

# Valdi Licul

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Valdi Licul is a Partner at Wigdor LLP. Mr. Licul is a highly accomplished civil rights attorney who has devoted his 25-year career to the representation of plaintiffs in employment and anti-discrimination cases. He has represented numerous plaintiffs in legal matters involving sexual harassment, discrimination based on sex, pregnancy, race, age, national origin, disability, religion and/or sexual orientation, whistleblower retaliation, executive compensation, breach of contract, restrictive covenants, trade secrets, defamation, wage and hour violations, and other employment-related disputes. His trial verdicts, arbitration awards and confidential settlements total in the tens of millions of dollars.

A stalwart disability rights advocate, Mr. Licul has represented individuals with disabilities in employment discrimination and civil rights cases in federal and state court, including claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as the New York State and City Human Rights Laws. He has spoken at numerous legal conferences and seminars on disability rights in the workplace and access to justice for people with mental and physical disabilities.

Mr. Licul represents clients from a wide range of industries, including financial services, private equity, accounting, law, healthcare, sports and leisure, media and entertainment, education, real estate, architecture, transportation, telecommunications, fashion and many others.

## **Publicity and Speaking Engagements**

Mr. Licul has handled complex and high-profile matters that have garnered significant media attention. He and his cases have been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Law Journal*, *USA Today*, *Reuters*, *Bloomberg*, *CNN*, *TIME*, *CBS New York*, *NBC Sports*, *ESPN*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Vogue*, *Buzzfeed News*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *Newsday*, *Daily Mail*, *ABA Journal*, *Bloomberg Law*, *Law360*, *Business Insurance*, *The Real Deal*, *Ad Age* and other notable outlets.

Mr. Licul is a frequent lecturer and speaker on employment-related legal issues. He is regularly invited to speak at the New York City Bar Association on a variety of legal topics, including disability rights in the workplace, reasonable accommodations for employees with mental health disabilities, legal issues in the hiring process, alternative dispute resolution, drafting and negotiating employment agreements and settlement agreements, and other key employment topics. He has also presented lectures and Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminars on topical employment subjects for the Practising Law Institute, Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services (JAMS), Legal Services Corporation, the Federal Bar Council, Strafford Publications and other leading educational forums.

## Notable Cases

While the vast majority of matters handled by Mr. Licul have resulted in confidential, out-of-court settlements before a lawsuit is even filed, some of Mr. Licul's notable public cases include:

- Represented a former senior sales representative in an age discrimination and retaliation lawsuit against textbook publisher McGraw-Hill, which resulted in a jury verdict of over \$350,000;
- Represented a female sports executive in a high-profile lawsuit against the New York Mets and its co-owner Jeffrey Wilpon alleging unlawful discrimination based on gender, pregnancy and marital status and retaliation;
- Represented a former associate attorney in an age discrimination lawsuit against a midsize law firm;
- Represented a former 9/11 survivor in a disability discrimination lawsuit against the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in connection with Plaintiffs' request for reasonable accommodations related to his post-traumatic stress disorder; and
- Represented a class of criminal defendants who were confined to a forensic psychiatric facility and who had been found incapacitated to stand trial in a widely influential class action against the former Commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Health, alleging unlawful disclosure of HIV status and other confidential medical and psychiatric information in violation of Plaintiffs' constitutional rights.

Prior to joining Wigdor LLP, Mr. Licul spent over 16 years at a prominent plaintiff-side labor and employment law firm, where he represented workers in employment-related disputes in federal and state court, as well as in arbitration. He also was a member of the Special Litigation and Appeals Unit of the Mental Hygiene Legal Service for the Appellate Division, Second Department, where he represented disabled individuals in civil rights matters. Mr. Licul previously served as a law clerk to the Honorable Lois Bloom, U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

## Pro Bono and Community Involvement

Mr. Licul is a member of the Second Circuit's Pro Bono Panel, where he represents *pro se* litigants in civil appeals in connection with complex employment and civil rights cases. He has also been invited to serve as pro bono counsel in employment mediation matters by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Mr. Licul is the co-chair of the

Employment Litigation Committee of the Federal Bar Council and served on the Disability Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association.

Mr. Licul is committed to mentoring future generations of lawyers and educating them about the evolving legal landscape. In addition to being an adjunct professor at Fordham University School of Law, he has been invited to give guest lectures at Columbia Law School, the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law and New York Law School. Mr. Licul has also served as a Moot Court Judge for the Annual National Moot Court Competition, the Judge Paul Joseph Kelly, Jr. Invitational Trial Competition at Fordham University School of Law, the Annual Yale Invitational and the Moot Court Competition at the Maurice A. Dean School of Law at Hofstra University.

### **Awards**

Mr. Licul has been selected to the Super Lawyers list for the past two years, a designation reserved for the top 5% of attorneys in New York. He has also received an AV Preeminent Rating from Martindale Hubbell in recognition of his extraordinary level of professional achievement.

### **Education**

Mr. Licul received his Juris Doctor from Brooklyn Law School. He earned his M.A. *cum laude* from the New York Institute of Technology, where he also received his B.A. with honors.

### **Admitted to Practice**

Mr. Licul is admitted to practice law in New York, as well as before the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, and the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Licul is also admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.