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Leading Commercial Litigators 2025: Theodore Boutrous

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During Theodore J. Boutrous Jr's 36-plus years with Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, he has developed a practice as a prominent advocate in high-profile and high-stakes cases involving significant legal issues in the fields of media, entertainment and technology, freedom of speech and of the press, antitrust, class actions, insurance and climate change.

"It's been an active year," Boutrous said. "One of my specialties is challenging big verdicts."

In November, an appellate panel in Georgia vacated a $1.7 billion punitive damages award against Ford Motor Co. after Boutrous and a Gibson Dunn team persuaded the panel that a trial judge's imposition of issues sanctions was unauthorized. The sanctions prevented Ford at a retrial from contesting liability for a fatal rollover crash of a F-250 pickup. *Ford Motor Co. v. Hill et al.*, A24A0657 (Ga. Ct. of App., op. filed Nov. 1, 2024).

"This was an extraordinary situation where the trial judge virtually directed the jury to a huge verdict," Boutrous said. "We worked with the trial team to argue that the remedy was way out of whack."

In April, Boutrous and colleagues, representing the pro bono journalism watchdog nonprofit Media Matters for America, took on X.com's Elon Musk and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. Musk and Paxton reacted strongly to a 2023 Media Matters report that ads for major corporations on X.com appeared next to extremist content such as photos of Adolf Hitler. Musk called the report "a fraudulent attack" and promised to file "a thermonuclear lawsuit."

Days later, Paxton announced he'd probe whether Media Matters violated Texas' deceptive trade practices law. He issued a civil investigative demand for numerous Media Matters records and had it served on Media Matters in the District of Columbia. Boutrous successfully sought an order to preliminarily enjoin enforcement of the demand, contending it was designed to chill Media Matters' First Amendment rights. *Media Matters for America et al. v. Paxton*, 1:24-cv-00147 (D. Columbia, filed Jan 17, 2024).

"It's unusual to stop an attorney general in his tracks, even though he's off the rails here," Boutrous said.

Boutrous is lead defense counsel for Chevron Corp. in a series of more than 25 ongoing climate change cases pending around the U.S. In that role, he also serves as the lead advocate for all the petroleum industry defendants on many of the key arguments over the inapplicability of local laws to deal with interstate and international greenhouse-gas emissions.

He's won several, and he petitioned for cert at the U.S. Supreme Court after the Hawaiian Supreme Court gave the green light to defective marketing and failure to warn claims

Related People

Theodore J. Boutrous Jr.

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against the defendants. In January the high court let the cases go forward. *Sunoco LP et al. v. City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii et al.*, 23-947 (S.Ct., pet. filed Feb. 28, 2024).

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