

Connor S. Sullivan

Partner

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New York



Connor Sullivan is a partner in the New York office of Gibson Dunn. He is the co-chair of the firm's First Amendment and Free Expression practice group and a member of the Technology Litigation; Tech and Innovation; Media, Entertainment, and Technology; and Appellate and Constitutional Law practice groups, among others.

He represents technology and media companies in high-stakes litigation in state and federal court, including multiple jury trials involving billions of dollars in potential damages. His experience includes founders' disputes, breach of contract litigation, tort claims, and copyright and trademark issues, involving products ranging from social media platforms to artificial intelligence and fintech applications.

Connor also has significant experience in litigation involving the First Amendment, especially defamation defense, for technology companies, media and entertainment clients, and news media organizations. He has been involved in some of the firm's major recent First Amendment victories, including winning a complete victory at summary judgment in defeating the first-ever defamation claim arising from generative artificial intelligence output. Before joining the firm, Connor served as a member of the trial team in one of the largest defamation suits ever tried. He is a co-author of "Defamation and Reputation Management in the United States" for the global research platform Lexology and co-hosts the firm's regular webinar on developments in First Amendment jurisprudence. Connor has also worked on behalf of pro bono clients in connection with immigration and First Amendment rights.

Connor was a member of the team honored with the *Financial Times*' Innovative Lawyers North America 2025 award for Disputes and Litigation. For his role in securing a precedent-setting victory based on "hallucinated" AI output, *The American Lawyer* recognized Connor in its "Litigators of the Week" feature. He has been repeatedly recognized by *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America* in Entertainment and Sports Law and Appellate Practice, and named to *Super Lawyers* New York Metro "Rising Stars" for litigation since 2020.

Significant representations include:*

- Secured a complete defense victory at summary judgment against the first-ever defamation claim arising from generative artificial intelligence output.
- Represented the founders, early executives, and employees of the online dating application Tinder in a four-year multibillion-dollar litigation, which settled at the conclusion of a month-long jury trial with the defendants paying Gibson Dunn's clients \$441 million.
- Defending NBCUniversal Media and its production company partner against a defamation claim brought by the music industry executive Sean Combs arising from a streaming documentary.

Capabilities

Litigation

Appellate and Constitutional Law

Artificial Intelligence

First Amendment and Free Expression

Intellectual Property

Media, Entertainment, and Technology

Privacy, Cybersecurity, and Data Innovation

Tech and Innovation

Technology Litigation

Trials

Credentials

Education

Yale University - 2013 Juris Doctor

University of Virginia - 2008 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

New York Bar

District of Columbia Bar

Clerkships

US Court of Appeals, DC Circuit, Hon. Thomas B. Griffith, 2014 - 2015

USDC, Southern District of New York, Hon. Katherine Polk Failla, 2013 - 2014

- Represented an AI developer in successfully enforcing a non-competition and non-solicitation agreement against a former employee.
- Represented a major grocery retailer and wholesaler in a \$125 million breach of contract lawsuit arising from a failed merger.
- Defending two global media companies against a defamation claim brought by a prominent television producer arising from a streaming documentary.
- Defended multiple consumer products manufacturers against trademark infringement litigation.
- Defending a global entertainment company against a breach of contract claim arising from production of an Emmy-winning streaming drama.
- Representing the MSNBC host Joy Reid in defending against a defamation claim.
- Defended a national news network against multibillion-dollar defamation and product disparagement claims seeking billions of dollars in damages, including a month-long jury trial.
- Successfully represented White House in First Amendment and Due Process Clause challenges to obtain the return of their press credentials after they were suspended by the White House Press Office.
- Defended a global news agency against defamation claims involving international financial fraud.
- Represented Mary Trump, the niece of President Donald Trump, in successfully defeating an attempt by the Trump family to prevent the publication of her bestselling family memoir *Too Much and Never Enough*.

Prior to joining Gibson Dunn, Connor was an associate at a prominent firm in Washington, D.C., where he focused on defending news organizations in defamation actions. He was also involved in significant copyright, product liability, and breach of contract actions.

He clerked for the Honorable Thomas B. Griffith of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and the Honorable Katherine Polk Failla of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. In the summer after law school, he served as what is now called a Phillips Fellow in the Office of the Solicitor General at the Department of Justice.

Connor graduated from Yale Law School in 2013, where he was a director of the law school's Supreme Court clinic, an editor of the *Yale Law Journal*, the Executive Editor of the *Yale Journal on Regulation*, and a winner of the Morris Tyler Moot Court competition. He published an academic comment entitled *A First Amendment Approach to Generic Drug Manufacturer Tort Liability*, 123 Yale L.J. 495 (2013). Prior to law school, Connor was a strategy and operations consultant for McKinsey & Company. He graduated with distinction from the University of Virginia in 2008, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Connor is admitted to practice in New York and the District of Columbia, and before the United States Supreme Court, the United States Courts of Appeals for the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Ninth, and District of Columbia Circuits, and the United States District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York and the District of Columbia.

** Includes matters Connor handled prior to joining Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher.*

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