GIBSON DUNN

In Memoriam: Gibson Dunn Partner Theodore B. Olson

Firm News | November 13, 2024



Gibson Dunn is deeply saddened by the passing of our partner and friend, Theodore B. Olson, on November 13, 2024. A towering figure on the national stage, Ted was a once-in-a-generation lawyer – and a central part of Gibson Dunn's legacy and success.

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He was a founder of the firm's Appellate and Constitutional Law Practice Group and served in many firm leadership positions as well as senior government roles, including Solicitor General of the United States.

"Ted was a titan of the legal profession and one of the most extraordinary and eloquent advocates of our time," said Barbara Becker, Chair and Managing Partner of Gibson Dunn. "He was creative, principled, and fearless – a trailblazing advocate who cared about all people. We mourn his loss profoundly and send our condolences to his wife Lady, a cherished member of our firm family, and to all of Ted's loved ones."

"Ted has been the heart and soul of Gibson Dunn for six decades and made us who we are today," said Theodore J. Boutrous Jr., partner at Gibson Dunn. "He was not just an incomparable lawyer, mentor, role model, and friend, but he has made immeasurable contributions to the rule of law, our Constitution, and our country. We will miss him with all our hearts."

In June 2024, the firm held a ceremony, attended by Ted, to christen the Theodore B. Olson Moot Courtroom in Los Angeles, in honor of his pioneering methods of appellate argument preparation and his bold and powerful style of delivery. May his memory be a blessing.

About Theodore B. Olson

Theodore B. Olson was Solicitor General of the United States during the period 2001 to 2004. From 1981 to 1984, he was Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel in the U.S. Department of Justice. Except for those two intervals, he was a lawyer with Gibson Dunn in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. since 1965.

Selected by *TIME* in 2010 as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, Ted was one of the nation's premier appellate and U.S. Supreme Court advocates.

He argued 65 cases in the Supreme Court, including the two *Bush v. Gore* cases arising out of the 2000 presidential election; *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission; Hollingsworth v. Perry*, the case upholding the overturning of California's Proposition 8 banning same-sex marriages; and *U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California*, successfully challenging the Trump Administration's rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Ted's Supreme Court arguments included cases involving separation of powers; federalism; voting rights; the First Amendment; the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses; patents and copyrights; antitrust; taxation; property rights; punitive damages; the Commerce Clause; immigration; criminal law; securities; telecommunications; the internet; and other federal constitutional and statutory questions.

Ted served as private counsel to two Presidents, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, in addition to serving those two Presidents in high-level positions in the Department of Justice.

He was twice awarded the U.S. Department of Justice's Edmund J. Randolph Award, its highest award for public service and leadership, and also received the Department of Defense's Distinguished Service Award, its highest civilian award, for his advocacy in the courts of the United States, including the Supreme Court.

Ted was appointed by President Barack Obama to the 10-member Council of the Administrative Conference of the United States as well as the Commission on White House Fellowships. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, the Board of Visitors of the Federalist Society, the Board of Directors of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, and the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial Foundation. He previously served as a member of the President's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

Ted was a Fellow of both the American College of Trial Lawyers and the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers. He received his law degree in 1965 from the University of California, Berkeley where he was a Member of the *California Law Review* and Order of the Coif.

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