# Theodore J. Boutrous Jr.

Partner

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Los Angeles



Theodore J. Boutrous, Jr. is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Gibson Dunn and one of the nation's leading litigators. He is a member of the American Law Institute and a Fellow of the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers.

As *The New York Times* has noted, Mr. Boutrous has "a long history of pushing the courts and the public to see the bigger picture on heated issues." *The American Lawyer* named Mr. Boutrous the 2019 "Litigator of the Year, Grand Prize Winner" and the *Los Angeles* and *San Francisco Daily Journals* in 2021 named him a "Top Lawyer of the Decade." According to *The National Law Journal*, which in 2013 named him one of the "100 Most Influential Lawyers in America," he "is known for his wise, strategic advice to clients in crisis and is a media law star."

Mr. Boutrous has represented clients in federal and state appellate courts throughout the nation in a wide spectrum of cases, and he is currently serving as Co-Chair of the firm's First Amendment and Free Expression Practice Group. He has argued hundreds of appeals, including before the Supreme Court of the United States, 12 different federal circuit courts of appeals, and 12 different state supreme courts (including 14 arguments in the California Supreme Court), and he has led a multitude of other complex civil, constitutional, and criminal matters. Mr. Boutrous has successfully persuaded courts to overturn some of the largest jury verdicts and class actions in history and prevailed in many cutting-edge cases. In 2011, he successfully represented Walmart before the Supreme Court of the United States in the *Dukes* case, which unanimously reversed what had been the largest employment class action in history and established important standards governing class actions (Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes). In 2013, he successfully represented the prevailing party in obtaining a unanimous Supreme Court decision enforcing the Class Action Fairness Act (Standard Fire Insurance Co. v. Knowles ). Also in 2013, Mr. Boutrous successfully represented plaintiffs in the Supreme Court in a case invalidating California's prohibition on same-sex marriage, Proposition 8 (Hollingsworth v. Perry), in which he also served as one of the lead trial lawyers and architects of the legal strategy that led to the landmark victory. In 2018, Mr. Boutrous successfully represented CNN and reporter Jim Acosta in bringing First Amendment and due process claims against then-President Donald Trump and other White House officials, forcing the White House to restore Mr. Acosta's press credentials. "Litigators of the Week: Gibson Dunn's Two Teds Score for the Free Press," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (November 30, 2018). And in 2021, he secured a major victory for Hewlett-Packard Company when the California Court of Appeal affirmed a more than $3 billion verdict in HP's long-running contract dispute with Oracle Corporation. "Litigators of the Week: Gibson Dunn Protects Its $3B Trial Win for HP Against Oracle on Appeal," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (June 18, 2021).

As both a crisis management strategist and a seasoned appellate and media lawyer, Mr. Boutrous has extensive experience handling high-profile litigation, media relations, and media legal issues. He routinely advises clients in planning how to respond, and in

## Capabilities

Appellate and Constitutional Law
Antitrust and Competition
Class Actions
Consumer Protection
Crisis Management
First Amendment and Free Expression
Intellectual Property
Labor and Employment
Litigation
Mass Torts and Product Liability
Media, Entertainment, and Technology
National Security
Technology Litigation
Transnational Litigation
Trials

## Credentials

### Education

University of San Diego - 1987 Juris Doctor
Arizona State University - 1984 Bachelor of Science

### Admissions

California Bar
District of Columbia Bar
New York Bar
England & Wales - Solicitor - Registered Foreign Lawyer

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responding, to crises and other especially significant legal problems that attract the media spotlight.

Mr. Boutrous received the Distinguished Leadership Award from PEN America in 2019 for his leadership in advancing First Amendment rights and protecting freedom of expression. As *The Hollywood Reporter* noted in naming him to its 2022 "Power Lawyers" list, "[w]hen issues of free speech are in play, Boutrous is the attorney on speed dial." Mr. Boutrous was also named one of "Hollywood's Top Entertainment Attorneys" in *Variety*'s 2026 Legal Impact Report, which highlighted his representation of OpenAI in a successful defense against the first-ever defamation case arising from generative AI output. *The National Law Journal* recognized him as a "First Amendment Rights Trailblazer" in 2020.

