

Donziger Taps Gupta Beck as Chevron Appeal Looms

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Embattled New York lawyer Steven Donziger packed on new legal muscle in his epic fight with Chevron Corp., including an up-and-coming U.S. Supreme Court advocate and even a group of eager law students.



Deepak Gupta of Gupta Beck

The revolving cast of lawyers representing Steven Donziger against accusations that he rigged a fraudulent environmental judgment against Chevron Corp. is shifting yet again. This week the embattled New York lawyer packed on new legal muscle for the epic fight, including an up-and-coming U.S. Supreme Court advocate, two law professors, and even a group of eager law students.

Donziger [announced](#) on Thursday that he's being advised by Deepak Gupta, 36, of the Washington D.C. appellate boutique Gupta Beck. Prior to founding the firm, Gupta worked at Public Citizen, Ralph Nader's consumer watchdog group. Gupta has argued on behalf of plaintiffs in several recent Supreme Court cases, including the high-profile arbitration challenge *AT&T Mobility v. Concepcion*.

Gupta told us he's charging for his services, but at a reduced rate. "I could not be more proud to be representing Steven Donziger," he said. "This is the ultimate David v. Goliath case."

Gupta's arrival comes as Donziger prepares for an important chapter in the long-running battle. You'll recall that Chevron sued Donziger for fraud and racketeering, alleging that he and his team conspired to fix a 2010 Ecuadorian judgment that put the oil company on the hook for billions of dollars in environmental damages. In October, a bench trial began before U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan in Manhattan, who is now receiving post-trial briefing and who is widely expected to rule in Chevron's favor. (American Lawyer columnist Michael Goldhaber [recently called the trial a "rout,"](#) crediting Chevron's lawyers at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher for obliterating Donziger's star witness.)

One of Donziger's previous lawyers in the case, West Coast powerhouse John Keker of Keker & Van Nest, [withdrew](#) in May, telling Kaplan that the deck was unfairly stacked for Chevron and that Donziger couldn't pay \$1 million in outstanding legal bills. Kaplan was skeptical of that claim, pointing out that someone is funding a [massive effort](#) to enforce the Ecuadorian judgment abroad. Just days before trial, Donziger added attorneys Zoe Littlepage of Littlepage Booth and Richard Friedman of Friedman Rubin, as we reported [here](#). Littlepage and Friedman remain involved in the case.

Gupta isn't the only one coming to Donziger's aid as he prepares an inevitable appeal. According to Gupta, Donziger is also being advised by two professors at Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver, John Campbell and Justin Marceau. The duo is also teaching an entire class on the Chevron case that will allow law students to assist Donziger.

"Despite Chevron's attempts to make Donziger into a pariah, he hasn't been left out in the cold," Gupta said. "He has people standing up for him."