy.

but I was looking for additional independence and flexibility. After getting advice from a lot of lawyers who had made similar moves, I decided to go ahead and do it, because I realized that I would regret it if I didn't try."

Nine years later, Dant's go-for-broke new enterprise looks more like a striking success. In addition to winning the "Lawyer of the Year" award this year in government relations practice based on the votes of her peers, Dant is the only woman listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* in that practice area in the state of Indiana, period. And she returns this sign of respect to others in her field in Indiana, saying: "All government affairs practitioners feel very strongly about having integrity and trust. We can't get very far in the statehouse if we don't have those things, so this award is a well-appreciated vote of confidence. We've got a good group of government affairs professionals in Indiana, and I'm proud to be part of it." ●

By Nathaniel Barr

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