



Angela A. Smedley

Partner
Chair, Pro Bono Committee

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Angela focuses her practice on complex commercial litigation and has successfully defended large financial services clients against individual and class actions at the trial and appellate level. She also employs her years of sports litigation experience in representing professional sports unions, and athletes, and agencies in labor arbitrations, and complex disputes in a variety of forums. She serves as Chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee and Co-Chair of the Black Lawyers Network. She is also a member of the firm's Opportunity & Inclusion Committee.

Angela has represented and counseled financial services entities in the class action and consumer fraud space in matters involving breach of contract, business torts, and government program fraud, among other causes of action. She has recent experience defending large institutional clients against consumer claims under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, and various state consumer protection laws. She aggressively pursues early case resolution on behalf of her clients in individual and class litigations.

Angela's practice also involves the application of federal labor statutes and international arbitration protocols to the unique landscape of amateur and professional sports. In this context, she has represented clients such as the

National Football League Players Association (NFL Players Association), the National Basketball Players Association, and a variety of individual athletes, agents, and sports agencies.

Key Matters

Complex Commercial Litigation – Financial Services Industry

- Angela focuses her commercial litigation practice on the representation of financial services clients in both federal and state court actions. Angela is currently defending several large financial institutions in consumer class action and individual lawsuits spanning over a dozen jurisdictions.
- Angela has also represented several high-profile media and retail organizations against defamation and negligence claims.

Sports Litigation

- *Simidele Adeagbo v. IBSF and IOC* – Angela represents elite bobsleigh athlete Simidele Adeagbo before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in a gender discrimination case against the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation and the International Olympic Committee.
- *Relevant Sports v. U.S. Soccer Federation and FIFA* – Angela represents soccer promoter Relevant Sports, LLC in a federal antitrust lawsuit seeking to enjoin the U.S. Soccer Federation from continuing to block official season international soccer matches from being played in the United States.
- *Major League Baseball Player/Agent Arbitrations*. Angela has represented several high-profile baseball players and agents in arbitrations under the Major League Baseball Players Association's Regulations Governing Player Agents.
- *Searcy v. National Football League Players Association, et al.* Angela has represented the NFLPA in actions brought by a prospective NFL agent challenging the Union's Regulations Governing Contract Advisors.
- *Blake Leeper v. IAAF/World Athletics* – Angela represented double-amputee 400m sprinter Blake Leeper before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in an eligibility dispute with World Athletics (formerly the International Association of Athletics Federations).
- *Ezekiel Elliott v. NFL* – Angela served as counsel for Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott and the NFL Players Association in federal court proceedings challenging the six-game suspension imposed on Elliott by the NFL for an alleged violation of the League's Personal Conduct Policy.
- *Tom Brady v. NFL ("Deflategate")* – Angela represented New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady in his appeal of his four-game suspension imposed by the NFL for his alleged role in the so-called "deflategate" scandal.
- *Adrian Peterson v. NFL* – Angela represented NFL running back Adrian Peterson in arbitration and court proceedings challenging his suspension under the NFL's Personal Conduct Policy.
- *Greg Hardy v. NFL* – Angela represented Dallas Cowboys defensive end Greg Hardy in his appeal of his 10-game suspension for alleged violation of the NFL's Personal Conduct Policy.
- *Ray Rice v. NFL* – Angela represented NFL running back Ray Rice in his appeal of his indefinite suspension imposed by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.
- *Ray Rice v. Baltimore Ravens* – Angela represented Ray Rice in a grievance proceeding against the Baltimore Ravens challenging Rice's termination by the Club.
- *New England Patriots v. Jonathan Fanene* – Angela represented NFL Defensive Lineman Jonathan Fanene in an action brought by the New England Patriots to recover Fanene's signing bonus.
- *Jonathan Vilma v. Goodell* – Angela represented the National Football League Players Association and NFL players Scott Fujita, Anthony Hargrove, and Will Smith in connection with federal court proceedings in the Eastern

District of Louisiana challenging NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell's arbitration award affirming the players' discipline for their alleged roles in a "pay-for-performance/bounty" program at the New Orleans Saints.

