

Karin Portlock

Partner

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New York

Karin Portlock is a partner in the New York office of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher and a member of the White Collar Defense and Investigations, Litigation, Labor and Employment, and Crisis Management Practice Groups. As a former federal prosecutor, Karin has a broad-based government enforcement and investigations practice, ranging from government and internal corporate investigations to criminal defense and regulatory enforcement litigation through trial. She regularly represents individuals and companies under criminal investigation and indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice as well as in civil government probes by federal regulators and state Attorneys General.

Karin is an experienced trial lawyer and courtroom advocate, having served as lead counsel in numerous federal jury trials in the course of her career. Prior to joining Gibson Dunn, Karin was as an Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York from 2015 to 2020. In that role, she tried multiple cases to verdict and prosecuted a broad range of federal criminal violations, including fraud, racketeering, and violent crimes, leading large-scale investigations of murder, firearms, and sex trafficking offenses as well as crimes involving minors and other vulnerable victims. She has particular expertise with victims of trauma and represents victims and witnesses at all stages of investigation and prosecution, including in cases involving highly sensitive subject matter.

Karin leads independent investigations of all kinds, particularly in the employment context. She has conducted numerous confidential investigations into #MeToo, discrimination, harassment, and related allegations of misconduct, including executive misconduct, for companies in a variety of industries, including the media, technology, financial services, and entertainment sectors. Karin often conducts investigations on behalf of audit committees and special committees of corporate boards into workplace-related issues.

Karin has a robust *pro bono* practice. She currently represents the estate of police shooting victim, Terence Crutcher, who was unarmed and had his hands raised when he was shot and killed by Tulsa police in 2016. Mr. Crutcher's killing was captured on video and has been the subject of extensive national media coverage. Karin represents the estate in appealing a lower court's dismissal of the estate's federal civil rights lawsuit alleging numerous violations of Mr. Crutcher's federal constitutional rights against the City of Tulsa and the former officer who killed him. In 2023, Karin secured a unanimous federal jury verdict in the Central District of California in a historic civil rights case for the firm's *pro bono* client, Deon Jones, who was shot in the face with a rubber bullet by a Los Angeles Police Department officer while peacefully protesting during the May 2020 mass demonstrations in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. The result represents the first jury verdict for a protester victimized by the LAPD in connection with the 2020 mass demonstrations and the first time there has been a finding of wrongdoing by an LAPD officer in connection with those demonstrations. Following the 7-day trial, the jury awarded \$375,000 to Mr. Jones, including \$125,000 in punitive damages, finding that the officer acted maliciously and in reckless disregard of Mr. Jones's rights in using unconstitutional



Capabilities

White Collar Defense and Investigations
Crisis Management
Labor and Employment
Litigation
Technology Litigation
Trials

Credentials

Education

Columbia University - 2008 Juris Doctor
Stanford University - 2004 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

New York Bar

Clerkships

US Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit, Hon. Jon O. Newman, 2010 - 2011
US Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit, Hon. Amalya L. Kearse, 2008 - 2009

and excessive force against him. Karin also led a pro bono team that secured the release of an incarcerated domestic violence survivor in the first successful appeal under New York's Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act in the Third Department. She is currently representing another incarcerated domestic violence survivor seeking relief under the law.

Karin is an advocate for diversity in the profession and has written on the advantages of diverse investigative teams. She is consistently cognizant of the benefits that diverse legal teams bring to her clients and is committed to developing diverse talent and mentoring junior lawyers of color. Karin is an Alumni Mentor to the Columbia Black Law Students Association, serves as a Board Member to the Stanford National Black Alumni Association, and was selected as a member of the 2022 fellowship class for the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity.

Karin serves on the Board of Directors for the Columbia Law Review Association and was previously a Lecturer-in-Law at Columbia Law School where she taught legal writing. Additionally, she is a member of the New York Chapter of the Women's White Collar Defense Association and serves on the association's Diversity Committee. Karin has repeatedly been named to the National Black Lawyers' "Top 100" as a Top 100 African American attorney in New York (2022-2024). Additionally, Karin has been named a 2025 New York "Future Star" in White Collar by *Benchmark Litigation*. She also currently serves on the White Collar Crime Committee of the New York City Bar.

Karin received her undergraduate degree from Stanford University and is a graduate of Columbia Law School where she was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Columbia Law Review*—the first Black student to hold that position. She was also a Harlan Fiske Stone scholar and Chair of the Civil Rights Law Society. Following law school, Karin clerked for Judges Amalya L. Kearse and Jon O. Newman, both of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. She later served as a member of the Second Circuit's Pro Bono Panel and has argued numerous appeals before the court. Karin is an experienced appellate advocate. Prior to her government service, Karin practiced for several years at another major international law firm, where she litigated complex civil cases and appeals before state and federal appellate courts.

Karin is admitted to practice in the State of New York and before the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

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