Karin Portlock

Partner

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New York



Karin Portlock is a partner in the New York office of Gibson Dunn and a member of the White Collar Defense and Investigations, Crisis Management, Litigation, and Labor and Employment 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 companies and individuals under criminal investigation and indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice as well as in civil probes by federal regulators and major litigation by State Attorneys General. Karin is a member of the firm's State Attorneys General Task Force.

Karin is an experienced trial lawyer and courtroom advocate. Prior to joining Gibson Dunn, Karin was 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 frequently leads independent investigations, particularly in the employment context on behalf of corporate boards into workplace-related issues. She has conducted numerous confidential investigations into discrimination, harassment, and related allegations of misconduct, including executive misconduct, for companies in a variety of industries, including the media, technology, financial services, nonprofit, and entertainment sectors.

Karin's *pro bono* practice is similarly robust—focusing on civil rights and criminal justice issues. 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 in violation of his constitutional rights. Mr. Crutcher's killing was captured on video and has been the subject of extensive national media coverage. 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. Karin also represents incarcerated domestic violence survivors seeking relief under New York's Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act. In 2023, she led a pro bono team that secured the release of a survivor in the first successful appeal under the law in New York's Third Department.

Karin has been named a 2026 "Future Star" in White Collar by *Benchmark Litigation*, a Top 100 African American attorney in New York by *The National Black Lawyers*

Capabilities

White Collar Defense and Investigations
Crisis Management
Labor and Employment
Litigation
State Attorneys General
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

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(2022-2025), and has been named to *Lawdragon's* list of 500 Global Leaders in Crisis Management (2025-2026). Karin currently serves on the White Collar Crime Committee of the New York City Bar Association and is an active member of the Women's White Collar Defense Association, where she serves on the Diversity Committee.

Karin is an advocate for diversity in the profession and speaks and publishes frequently on the advantages of diverse legal teams. She is consistently cognizant of the benefits that diverse 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, a former Board Member of the Stanford National Black Alumni Association, and a 2022 fellow of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity.

Karin received her undergraduate degree from Stanford University and is a graduate of Columbia Law School where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone scholar and Editor-in-Chief of the *Columbia Law Review*—the first Black student to hold that position. 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 is a former member of the Second Circuit's Pro Bono Panel and is an experienced appellate advocate. Karin has handled numerous appeals before federal and state appellate courts. Earlier in her career, Karin was a lecturer-in-law at Columbia Law School where she taught legal writing.

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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