- *New Orleans Saints "Pay-for-Performance/Bountygate" Litigations* – Angela represented the National Football League Players Association and NFL players Scott Fujita, Anthony Hargrove, and Will Smith in arbitrations under the NFL's collective bargaining agreement (CBA) challenging Commissioner Goodell's imposition of discipline against the players for their alleged participation in a "pay-for-performance/bounty" program.
- *White v. NFL (Collusion)* – Angela represented the NFLPA in a proceeding against the NFL and its member clubs arising under the NFL's collective bargaining agreement.
- *NBPA v. NBA (Bird Rights)* – Angela represented the National Basketball Players Association on behalf of NBA players Jeremy Lin, Steve Novak, Chauncey Billups, and J.J. Hickson in arbitration proceedings that determined the retention of "Bird" rights under the CBA for veteran free agents who change teams via the NBA's waiver procedure.
- *NBA v. National Basketball Players Association* – While on secondment to the NBPA, Angela represented the NBPA, Derek Fisher, Keyon Dooling, James Jones, Matt Bonner, Maurice Evans, Roger Mason, Jr., Chris Paul, Theo Ratliff, Etan Thomas, Amar'e Stoudemire, Mike Dunleavy, James Fredette, and Charles Jenkins in a declaratory judgment action filed by the NBA.

Antitrust, Class Action, and Multi-District Litigation

- *In re: Automotive Parts Antitrust Litigation* – Angela represented large corporations in multiple cases in the massive multidistrict automotive parts class action litigation in the Eastern District of Michigan, one of the largest series of class actions in U.S. history.
- *In re: Credit Default Swaps Litigation* – Angela represented a large investment bank in its defense against antitrust claims in the credit default swap industry.

Recent Experience

Secured Settlement for Fox on Brink of Trial in High-Profile Defamation Litigation Brought by US Dominion Voting Systems

Triumphed for Relevant Sports Before Second Circuit, Reviving Antitrust Suit Against FIFA, USSF

Recognitions

Angela was recognized on the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Global Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers. She is a member of Law360's Editorial Board for Sports & Betting and was recognized by *Benchmark Litigation U.S.* as a "Future Star" (2024–2025) and on the "Under 40 Hot List" (2022). She was also named to *Crain's* New York Business List of Notable Women in Sports (2022), *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America* (2021–2023), and as a "Key Lawyer" in Sports Law by *The Legal 500 US* (2022–2023).

Winston & Strawn's top-ranked Sports Law Practice was named "Law Firm of the Year" by *U.S. News & World Report – Best Law Firms®* (2012–2013, 2018–2022, 2024) and among Law360's Sports & Betting Groups of the Year (2017, 2020–2024).

Activities

Angela is chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee, co-chair of the firm's Black Lawyers Network, and a member of the firm's Opportunity & Inclusion Committee. She has been a member of Law360's Sports & Betting Editorial Advisory Board since 2022.

Credentials

EDUCATION

Angela received a J.D. from Columbia Law School in 2010, where she served as a senior editor of the *Columbia Law Review*. She received an A.B. in Sociology and African American Studies, *magna cum laude*, from Harvard University in 2004.

ADMISSIONS

- New York

CLERKSHIPS

- USDC - Southern District of NY for the Honorable George B. Daniels
- USDC - Southern District of NY for the Honorable George B. Daniels

Related Insights & News

Speaking Engagements

- "Class Action Trends," Black In-House Counsel Network, *Elevating Black Excellence*, April 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* Leading Global Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers List
MARCH 7, 2025

BLOG

Winston Holds DEI Retreat in Nashville
OCTOBER 30, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Law360 Recognizes Winston as a Top 15 Firm for Pro Bono
OCTOBER 24, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2025 *Benchmark Litigation*

OCTOBER 3, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Earns Top U.S. and International Rankings on *The American Lawyer's* 2024 Pro Bono Scorecard

JULY 12, 2024

BLOG

Winston Hosts Annual 1L LCLD Scholars Roundtable

JUNE 17, 2024

NEWS

2023 Pro Bono Impact Report

MAY 1, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Law360 Names Winston Attorneys to 2024 Editorial Advisory Boards

MARCH 21, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2024 *Benchmark Litigation*

OCTOBER 6, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Ranked a Top 10 Pro Bono Firm by Law360

SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

IN THE MEDIA

Angela A. Smedley Discusses What a Recent Civil Rights Win Means for Police Accountability with Law360

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

PRO BONO IN ACTION

Winston Secures Largest Jury Verdict in Firm's Pro Bono History in Section 1983 Case Against NYPD Officers

AUGUST 9, 2023

Capabilities

Litigation/Trials

Commercial Litigation & Disputes

Class Actions & Group Litigation

Financial Services Litigation

Insurance Litigation

Public Companies

Sports

Financial Services

Insurance