

Michael J. Willemin

Michael J. Willemin is a Partner at Wigdor LLP. Mr. Willemin has come to prominence as a leading plaintiffs' attorney within the field of employment litigation, having successfully represented clients in numerous high-impact employment matters in federal and state court, as well as in arbitration. Mr. Willemin concentrates his practice in counseling and litigation of sexual harassment, discrimination on the basis of race, gender, pregnancy, disability and age and LGBTQ+ status, retaliation, defamation, family and medical leave, wage and hour, whistleblower and contract cases. Mr. Willemin's practice also includes civil rights, appellate, and complex class and collective action litigation. Additionally, Mr. Willemin handles certain high-profile personal injury cases, including wrongful death. He has represented individuals in a wide variety of industries, including financial services, entertainment and media, hospitality, medicine, architecture, retail and many others.

Because of his reputation and negotiating skills, and the reputation of Wigdor LLP, Mr. Willemin is often able to procure very favorable settlements for many of his clients before a lawsuit is even filed.

Publicity and Recognition

Mr. Willemin's cases have garnered significant media attention. As a result of his accomplishments and experience litigating high-profile cases, Mr. Willemin is regularly quoted as a legal expert in leading national news media. Mr. Willemin and his cases have been featured in virtually every major national media publication, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The BBC, NPR, The Washington Post, New York Law Journal, Bloomberg, TIME Magazine, Reuters, Business Insider, New York Daily News, New York Post, Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, The New Yorker, Vanity Fair, Fortune, Financial Times, Barron's, CNN, Yahoo, Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, The Daily Beast, USA Today, Law360 and all of the major broadcast networks, among many others. Mr. Willemin has also made many television and radio appearances, including on WPIX and WCBS. Due to his work handling prominent sexual harassment and gender discrimination cases, Mr. Willemin was the subject of a feature profile published in Law360.

Notable Cases

Mr. Willemin's recent representative cases include:

Sexual Harassment:

- Litigation against a prominent night club on behalf of a woman who was raped by the club's general manager;
- Litigation against a very large hedge fund in a lawsuit that has been lauded by the New York Times as "among the most prominent to accuse a major Wall Street firm of workplace misconduct amid a national reckoning on sexual harassment."
- Litigation on behalf of two women in a sexual harassment action against their former employer, a very successful New York City hedge fund, and the managers of the fund;
- Pre-litigation resolution of sexual harassment claims on behalf of two women against a multinational banking and financial services company;
- Pre-litigation resolution of sexual harassment claims on behalf of international investment banking firm;
- Litigation and favorable settlement for two women subjected to physical and verbal sexual harassment at the hands of their supervisors.

Discrimination, Retaliation and Whistleblower:

- Sarbanes-Oxley whistleblower retaliation trial against an international investment bank, resulting in a \$1,126,000 jury verdict;
- Disability discrimination trial resulting in a \$1,350,000 jury verdict;
- Litigation of various race discrimination and hostile work environment lawsuits against Fox News;
- Litigation and favorable settlement on behalf of a gay couple in a sexual orientation discrimination lawsuit against Vistaprint;
- Litigation and favorable settlement of a five-plaintiff gender discrimination lawsuit against one of the world's largest banks;

- Litigation and favorable settlement of a race discrimination action against a leading recruiting firm;
- Litigation and favorable settlement of a pregnancy discrimination and retaliation action against a major media company;
- Pre-litigation resolution of an age discrimination claim against a large investment bank;
- Pre-litigation resolution of an age discrimination claim against a major pharmaceutical company;
- Prompt resolution of sexual orientation discrimination and retaliation lawsuit against a global banking institution;
- Litigation and resolution of age discrimination actions brought on behalf of two well-known television reporters;
- Litigation and resolution of disability discrimination and retaliation action brought against an international bank;

Wage and Hour:

- An FLSA and New York Labor Law wage and hour class and collective action against an iconic New York restaurant;
- An FLSA and New York Labor Law wage and hour class and collective action against a renowned architectural firm;
- An FLSA and New York Labor Law wage and hour claim against one of New York City's most famous restaurants;
- An FLSA and New York Labor Law wage and hour claim against a worldwide motor carrier.

Civil Rights and Catastrophic Personal Injury:

- Litigation of a negligence claim against the City of New York on behalf of a victim of multiple stab wounds;
- Litigation of a negligence claim against the City of New York and the New York Fire Department on behalf of a probationary firefighter who was killed during training;

- Litigation and successful resolution of claims of assault and battery resulting in serious injury;
- Litigation and successful resolution of claim of negligence against a famous New York City nightclub;
- Litigation and successful resolution of claim of sexual assault against a 17 year-old female victim.

Advice and Counseling:

- Advice and counsel regarding various restrictive covenant agreements;
- Advice and counsel regarding various independent contractor and employment agreements;
- Advice and counsel regarding various separation agreements;
- Advice and counsel provided to companies concerning various employment and contract issues.

Awards

Mr. Willemin was named a Law360 Employment Rising Star for 2018, a highly competitive award that is reserved for the top U.S. employment attorneys under age 40. Mr. Willemin was also selected as a New York Metro Super Lawyers Rising Star honoree for five years in a row (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018).

Education

Mr. Willemin received his J.D. from Fordham University School of Law. While in law school, Mr. Willemin spent his summers interning at Legal Services NYC, Bronx and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. He also interned at the New York City Council in the General Counsel's Office, and assisted indigent clients as a participant in Fordham Law's Criminal Defense Clinic. Mr. Willemin received his B.A. from Providence College. While at Providence College, Mr. Willemin interned at the Rhode Island Commission on Human Rights, where he investigated complaints of discrimination against Rhode Island employers.

Admitted to Practice

Mr. Willemin is admitted to practice law in both New York and Massachusetts, as well as the Southern District of New York and Eastern District of New York.