



Brian O'Donnell

STOCKHOLDER

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Practice Areas

Litigation

- Business Litigation
- Fiduciary & Probate Litigation
- Arbitration & Mediation

Employment Matters

Health & Human Services

- Medical Staff Issues
- Physician Employment & Independent Contractor Relationships

Appellate

Admissions

State of Connecticut

U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut

U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York

Education

University of Michigan Law School, J.D. (*cum laude*)

Wesleyan University, B.A.

Overview

Brian is a trial lawyer. His cases run the litigation gamut, but they often involve people who were once close, and are now adversaries. Brian has represented business partners who no longer get along and shareholders of closely held corporations who are clashing with fellow shareholders. He has also represented clients who feel badly used by their relatives in the probate process, including people who feel they have been wrongfully shut out of their parents' wills. Money is almost always at issue, but Brian knows that such cases require sensitivity to the emotional side of the ledger as well.

Brian handles most types of commercial and probate disputes, including litigation involving claims of breach of contract and of fiduciary duties, the interpretation of wills and trust agreements, employment disputes, alleged environmental contamination, defamation, real estate sales gone bad, securities fraud, and insurance and reinsurance disputes. He has defended complex class actions, and has brought and defended appeals.

Brian has tried cases to verdict concerning claimed breaches of contract, shareholder disagreements, will contests, environmental contamination, alleged copyright infringement, easement rights, estate management, reinsurance, and tax assessments, among others. His many cases have led him to a variety of state and federal courts. Brian is also experienced in administrative proceedings, mediation and arbitration.

Before becoming a lawyer, Brian was a newspaper reporter for more than a decade. He learned that compelling stories can be told in plain English, and complex issues can be explained concisely. He works to bring this experience to his trial practice.

Representative Matters

- Defended a shareholder in litigation brought by a software company claiming breaches of fiduciary duty and of several contracts, resulting after trial in a verdict in favor of the defendant shareholder.
- Defended a closely held corporation in litigation by shareholders owning 40 percent of the company, who claimed to be oppressed shareholders, leading to settlement in which the corporation purchased the plaintiffs' shares on favorable terms.
- Tried companion lawsuits brought by a 50 percent shareholder of a manufacturing company, who claimed breach of fiduciary duty and other misconduct, resulting in a verdict in favor of the defendant shareholder.
- Brought claims by a minority shareholder of a closely held corporation asserting shareholder oppression and wrongful termination, resulting in a favorable settlement.

- Tried a claim by disinherited siblings against their brother, who inherited their parent's estate, leading to a favorable settlement and, by this discovery process, gaining much new information for the clients.
- Brought complaint that the clients' late step-mother had diverted their inheritance to her biological children, leading to a favorable settlement without need for trial.
- Defended an executor accused of mishandling an estate and wasting assets, leading to a directed verdict after a Superior Court jury trial and a favorable settlement on appeal.
- Defended an executive sued by his former employer for allegedly taking trade secrets to his new employer, leading to a favorable settlement that allowed the executive to continue pursuing his new career.
- Defended a professional corporation against claims by an intern who alleged she was terminated from employment for reporting sexual misconduct, leading to resolution when the plaintiff abandoned her claims in the face of poor prospects for success.
- Tried to verdict an action to terminate the parental rights of long-time drug addicts, leading to adoption of their then-young children, who are now growing into healthy teenagers.

Professional & Community Involvement

- The Oliver Ellsworth American Inn of Court
- Tariffville Water Commission, Member
- Downtown YMCA, Board Member
- American Bar Association
- Hartford County Bar Association
 - Probate Litigation and Elder Law Committee (Co-chair)
 - Board of Directors (Former Member)
- Connecticut Bar Association, Committee on Professionalism (Former Member)
- The Hartt School, Board of Trustees (Former Member)

Honors & Awards

- *Connecticut Super Lawyers* for Business Litigation (2020-2025)
- AV PreeminentTM Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Rated
- *Connecticut Super Lawyers* for Business Litigation (2020-2023)

News

- Reid and Riege Honored with "Partners on the Rise" Award by Lawyers for Children America