Cooley

Bobby Earles

Partner



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Chicago

Trials
Commercial Litigation
White Collar Defense and Investigations

M&A Disputes
Financial Services Enforcement and Regulatory
CooleyREG

Bobby is a partner in Cooley's litigation department and co-lead of the Chicago litigation group. His practice concentrates on complex commercial litigation, with a focus on post-closing and M&A-driven disputes.

Post-acquisition disputes

Bobby is a co-founder of Cooley's post-acquisition disputes practice and works closely with clients navigating complex, fast-moving commercial conflicts, including disputes involving growth companies and venture-backed businesses. His experience spans cases where legal risk, business strategy and reputational concerns intersect.

Complex commercial litigation

Bobby is an experienced first-chair litigator and trial lawyer. He is a go-to option for difficult, contentious legal disputes. He focuses on hard-to-resolve contract cases, ranging from small matters to large, bet-the-company commercial litigation. Bobby is particularly experienced at helping clients navigate challenging contractual disputes and finding a way to a resolution where there's no obvious path forward.

White-collar defense

In addition to his commercial disputes practice, Bobby advises clients on internal investigations and white collar-adjacent matters, including investigations involving allegations of bribery and corruption, financial fraud, and regulatory violations. He has led investigations involving cross-border issues, conducted witness interviews, overseen on-site reviews, and advised organizations on strengthening internal controls and compliance frameworks.

Bobby maintains a strong commitment to pro bono service and has successfully represented pro bono clients in contested proceedings in state and federal courts, including matters involving domestic violence protection, access to healthcare for incarcerated individuals and criminal record expungement. Bobby was also a 2023 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity fellow and is actively involved in leadership and diversity initiatives within Cooley.

He has been recognized as a Rising Star by Illinois Super Lawyers, named one of the Nation's Best by Lawyers of Color magazine, and selected as one of Chicago's 40 Game Changers by

Ariel Investments and WVON Radio. Bobby has also received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Western District of Wisconsin's Pro Bono Program.

Representative matters*

- ***Lawrence Northern v. Frisk*** (W.D. Wis.): Served as lead counsel in section 1983 lawsuit on behalf of Wisconsin inmate against state-employed nurse; sat first chair and delivered closing argument; tried case to verdict and won $73,000 in compensatory damages. The trial win was highlighted in The American Lawyer.
- **Pacific Gas and Electric**: Key member of team serving as court-appointed monitor of large West Coast utility in the aftermath of the 2010 San Bruno gas pipeline explosion.
- ***In re Toys "R" Us, Inc.***: Serving as debtor's litigation counsel in complex reorganization of the company's finances and business operations.
- ***James Doe v. Syngenta***: Defending international agricultural company Syngenta against product compliance claims.
- ***Coast Products v. BP, et al.*** (N.D. Fla.): Defended BP against a lawsuit alleging tortious interference and civil conspiracy related to the lease of a commercial building during the Deepwater Horizon Plaintiff alleged $125 million in damages. Plaintiff voluntarily dismissed the action during the discovery period.
- ***Newton v. BP, et al.*** (Alabama state court): Defended BP against a lawsuit alleging trespass to private property during the Deepwater Horizon response. The parties entered into a confidential settlement during the discover period.
- **Ad Hoc Committee of Valeant Pharmaceuticals International**: Member of the team responsible for the internal investigation of Valeant Pharmaceuticals on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Valeant board of directors in response to public allegations of impropriety regarding Valeant's relationship with Philidor and various accounting issues.

* Representation handled before joining Cooley

Clerkships

- Summer clerk to the Judge Sophia H. Hall of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division

Education

University of Chicago Law School JD, Pro Bono Award, 2012

Howard University BBA, Business Management, magna cum laude, 2001

Admissions & Credentials

Illinois

Court Admissions

US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Rankings & Accolades

Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch – Commercial Litigation

Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch – Criminal Defense: White-Collar

Super Lawyers: Rising Star – Illinois

Lawyers of Color: Nation's Best

Ariel Investments and WVON Radio: Chicago’s 40 Game Changers

Memberships & Affiliations

Fellow, Chicago Urban League IMPACT Leadership Development Program

Co-Founder, “It’s Just [Black Lawyers Having] Lunch”

Mentor, LINK Unlimited

Member, Chicago Inn of Court

Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth

American Bar Association (ABA)

Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms