

Contact

Jonathan Watkins

Partner

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Jonathan Watkins is a partner in the Litigation Department, where he represents clients in complex, high-stakes commercial disputes and regulatory inquiries. His practice spans several industries and areas of law, including financial services, securities, mergers and acquisitions, antitrust, sports and technology. Jonathan is also a trusted counselor on fiduciary duties and other transaction-related issues, advising on the most challenging aspects of corporate governance and deal-making.

Jonathan has been at the forefront of high-profile financial services litigation for more than two decades. He recently led the defense of a widely reported matter involving civil RICO and lender?liability claims, a $600 million asset freeze, and the sale—over Plaintiff's challenge—of a Premier League club. Jonathan also recently represented one leading national bank in government inquiries concerning alleged manipulation of interest-rate benchmarks and bond prices; another leading national bank in litigation over structured credit products; andseveral state-chartered banks in mission-critical regulatory matters. Early in his career, Jonathan defended Credit Suisse against $40 billion in securities claims arising from the collapse of Enron; Merrill Lynch's independent directors in shareholder suits tied to the Bank of America merger; and two major global financial services firms at trial in the $15 billion litigation over the failed Hexion-Huntsman merger.

Jonathan's securities, M&A-related, and corporate governance practice extends across diverse industries. He represented Thoma Bravo in an M&A dispute that resulted in the repricing of its $10.4 billion acquisition of a publicly traded company; a fund's challenges to issuances that disenfranchised public stockholders; the founders of a leading cryptocurrency exchange in M&A, antitrust and commodities disputes; and the former CEO of SCANA in securities, RICO and shareholder derivative litigation arising from the company's abandoned $13 billion nuclear?power project.

Another cornerstone of Jonathan's practice is his representation of technology?driven companies in their most important disputes. He has acted for Renaissance Technologies, the renowned statistical?arbitrage fund, in litigation to safeguard its trade secrets; Rubicon Global in nationwide competition suits against entrenched oligopolists; Hyland Software in patent cases involving machine-learning technology; and Qualcomm in industry?defining competition and patent?licensing battles with Nokia and Broadcom.

Jonathan's work also extends into the world of professional sports. He has represented an owner in litigation over control of the Baltimore Orioles; a major corporate sponsor in disputes involving the 2022 Qatar World Cup and matters arising from COVID?19's impact on professional sports leagues, including the NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL and PGA Tour; and a seller in expedited proceedings that enabled the 2024 sale of a Premier League club.

Jonathan maintains an active appellate practice, prevailing in constitutional challenges to North Carolina's attempted taking of Asheville's water system; a challenge, under *Grupo Mexicano*, to a $600 million prejudgment asset freeze; a banking trade association's First Amendment challenge to New Jersey's campaign finance restrictions; and a trust's due process and dormant?commerce?clause challenge to state taxation of foreign trusts. He has argued appeals on several issues that have split lower courts, including disputes over statutory interpretation, the scope of federal jurisdiction to freeze assets prejudgment and complete preemption.

Jonathan earned his J.D. *magna cum laude* from Fordham University School of Law, where he was awarded the Fordham Law School Prize, served on the *Fordham Law Review* and was elected to the Order of the Coif. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Lehigh University.

Practices

Antitrust, Litigation, Trials, Intellectual Property, Mergers & Acquisitions, Patent Law, Private Credit, Restrictive Covenants, Trade Secrets & Unfair Competition, Securities Litigation, White Collar Defense & Investigations

Industries

Financial Services, Life Sciences, Sports, Technology, Media & Telecommunications

Market Solutions

Blockchain & Digital Assets, Corporate Governance

Education

Fordham University School of Law, J.D., Order of the Coif, Fordham Law Review
magna cum laude
Lehigh University, B.S., Chemical Engineering

Admissions & Qualifications

New York
North Carolina
District of Columbia

Court Admissions

U.S. Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit
U.S. District Court, District of North Dakota
U.S. District Court, Western District of North Carolina
U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina
U.S. District Court, New York, Southern District
U.S. District Court, New York, Eastern District
U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit

Memberships

Advisory Board, Harvard Program on Corporate Governance

Awards & Recognition

Lawdragon 500 Leading Global IP Lawyers 2025

Lawdragon 500 Leading Litigators in America 2025

Best Lawyers in America 2023-2027