



Justin C. Sawyer

 Partner

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“Committed to furthering my clients’ rights and interests, I am a trusted advocate who has built a balanced practice of representing plaintiffs and defendants in a wide range of complex disputes.”

Justin Sawyer co-leads the firm’s litigation practice, representing clients in disputes against commercial, financial, and reputational threats for nearly 20 years. He advises on crucially sensitive and high-profile matters while delivering solutions to clients’ most pressing legal challenges. Whether through direct negotiation, litigation in state or federal courts, arbitration, or mediation, Justin’s breadth of experience includes claims for breach-of-contract, fraud, and other torts; corporate governance and shareholder disputes; trade secret and intellectual property litigation; securities violations; real estate and condemnation matters; and claims involving catastrophic injuries, wrongful death, or sexual abuse.

Over the span of his career, Justin has successfully litigated cases of first impression, handled large multiparty lawsuits, and developed experience in highly regulated industries, including financial, securities, cannabis (hemp and marijuana), and education sectors. Representing businesses, retailers, financial institutions, manufacturers, public entities, farmers, and individuals, Justin brings the experience and understanding clients need from their counselor, in addition to the skill sets and judgment needed to help identify and pursue the desired outcome efficiently and effectively.

Professional Activities

- Multnomah Bar Association, member
- Oregon State Bar, member
 - Litigation section, member
 - Pro Bono Committee, member, past chair
- American Bar Association, member
- Sidney Lezak Fellows Program, past mentor
- Owen M. Panner American Inn of Court

Civic Activities

- Positive Coaching Alliance, chapter board member
- Lewis & Clark Law School Alumni Board, member

Education

J.D., Lewis & Clark Law School, 2001

- Regional Mock Trial, team member

B.A., Colorado College, political science, 1998

Bar Admissions

Oregon, 2001

Court Admissions

U.S. District Court, District of Oregon, 2001

Languages

French

- Self Enhancement, Inc.
 - Here & Now Committee, cochair, 2009 & 2011
 - subcommittee chair
- Portland Business Alliance’s Leadership Portland, alumni, 2011
- Campaign for Equal Justice, advisory committee member

Representative Experience

Commercial Contract & Tort Litigation

- Recovered \$15 million in breach-of-contract, successor liability, fraudulent transfer, and corporate piercing action arising out of sale of business.
- Obtained six-figure recovery based on breach of contract claims against Fortune 500 company.
- Successfully defended aircraft manufacturer against \$100 million claim for breach of design and development agreement in four-week arbitration.
- Obtained \$1.4 million arbitration award and permanent injunction based on claims for corporate raiding, breach of fiduciary duty, aiding and abetting breach of fiduciary duty, and breach of contract.
- Successful defense of brokerage firm against \$1.5 million raiding claim. After one week of arbitration, claimant rested, and the panel granted brokerage firm’s motions dismissing all claims.
- Obtained six-figure recovery on behalf of cannabis farmer based on breach of contract.
- Secured immediate injunctive relief enforcing contractual rights in connection with cannabis cultivation.
- Favorably resolved claims arising from destruction of cannabis crops due to cross-pollination.
- Conducted numerous internal investigations into employee fraud, director and officer liability, and accounting malpractice.
- Enforced trademark rights in trademark infringement lawsuit.
- Favorable pre-litigation resolution of numerous claims involving non-competition agreements.

Corporate Governance & Securities Litigation

- Obtained seven figure recovery on behalf of a shareholder asserting minority oppression and multiple breaches of fiduciary duty.
- Successful defense of securities fraud, breach of fiduciary duty, and suitability claims arising from the sale of emerging market securities in bet-the-company arbitration. FINRA panel denied the claims in their entirety.
- Assisted common shareholder in obtaining a multimillion-dollar recovery against preferred shareholders arising out of claims that the preferred shareholder and others breached fiduciary duties owed to the common shareholders by selling the company in a manner that destroyed common shareholder value.
- Obtained order protecting shareholders by placing deadlocked cannabis company into receivership.
- Successful defense of \$5.4 million securities claims arising from tenant-in-common investments.
- Favorably resolved multiparty litigation involving claims of securities fraud and breaches of fiduciary duty by directors and officers.
- Successfully defended brokerage firm against claims arising from sale of high yield bonds. Panel denied the claims in their entirety.
- Resolved dispute among business owners through buy out and valuation of co-owner’s ownership interest.

Catastrophic Injury Litigation

- Favorable resolution of a complex \$30 million catastrophic injury lawsuit arising from a crane-rollover accident.
- Summary judgment dismissal of a \$25 million wrongful death action
- Successful defense of \$23 million traumatic brain injury lawsuit arising from snowboarding accident.
- Successful defense of university, head football coach, and athletic trainer in a lawsuit seeking \$5 million based on student-athlete’s return to play after concussion during a college football game.

- Defended manufacturers against product liability claims asserting product defects and failure to warn.
- Favorable resolution of claims arising from a concussion sustained by a student-cheerleader.
- Resolution of claims alleging sexual abuse of student.
- Successful defense against claims arising from head injuries sustained during a scuba diving class.

Publications

- “Protecting Your Company from Shareholder Lawsuits,” *Portland Business Journal* (Jan. 2016)
- “Take Steps to Protect Against Concussion Liability Beyond Athletics,” *Campus Legal Advisor* (May 2015)
- “In-House Counsel Remain in Position to Do Pro Bono Work,” *Portland Business Journal* (July 2012)
- “Avoid Legal Headaches When Workers Depart,” *Portland Business Journal* (Oct. 2009)

Presentations

- “Negotiation Skills and Tactics,” Multnomah Bar Association, CLE (Sept. 2014)

Recognition & Honors

- Named to the “Forty Under 40 Award” list by the *Portland Business Journal*, 2013
- Named to the “Up & Coming Lawyers” list by the *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 2010
- Recognized as an “Oregon Litigation Star” by *Benchmark Litigation*, 2018-present
- Selected for inclusion as an Oregon Super Lawyer, 2016-present
 - Selected as a Rising Star, 2008-2011 and 2013-2015

Personal Activities

Justin enjoys working hard and playing hard. When he is not in the midst of litigation or engaged in the community, Justin is playing soccer, skiing, hiking, fishing, or playing golf.