



Charles C. Cavanagh

Partner

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Practice Areas

- Labor & Employment
- Litigation
- Product Liability
- Retail, Restaurants & Hospitality
- General Liability

Admissions

- Colorado
- California

Education & Honors

- University of Michigan School of Law, J.D., cum laude, 1998
- Georgetown University, B.S.F.S., cum laude, 1994

Associations

- American Bar Association
- Colorado Bar Association
- Los Angeles County Bar Association
- Larimer County Bar Association

Professional Experience

- Arnold & Porter, LLP, Los Angeles, CA
- Irell & Manella LLP, Los Angeles, CACA

Charles Cavanagh is a highly accomplished trial lawyer and a valued member of the Litigation and Labor & Employment Practice Groups at Messner Reeves LLP. With extensive experience in federal and state trial and appellate courts, as well as a strong background in binding arbitration, Mr. Cavanagh has successfully litigated a broad range of cases. His expertise spans diverse areas of the law, including labor and employment defense, corporate break-ups, commercial contract disputes, intellectual property protection, allegations of false advertising, breach-of-warranty claims, products liability, and construction defects. Mr. Cavanagh's comprehensive approach to litigation ensures that his clients receive top-notch representation, from guiding them through the litigation process to trial advocacy and appeals. Additionally, he provides valuable counseling on labor and employment matters, such as employee handbooks, workplace investigations, termination procedures, and litigation avoidance strategies.

Admitted to both the Colorado and California bars, Mr. Cavanagh initially practiced law in California for a decade before relocating to Colorado and joining Messner Reeves. His transition to Colorado has allowed him to serve the firm's clients in both jurisdictions. Indeed, Mr. Cavanagh boasts significant courtroom experience, including serving as first-chair trial counsel, in both states. Mr. Cavanagh prepared for his successful legal career by completing his education at Georgetown and the University of Michigan Law School, graduating with honors from both schools.

Bio Continued

Areas of Expertise:

Labor and Employment Defense:

Mr. Cavanagh has extensive experience in defending clients against labor and employment claims. With a focus on litigation avoidance strategies, he also advises clients on formulating employee handbooks, conducting workplace investigations, and ensuring proper termination procedures. His goal is to protect his clients' interests while promoting fair and compliant practices in the workplace. However, Mr. Cavanagh is a zealous courtroom advocate when it comes time to represent clients who have been accused of discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, and other unlawful employment practices.

Corporate Break-Ups:

Mr. Cavanagh has been a trusted counselor for clients experiencing all manner of corporate break-ups, successfully navigating them through voluntary withdrawals, forced expulsions, and judicial dissolutions.

False Advertising Allegations:

When false advertising allegations that threaten his clients' reputations arise, Mr. Cavanagh meets the challenge. He has successfully defended large restaurant chains against class action lawsuits that alleged misleading claims, such as "non-GMO" labels on meat, dairy, and soda products. His track record includes obtaining dismissals and summary adjudications of multiple false advertising class actions.

Intellectual Property Protection and Commercial Contract Disputes:

Mr. Cavanagh provides invaluable guidance to clients in matters related to intellectual property protection and commercial contract disputes. His strategic approach and extensive knowledge of these areas of law enable him to safeguard his clients' intellectual property rights and to resolve contract disputes effectively.

Products Liability Litigation and Breach-of-Warranty Claims:

In cases involving products liability and breach-of-warranty claims, Mr. Cavanagh has demonstrated exceptional skill in representing his clients. Whether defending manufacturers or pursuing claims on behalf of injured parties, he leverages his deep understanding of the intricacies of these areas of law to provide effective representation.

Outside of his professional endeavors, Mr. Cavanagh values spending quality time with his loved ones and enjoying the beauty of the Colorado outdoors. Whether hiking, cycling, or skiing, he appreciates the recreational opportunities the state has to offer. Additionally, Mr. Cavanagh and his family find joy in exploring different cultures through travel, broadening their horizons and enriching their lives.

Charles Cavanagh is a highly skilled trial lawyer with a wealth of experience. His ability to advocate effectively for his clients in federal and state courts, as well as through binding arbitration, has resulted in numerous favorable outcomes. From defending against labor and employment claims to handling complex false advertising cases, Mr. Cavanagh consistently provides top-tier representation. With a dedication to guiding his clients through the litigation process and a passion for achieving successful trial outcomes and appeals, he is a trusted advocate for those in need of legal support.

Noteworthy

- Defended a large fireworks manufacturer and display operator at a state court jury trial involving claims of negligence and premises liability.
- Oversaw the defense of dozens of individual wage-and-hour arbitrations brought against a large restaurant chain throughout the Western United States and obtained a complete defense verdict in each of the arbitrations that he tried to completion.
- Obtained a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large restaurant chain after a federal court jury trial in an action filed by a former employee, alleging pregnancy discrimination, failure to accommodate a disability, and failure to engage in the interactive process.
- Obtained a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large restaurant chain after a federal court jury trial in an age discrimination action brought by a job applicant.
- Obtained a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large restaurant chain after a state court jury trial in an action filed by a former employee, alleging harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender, race, and disability, as well as whistleblower retaliation.
- Obtained a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large restaurant chain after a federal court jury trial in a sexual orientation harassment action filed by a former employee.
- Obtained a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large restaurant chain after a federal court jury trial in a disability discrimination lawsuit filed by a former employee.
- Obtained summary judgment, and defeated certification of a putative statewide class of consumers, on behalf of a large restaurant chain in a false advertising action regarding the “non-GMO” character of its meat and dairy products. Obtained subsequent affirmance of these rulings from the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Defeated certification of a putative nationwide class of consumers and obtained a defense judgment on behalf of a large restaurant chain in a false advertising action regarding the “naturally raised” character of its meat.
- Obtained a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large motion picture production company after binding arbitration in a claim for underpayment brought by a writers guild under a collective bargaining agreement.
- Obtained a net defense verdict on behalf of a large e-commerce company after binding arbitration in connection with contractual claims and cross-claims between the company and its fulfillment services provider.
- Obtained dismissal of two putative false advertising class actions on behalf of a large restaurant chain regarding the “non-GMO” character of its meat, dairy and soda products.
- Obtained dismissal of a putative false advertising class action on behalf of a large restaurant chain regarding the “non-GMO” character of its corn products.
- Obtained dismissals of two putative false advertising class actions on behalf of a large restaurant chain regarding the use of bacon in the preparation of its pinto beans.
- Defeated certification of a putative consumer class against a large residential alarm monitoring company with respect to claims regarding the legality and enforceability of numerous provisions of company’s form contract, and successfully defended that ruling before the California Court of Appeal.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a large restaurant chain with respect to national origin harassment and discrimination claims brought against it by two former employees.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a large restaurant chain with respect to discrimination, failure-to-accommodate, wrongful termination and wage-and-hour claims brought against it by a former employee.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a school district with respect to sexual harassment claims brought against it by a former employee.

Noteworthy Continued

- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a high-net-worth individual with respect to an enforcement-of-foreign-judgment action brought against him in California state court.
- Successfully defended before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals a district court's grant of summary judgment in favor of a manufacturing company with respect to race discrimination claims brought against it by a former employee.
- Persuaded the California Court of Appeal to reverse an order denying a motion to strike certain cross-claims under that state's anti-SLAPP statute.
- Defeated an e-commerce company's motion for a preliminary injunction against a large software developer in a trademark infringement action in federal court.
- Persuaded the Los Angeles County Department of Environmental Health at an administrative hearing to drop all claims against a large restaurant chain regarding alleged misrepresentations with respect to various menu items.