

PARTNER

## Michael J. Willemin

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### OVERVIEW

Michael J. Willemin is a Partner at Wigdor LLP. He is a leading plaintiffs' employment litigation attorney representing clients in numerous high-impact employment matters in federal and state court, as well as in arbitration.

Michael's practice covers counseling and litigation of discrimination cases including sexual harassment, discrimination based on race, gender, pregnancy, disability and age and LGBTQIA+ status, retaliation, defamation, Family and Medical Leave Act, wage and hour, whistleblower and breach of contract cases. Michael's focus also includes civil rights, appellate, and complex class and collective action litigation.

"... his ability to understand and translate client goals and emotions is unparalleled."

—Former client

He has represented individuals in many industries, including financial services, professional services including law, auditing and consulting, sports, tech, entertainment and media, hospitality, medicine, architecture and retail.

Michael is not afraid to aggressively litigate and try cases when the situation calls for it. As a result of his and Wigdor's reputation in this regard, along with Michael's superior negotiating skills, he is regularly able to secure favorable settlements prior to the filing of any lawsuit or other litigation. Michael's trial verdicts, arbitration awards and confidential settlements total over one hundred million dollars.

### PUBLICITY

Many of Michael's cases have garnered significant media attention. Michael is regularly quoted as an expert in national news media. He and his cases have been featured in virtually every major national media outlet, 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.

Michael has made many television and radio appearances, including WPIX and WCBS. He was profiled as a [Rising Star](#) by *Law360* in 2018 for his handling of prominent sexual harassment and gender discrimination cases.

## NOTABLE CASES

- Lead counsel in the case against the NCAA on whether Division I athletes should be treated as employees under the minimum wage and overtime laws
- Co-counsel on the Brian Flores, Steve Wilks, and Ray Horton in their historic race discrimination class action against the NFL
- Sarbanes-Oxley whistleblower retaliation trial against an international investment bank, resulting in a \$1.126 million jury verdict
- Disability discrimination trial resulting in a \$1.35 million jury verdict
- Lead trial counsel on a disability discrimination and retaliation matter that resulted in a substantial verdict for the plaintiff
- Lead arbitration counsel in a discrimination and retaliation matter that resulted in a substantial arbitration award for the Claimant
- Second chair trial counsel in a matter that garnered significant nation-wide publicity
- Arbitration of claims (resulting in successful post-hearing settlement) against nationwide retailer
- Litigation against a very large hedge fund in a lawsuit that has been lauded by the *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." The matter settled following an arbitration hearing on the merits
- Litigation of various race discrimination, hostile work environment and sexual assault lawsuits against Fox News
- Litigation against a prominent night club on behalf of a woman who was raped by the club's general manager (resulting in favorable settlement)
- 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 an age discrimination claim against a large investment bank
- Pre-litigation resolution of an age discrimination claim against a major pharmaceutical company
- 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 against an international investment banking firm

## AWARDS

Michael is ranked in *Chambers USA* Labor & Employment: Mainly Plaintiffs and is a *Billboard* Top Music Lawyer. He was recognized in 2024 by Bloomberg Law as one of 40 leading young lawyers nationwide in the fourth annual "They've Got Next: The 40 Under 40." He was named a *Law360* Employment Rising Star in 2018, a highly competitive award that is reserved for the top U.S. employment attorneys under

age 40. He is a 2024 *National Law Journal* Rising Star of the Plaintiff's Bar, was selected as a New York Metro *Super Lawyers* Rising Star for the past 11 years, has been recognized by *Best Lawyers*, widely regarded as a top peer review service and is a *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Civil Rights & Plaintiff Employment lawyer.

## ADMISSIONS

- New York
- Massachusetts
- U.S. District Court for Southern District of New York
- U.S. District Court for Eastern District of New York

## EDUCATION

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- J.D., Fordham University School of Law
  - Internships at Legal Services NYC, Bronx, Manhattan District Attorney's Office, New York City Council's General Counsel's Office and Fordham Law's Criminal Defense Clinic.
- B.A., Providence College
  - Internship at the Rhode Island Commission on Human Rights
  - Investigated complaints of discrimination against Rhode Island employers



