

# Robert M. McDowell

Partner



rmcdowell@cooley.com

+1 202 842 7862

Washington, DC

Communications Regulatory  
Communications  
Congressional Investigations  
Digital Media and Entertainment  
Internet of Things  
Mergers and Acquisitions  
Telecommunications and Wireless  
Technology  
Private Equity  
Spacetechn and Satellite

Rob McDowell is co-chair of Cooley's global communications practice group and he advises telecommunications, media and technology clients, including private equity funds, on their most significant regulatory, legal and business matters. As a former commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission and a highly regarded industry leader, Rob has been at the forefront of the most complex and groundbreaking issues facing telecommunications.

Rob was first appointed to the FCC by President George W. Bush in 2006 and again by President Obama in 2009. He was unanimously confirmed both times by the US Senate. During his tenure, Rob led efforts to expand consumer access to spectrum through his work on the two largest wireless auctions in US history at the time, played a key role in the 2009 digital television transition and led efforts to establish the first federal civil rights rule in a generation by creating a ban on racially discriminatory practices in broadcast advertising.

While at the FCC, Rob also worked extensively on several large and complex mergers, including: Sirius/XM; Comcast/NBC-Universal; Verizon/AllTel; AT&T/Dobson; Sprint/Clearwire; Verizon/SpectrumCO and AT&T/T-Mobile. At Cooley, he represents clients on transformative deals before the FCC, Congress, the White House and other regulatory bodies.

Representative matters:

- T-Mobile in its merger with Sprint
- Private equity funds managed by affiliates of Apollo Global Management in the \$3.484 billion acquisition of the broadcast television businesses of Northwest Broadcasting and Cox Media Group, CMG's radio station portfolio, CoxReps, the nation's largest national television rep company, and Gamut, a national advertising business
- Gray Television in its acquisition of Raycom for \$3.6 billion
- Microsoft and its Airband project to secure regulatory approval of technical spectrum proposals to enable the creation of a broadband ecosystem using unlicensed television channels, or "TV white spaces," to help serve unserved and underserved portions of the US
- Iridium Communications in its regulatory spectrum advocacy to support its global voice, data and navigation satellite services
- Help clients navigate policy and advocacy processes before regulatory bodies, the executive branch, Congress and strategic third parties
- Sixth Street Partners on spectrum arbitrage opportunities

- GI Partners in its acquisition of Rise Broadband (regulatory)

Rob is an advocate for internet freedom, serving on the official US diplomatic delegation to the 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications and exposing an international bid to regulate vital aspects of the Internet through multilateral treaty-based organizations. Rob authored an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal opposing multilateral internet regulation that led to a resolution passed unanimously in the House and Senate, as well as the ultimate defeat of the international bid at a treaty negotiation in Dubai later that year.

Rob is often called upon for speaking engagements and frequently appears on TV and radio. He has written opinion pieces for many publications, including the Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.

## Education

William & Mary Law School  
JD, 1990

Duke University  
BA, 1985

## Admissions & Credentials

Virginia

District of Columbia

## Court Admissions

Supreme Court of the United States

US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

## Rankings & Accolades

Super Lawyers: Washington, DC, Rising Star (2024)

Best Lawyers in America: Media Law

Chambers USA: Telecom, Broadcast & Satellite – District of Columbia (2020 – 2023)

Consumer Electronics Association: Digital Patriot Award

Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association: Chair Award

Legal 500: Telecom and Broadcast

Media Institute: Freedom of Speech Award

Minority, Media and Telecom Council (MMTC): Everett C. Parker Award

National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters: Power of Urban Radio Award

Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal and Economic Policy Studies: Jerry B. DuVall Public Service Award

Sports Fan Coalition: Most Valuable Policymaker

## Memberships & Affiliations

## MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

McLean Project for the Arts, Former Chairman and Board Member

The Hudson Institute, Senior Fellow

The Potomac School, former member, Board of Trustees

Shared Spectrum Company, Board of Directors

Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, Former Member, Board of Visitors