

Michael Sullivan

PARTNER

San Diego

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About Michael

Practical, deeply experienced trial counsel for employment disputes

Michael Sullivan is an experienced trial lawyer and has represented employers for over 35 years. His clients include leading companies in the education (primary, secondary and higher), technology, retail and health care sectors. A fellow of the prestigious College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, Mike focuses on:

- **Employment litigation**
- **Employment law counseling**
- **Higher education litigation and counseling**

Mike excels at addressing the practical considerations facing clients as he develops litigation strategies, and he delivers creative solutions aligned with their business objectives.

Mike was a co-founder of Paul, Plevin, Sullivan & Connaughton LLP, which combined with Quarles in 2023.

Experience in Action

- **Litigating employment cases**, including claims for wrongful termination, wage and hour violations, trade secrets violations, discrimination, whistleblowing, sexual harassment and defamation. Mike has handled over 500 employment cases.
- **Litigating class action lawsuits and claims brought by governmental agencies.**

Education and Honors

UC Berkeley School of Law (J.D., 1987)

University of California, Riverside (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1984)

Judson Baptist College (A. S., *highest honors*, 1981)

Bar Admissions

California

Court Admissions

California State Courts

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

U.S. District Court, All Districts of California





- **Serving as lead trial counsel.** Mike has tried over 40 employment cases before juries, judges and arbitrators.
- **Advising employers on a full range of employment and workplace issues,** including wage and hour issues, leaves of absence, discipline and discharges, layoffs, conducting internal investigations, dealing with union activity, workplace safety issues and regulatory compliance.
- **Providing training to client management teams on the full spectrum of employment issues,** including conducting internal investigations, managing employees, sexual harassment and proper classification of employees.

Successes

- Defense verdict in first-of-its-kind jury trial on fraud claims against law school.
- Achieved dismissal of wrongful termination lawsuit for public school.
- Achieved summary judgment for university in breach of contract and defamation lawsuit.
- Achieved dismissal of Title VII lawsuits for a university and a public school.
- Defeated class certification of multiple educational fraud cases.
- Obtained anti-SLAPP judgment and fee award in defamation case.
- Achieved dismissal of education fraud claims against educational institution.
- Jury trial to defense verdict in national origin and race discrimination claims.
- Jury trial to defense verdict of claims of sexual harassment, failure to prevent harassment and intentional infliction of emotional distress.
- Jury trial to defense verdict of Title VII discrimination claim based on national origin and/or gender relating to the termination of plaintiff's employment.
- Achieved judgment for defendant in \$12 million ERISA arbitration for defense contractor.

Capabilities

Employment Advice, Counseling and Training

Employment Litigation and Dispute Resolution

Higher Education

Internal Investigations and Compliance

Labor & Employment

Labor Management Relations

Research Institutions & Higher Education

Wage and Hour Compliance and Defense

Professional Recognitions

- *Best Lawyers in America*[®] (2006-present)





- *Best Lawyers in America*® "Lawyer of the Year" (2016, 2019, 2024: Labor Law - Management; 2020: Litigation - Labor and Employment; 2014, 2023: Employment Law - Management)
- Martindale-Hubbell® *San Diego Magazine* as a "Top Lawyer in the Labor & Employment" (2016, 2017)
- *The Recorder* "One of The Best Employment Lawyers in California Not Working at a "Mega-Firm" (2006)
- *San Diego Super Lawyers*® (2007-present: Labor & Employment)
- *The Daily Transcript* "One of San Diego County's Top Attorneys in Labor and Employment" (2005)

Professional & Civic Activities

- University of San Diego School of Law for 12 years, teaching Employment Law and Employment Discrimination, adjunct professor
 - Frequent lecturer on employment law issues for industry and human resources groups
- *Bender's California Labor & Employment Bulletin*, editor-in-chief (2003-2019)
- College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, fellow (2021)
- San Diego County Bar Association, Labor and Employment Section, member
- National Association of College and University Attorneys, member
- American Employment Law Council, member
- California Society of Healthcare Attorneys, member
- San Diego County Bar Career Development Circle, chair (2015)
- Career Development mentor