Numerous profiles of Mr. Boutrous and his practice have appeared in the media. Prominent mentions include: "35 Judges in 44 Days: Gibson Dunn's Ted Boutrous on His 'Record' Argument Streak," *The Recorder* (April 8, 2026); "'Mr. Boutrous, You Have 4 Minutes': On Rebuttal With Ted Boutrous of Gibson Dunn," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (August 25, 2022); "Litigator of the Week: How Gibson Dunn Helped Hit Print on Mary Trump's Best-Seller," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (July 17, 2020); "Litigation Department of the Year," *The American Lawyer* (January 2020); "Litigator of the Week: Gibson Dunn's Theodore Boutrous Jr. Scores Another Win for the Fourth Estate," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (September 6, 2019); "Lawyer of the week: Theodore Boutrous Jr. attorney in White House press pass victory," *The Times of London* (November 29, 2018); "Ted Boutrous, CNN's Champion, Is Fired Up," *Law.com* (November 30, 2018); "Litigator of the Week: From Zero to Hero in Seven Days," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (April 27, 2017); "Litigator of the Week," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (September 8, 2016); "Practice Group Performs In Spotlight and Under Pressure," *Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journal* (March 14, 2012); "Litigator of the Week," *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* (June 23, 2011); "Lawyer of the Week," *The Times of London* (June 30, 2011); "Appellate Lawyer of the Week," *National Law Journal* (March 23, 2011); "Litigation Department of the Year," *The American Lawyer* (January 2016); "Litigation Department of the Year," *The American Lawyer* (January 2012); "Litigation Department of the Year," *The American Lawyer* (January 2010); and "He's a Hired Gun of the Highest Caliber," *The Los Angeles Times* (June 24, 2007).

In 2025, *The Daily Journal* recognized Mr. Boutrous with its inaugural Distinguished Counsel award, which honors lawyers "whose consistent excellence and enduring influence in California's legal community have earned them a place among the Top 100 lawyers for 15 years or more," and has repeatedly named him to its lists of "Top 100 Lawyers" and "Leading Commercial Litigators" in California for more than two decades. *The Hollywood Reporter* featured Mr. Boutrous on its 2026 list of "Hollywood's 100 Most Powerful Lawyers," noting that he "has built a reputation for going to the mat for media freedoms;" the publication also declared that he "is there when an industry's future rides on a big argument" in its 2021 Power Lawyers profile of Mr. Boutrous. He has been named a California "Litigation Star" by *Benchmark Litigation*, as well as a "National Practice Area Star." *Chambers USA* ranks him as a leading lawyer in five different categories, describing him as "an absolute star," with clients praising his skills as "an amazing orator" and his "incredible knack of picking the winning argument." "[H]is oral advocacy skills are peerless. He picks the right point in response to every question without even blinking." *The Legal 500* named Mr. Boutrous a member of its "Hall of Fame" for supreme courts and appellate litigation, calling him a "renowned advocate" and "the preeminent authority on punitive damages defenses in the U.S." *Lawdragon* recognizes Mr. Boutrous as one of its distinguished "Lawdragon Legends," an honor reserved for those who have appeared in *Lawdragon*'s guide at least ten times since its inception in 2005. Over the years, he has been named to the following *Lawdragon* lists: 500 Leading Litigators in America, Leading Global Litigators, 500 Leading Lawyers in America, 500 Leading Global Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers, 500 Global Leaders in Crisis Management, and 100 Leading AI & Tech Legal Advisors.

Mr. Boutrous is a frequent commentator on legal issues. His articles include: "Spare the 'Dreamers' a Nightmare by According Them Due Process," *The Wall Street Journal* (May 2, 2017); "Poor Children Need a New *Brown v. Board* of Education," *The Wall Street*


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*Journal* (August 28, 2016); "A First Amendment Blind Spot," *The Wall Street Journal* (May 27, 2014); "California Kids Go to Court to Demand a Good Education," *The Wall Street Journal* (January 28, 2014); "A Radical Departure on Press Freedom," *The Wall Street Journal* (May 23, 2013); "A Killer's Notebook, a Reporter's Rights," *The New York Times* (April 9, 2013); and "Broadcast 'Indecency' on Trial," *The Wall Street Journal* (January 17, 2012).

Mr. Boutrous is a member of the Steering Committee of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and was a recipient of its 2021 Freedom of the Press Award. He also sits on the Advisory Board of the International Women's Media Foundation, which named him its 2015 Leadership Honoree. In addition, he is a member of the Advisory Board of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, which advises the Chief Judge on matters related to the effective administration of the courts in the Ninth Circuit.

Mr. Boutrous received his law degree, *summa cum laude*, from the University of San Diego School of Law in 1987, where he was Valedictorian and Editor-in-Chief of the *San Diego Law Review.*

Mr. Boutrous is admitted to practice in California, New York, and the District of Columbia.


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