



William O'Neil

Partner
Chair, Hiring Committee

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Bill concentrates his practice on high-stakes trial work. An adept problem solver, Bill serves as a strategic advisor to some of the nation's largest corporations and private equity funds.

Bill is an accomplished trial lawyer who litigates and facilitates resolution of high-stakes business disputes. He has tried over 20 cases to verdict, including three in the past 18 months alone.

Bill is a sought-after counselor to some of America's largest corporations and private equity funds. Widely regarded as one of the nation's preeminent M&A litigators, Bill has litigated dozens of buyer-seller disputes in the Delaware Court of Chancery and won what may be the largest working-capital dispute in U.S. M&A history. Bill is regularly quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* regarding the representation and warranty (R&W) insurance market.

Bill has been described by clients as a "talented and tenacious litigator." The general counsel of one the nation's largest private equity firms noted: "Bill understands the complexities associated with real-world business problems and, more importantly, how to solve them—a commanding presence in the courtroom and an equally adept counselor and negotiator."

The Legal 500 US has specifically recognized Bill's work as well as the strength of Winston's securities litigation practice, noting: "The firm has a fabulous core group of M&A litigators...they are not only smart and hardworking but

also humble.”

Key Matters

M&A Litigation

A significant portion of Bill’s practice involves representing strategic acquirers, private equity funds, and their portfolio companies. Bill frequently represents buyers and sellers in post-closing disputes, including working-capital, R&W, and fraud claims. Bill regularly represents buyers in claims against R&W insurance carriers.

Bill has recovered well in excess of US\$150 million in post-closing judgments and settlements in M&A disputes.

More than a dozen private equity funds have retained Bill to handle these disputes for dozens of portfolio companies; often where another law firm handled the underlying transaction. He brings a practical, business-minded approach to contentious disputes and he is frequently praised by his clients for the depth of his understanding of M&A transactions.

Bill represents numerous public company clients in corporate governance litigation, shareholder strike suits, and internal investigations. He has been retained by corporate boards and independent committees to bring impartial advice to delicate, complicated, and often crisis-level scenarios.

Complex Commercial Litigation

Beyond the M&A arena, Bill also handles a wide range of business-to-business disputes with customers, vendors, and suppliers. He has represented dozens of Fortune 500 companies in disputes ranging from routine to high-stakes, “bet-the-company” litigation. Bill is frequently called upon to provide risk-management and litigation-avoidance advice to his clients.

Non-Compete Litigation

Bill represents corporations in non-compete litigation adverse to senior executives and their new employers. Bill has handled numerous “corporate-raiding” cases where two major corporations were pitted against each other in a dispute over human capital. Bill has successfully enforced numerous non-compete agreements against sellers in the context of an M&A transaction.

Pro Bono

Bill’s pro bono cases have included representing a prison inmate in a successful appeal before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals that resulted in new law in the circuit, the court’s reversal of its own prior precedent, and the reversal of the defendant’s conviction.

Recent Experience

Nauticus Robotics...

RTIC Holdings’...

Recognitions

- *Corporate Counsel's* 2023 Women, Influence & Power in Law Awards – “Ally of the Year” honoree. This national award honors leading individuals in the workplace who listen with empathy and seek to understand different perspectives, show up by being present, engaged, and committed to diversity efforts in the firm, and speak up as an advocate to others.
 - *The Legal 500 US* 2021–2023 “Key Lawyer” for M&A Litigation: Defense
 - *The Legal 500 US* 2023 “Key Lawyer” for Transport: Rail and Road: Litigation and Regulation
 - *Benchmark Litigation US* 2020–2024 “Illinois Litigation Star”
 - *Benchmark Litigation US* 2016 “Under 40 Hot List.” This national award recognizes the nation’s most accomplished trial lawyers under the age of 40 based upon a peer review and case-examination process.
 - Microsoft’s Advocacy Academy, 2015. One of just 16 lawyers invited to participate in a week-long intensive trial skills course dedicated to the development of Microsoft’s next generation of trial lawyers.
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Activities

Bill serves as the Chair of Winston’s Hiring Committee. In this role, he oversees Winston’s associate hiring on a firmwide basis. Bill serves as a member of Winston’s Diversity Committee.

Bill is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the NALP Foundation for Law Career Research & Education, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the quality and delivery of legal services.

Bill previously served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the First Tee of Greater Chicago, an organization dedicated to teaching life skills through the game of golf to at-risk youth in the Chicagoland area.

Credentials

EDUCATION

Bill received his B.A. from Denison University in 2000 and his J.D. from Washington University - Saint Louis in 2003.

ADMISSIONS

- Illinois

Related Insights & News

- Speaker, “Deals Gone Sideways: M&A Litigation in COVID-Churned Markets,” May 28, 2020
- “Rep and Warranty Insurers Confront Coronavirus Risk,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 2020
- “5 Lessons For Submitting A Successful R&W Insurance Claim,” Law360, March 27, 2020
- “Top 10 Secrets of Success for Summer Associates,” LexisNexis Practice Advisor, June 21, 2018
- “Defining ‘Knowledge’ In A Purchase Agreement,” Law360, May 14, 2018
- Speaker, “Negotiating Favorable RWI Policies: *Lessons Learned From Litigating Claims*,” July 16, 2017

- “Beware Risks of Using LinkedIn During Jury Selection,” Law360, September 5, 2013
- “Achieving the Perceived Cost Savings and Expedience of Commercial Arbitration,” The United States Law Week, October 26, 2010

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Bill O’Neil Speaks at...

MARCH 7, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Shortlisted for *Benchmark*...

JANUARY 8, 2024

ARTICLE

M&A Ruling Buys Loss...

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized...

OCTOBER 6, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Bill O’Neil Named as...

AUGUST 25, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500*

JUNE 7, 2023

PRESS RELEASE

Winston & Strawn Offers...

MAY 31, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Receive Shout...

MAY 19, 2023

CLIENT ALERT

Post-Closing Private M&A...

APRIL 13, 2023

RECOGNITIONS
Law360 Names Winston Attorneys...
APRIL 10, 2023

IN THE MEDIA
Bill O’Neil Discusses the...
OCTOBER 21, 2022

PRESS RELEASE
Winston & Strawn Launches...
OCTOBER 19, 2022

Capabilities

Securities, M&A & Corporate Governance Litigation	Commercial Litigation & Disputes		
Class Actions & Group Litigation	Public Companies	Financial Services	Insurance
Professional Services	Automotive & Mobility		