

William J. O'Brien

Chairman Emeritus

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E: wobrien@conradobrien.com**Practice Areas**

- Class Actions
- Employment
- Legal Malpractice
- Products Liability and Complex Torts
- Medical Malpractice
- Products Liability

In The News

Conrad O'Brien Wins Defense Verdict for Morgan, Lewis & Bockius in \$20 Million Legal Malpractice Case

Education

- Villanova Law School (L.L.B.)
- LaSalle College (B.A.)

Bar and Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of PA
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit

Honors and Memberships

- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
- Fellow, International Academy of Trial Lawyers

Chambers USA 2009 recognizes Conrad O'Brien as one of the top ranked litigation firms in Pennsylvania. With regard to William J. O'Brien, Chambers wrote:

William O'Brien is a "phenomenal litigator whose skills and instincts in the courtroom are second to none." Bill has been ranked in Pennsylvania as a Senior Statesman in Litigation: General Commercial.

Biography

William O'Brien is a founding member and Chairman Emeritus of the firm. Bill has been recognized as one of the country's leading trial lawyers, having tried numerous high-profile cases in state and federal courts. His accomplishments have been touted in such publications as *Best Lawyers in America and Chambers USA, The Client's Guide to America's Leading Business Lawyers*.

During more than 40 years of practice, Bill has represented clients in a wide variety of matters, including products liability and mass tort cases, class actions, defamation, employment discrimination, personal injury, professional liability, insurance coverage, environmental, antitrust, and commercial litigation. He has done extensive defense work for law firms in employment and legal malpractice matters, and has represented physicians and leading hospitals, including the world's foremost pediatric hospital, in complex medical malpractice cases. Bill has also been involved in governmental relations and legislative work with respect to products liability legislation and other matters of current concern in Pennsylvania.

Representative Matters

- In January 2008, as lead trial counsel, obtained defense verdict in jury trial on behalf of international law firm in legal malpractice action claiming over \$20 million in damages.
- Other representations on behalf of law firms include the successful defense of a major law firm in a high-profile sexual harassment case tried to a Pennsylvania jury in federal court; a widely-publicized jury trial involving a law firm accused of discriminating against a lawyer who had AIDS (similar to the claim depicted in the movie, Philadelphia); the defense of other prominent law firms in professional liability and employment-related cases.
- Represented heir to chemical fortune in high-profile civil lawsuit for wrongful death brought by wife of Olympic athlete shot by heir.

- Diplomat, American Board of Trial Advocates
- Selected as a Leading Lawyer, *Chambers USA, The Client's Guide to America's Leading Business Lawyers for Commercial Litigation* (2003–present)
- Listed in *Best Lawyers in America* from 1993–present in a variety of categories including Antitrust Law, Commercial Litigation, First Amendment Law, Personal Injury Litigation, and Bet-The-Company Litigation
- Recognized in the 2005 *Guide to the Leading U.S. Litigation Lawyers*
- Philadelphia Bar Association
- Philadelphia Association of Defense Counsel (president, 1989–90)
- Master, University of Pennsylvania Law School, American Inns of Court
- International Association of Defense Counsel
- Represented major supplier of cell phone products in cases brought on behalf of individuals and putative class members in federal and state courts alleging injuries from use of cell phones.
- Other representations in the area of products liability include the defense of a major tobacco company in class actions and individual lawsuits in federal and state courts alleging harm caused by cigarette products; the defense of a major paint manufacturer in lawsuits in federal and state courts brought on behalf of individuals and putative class members alleging harm caused by lead contained in paint; the defense of an international computer manufacturer in numerous mass tort actions involving Repetitive Stress Injury claims in Pennsylvania and New Jersey federal and state courts, resulting in dismissal of claims; and the defense of individual and putative class actions in beryllium products liability cases, resulting in dismissal of claims.
- Defended major steel manufacturer in claim brought by major railroad company alleging defect in steel rail products. After nearly 16-week jury trial in Pennsylvania state court, Bill won a defense verdict.
- Represented blood supplier in Pennsylvania cases involving alleged transmission of HIV virus and Hepatitis C through blood products.
- Represented the nation's oldest medical malpractice carrier in regulatory matters and in providing defense of insured physicians.
- Representation of doctors and major medical institutions in complex malpractice cases involving a wide range of medical specialties (e.g., neurosurgery, thoracic surgery, orthopedic surgery, and cardiac surgery, among others). Successfully defended former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop in jury trial involving alleged malpractice in surgery on infant.

In addition to his litigation practice and leadership role with the firm, Bill has lectured extensively on trial advocacy. He is on the Executive Board of the Academy of Advocacy of Temple University Law School, where he is also an Adjunct Professor of Trial Advocacy. He has been on faculties of the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, and the Pennsylvania Defense Institute. Before founding the firm, Bill was a partner in the litigation department at Pepper, Hamilton & Scheetz.