



Richard B. Goetz

Partner

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Rich Goetz defends some of the world's best-known businesses—including pharmaceutical, medical device, computer, insurance, consumer products, and food companies—in complex, multimillion-dollar legal challenges. At the pleadings stage and at trial, he has defeated allegations of negligence, false advertising, improper labeling, defective manufacturing, and personal injury. *Benchmark Litigation* calls him a national "Litigation Star," *The Legal 500: United States* named him to its inaugural "Hall of Fame" in 2017 and recognizes him as a "Leading Lawyer," and *BTI* has recognized him as a Client Service All-Star. *Chambers USA* ranks Rich in both Product Liability/Mass Torts and Insurance, noting his "widespread experience handling mass torts and consumer class actions," and his "skill in handling significant contentious insurance matters."

Rich is the Firmwide Co-Chair of O'Melveny's Litigation Department and previously chaired the Firm's Consumer Class Actions, Product Liability/Mass Torts, and Insurance Practices. He also serves on the Firm's Executive Committee.

Rich's clients include:

- Johnson & Johnson
- Colgate-Palmolive
- Chubb
- Amylin Pharmaceuticals
- AstraZeneca
- Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Kia Motors America

Admissions

Bar Admissions

California

Court Admissions

US Supreme Court

US Court of Appeals for the Sixth, Ninth and Tenth Circuits

US District Court for the Central, Eastern, Northern and Southern Districts of California

US District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

Education

University of Chicago, J.D., 1984:
Associate Editor, *Law Review*, 1982–84

Dartmouth College, A.B., 1981:
summa cum laude; Phi Beta Kappa

Rich is a contributing editor for *Product Liability Litigation: Current Law, Strategies, and Best Practices* (Practising Law Institute) and for the class action chapters of *California Practice Guide: Civil Procedure Before Trial* (The Rutter Group). He has lectured at the UCLA School of Engineering and Applied Science and at Harvard Law School, and is a member of the American Law Institute, which is responsible for formulating the Restatements of the Law and updating the Uniform Commercial Code and other model codes.

Rich is the Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of The Pacific Council on International Policy, a leading non-partisan foreign affairs organization. He has been an observer at the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, proceedings against those charged with plotting the 9/11 attacks, and co-chairs a bipartisan task force that has recommended changes to those proceedings, some of which Congress has enacted. He chairs the Board of Directors of Volunteers of America of Los Angeles, one of Southern California's largest providers of services to the homeless, at-risk youth, and others in need. And he was a longtime member of the Los Angeles County Bar Judicial Appointments Committee, serving under both Republican and Democratic Governors.

Experience

- Defending an industry-leading pharmaceutical and consumer products company in:
 - Nationwide litigation over prescription opioid medications.
 - Product liability litigation in multiple states over the alleged side-effects of an over-the-counter pain reliever.
 - Class action litigation over the risk and efficacy disclosures of sun-care products.
 - Nationwide class actions over allegedly defective sutures.
 - Nationwide litigation over a prescription antipsychotic medication alleged to increase the risk of diabetes.
 - Product liability litigation in California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas over allegedly defective pain patches.
 - Nationwide litigation over a prescription acid reflux medication alleged to cause cardiac arrhythmias.
 - Class action litigation over the alleged failings of a blood glucose monitor.
 - Class actions in West Virginia and Texas seeking personal injury damages for allegedly contaminated sutures.
 - Class actions and personal injury cases alleging the mishandling of body tissue from the UCLA Willed Body Program.
- Defending Colgate-Palmolive and Hill's Pet Foods in consumer class actions.
- Defending Amylin Pharmaceuticals, an AstraZeneca company, in an MDL and in nationwide litigation over the diabetes drug Byetta®.
- Defending insurers in multiple insurance coverage actions.
- Defending Kia Motors America in class actions over allegedly defective automobiles.

- Defending a class action for a multinational semiconductor company related to an alleged security vulnerability.
- Defending personal injury and class action cases in an MDL and in various courts over the anti-inflammatory Vioxx® as a national counsel for Merck.
- Defending class actions for Vita Coco™ in California, New York, and Florida over labeling claims.
- Defending a class action for Kombucha tea products in California over labeling claims.
- Defending entertainment and intellectual property disputes for a motion picture studio, a film director, a television producer, a sports marketing company, and a defense contractor.
- Defending environmental actions for an electric utility, a steel company, and an automobile manufacturer.
- Defending construction disputes for a natural resources company.
- Defending securities actions for commercial and investment banks.
- Defending a New Jersey multidistrict antitrust and RICO class action that challenged insurance broker compensation as lead counsel for CIGNA.
- Defending the insurers in the *Powerine II* and *Ameron* coverage cases in the California Supreme Court as lead counsel.
- Filing *amicus* briefs in highly publicized environmental and asbestos litigation (invited by the California Court of Appeal).
- Leading an O'Melveny briefing team in a series of cases before the Mississippi Supreme Court that helped put significant limits on the joinder of parties in that state.

Professional Activities

Member

- Board of Directors (Chair) of Volunteers of America of Los Angeles
- Board of Directors (Co-Chair) of The Pacific Council on International Policy
- Advisory Board of Saks Institute for Mental Health Law, Policy, and Ethics
- Board of Directors of Uncommon Good
- Product Liability Advisory Council (Sustaining Member)
- Former member of Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Bar Association Litigation Section
- Former member of *Law360's* Insurance Editorial Advisory Board
- Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (2003–2005 and 2012–2014)
- Judicial Appointments Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (multiple terms under Governors Davis, Schwarzenegger, and Brown)

Author

- “A Matter of Time: To Propel the Guantánamo Cases Toward Trial, Send in Federal Judges with the Authority to Enforce Scheduling Orders; A Report from the Pacific Council on International Policy Guantánamo Bay Task Force” (2018)
- “How to Fix Guantanamo's Broken Justice,” co-authored with K. Jack Riley, Jerrold D. Green, Michelle Kezirian, *Newsweek* (2016)

- “Up To Speed: To Fairly and Transparently Expedite the Guantanamo Trials, Put Federal Judges in Charge; A Report of the Pacific Council on International Policy GTMO Task Force” (2016)
- “Mass Tort Settlement Strategies,” co-authored with Catalina Vergara, and “Class Action Settlements,” co-authored with Carlos M. Lazatin and Esteban Rodriguez, *Product Liability Litigation: Current Law, Strategies, and Best Practices*, Practising Law Institute (2013)
- “Country Dialogue: North Korea,” Trip Report of Delegation Visit to Pyongyang, Wansan, Nampho Port and Kaesong/DMZ, co-authored with Jennifer Faust, Pacific Council on International Policy (2012)
- “A Defense Of The Learned Intermediary Doctrine,” *Food & Drug Law Journal*, co-authored with Karen Growdon (2008)
- “Drug Manufacturers’ Interactions with the FDA About Drug-Label Content Are Entitled to Protection Under the Noerr-Pennington Doctrine,” *Andrews Drug Recall Litigation Reporter*, co-authored with Sabrina Strong (2008)
- *2014 ABA State-by-State Survey of the Statutes of Limitation and Repose Applicable to Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Litigation*, California section

Contributing Editor

- *California Practice Guide: Civil Procedure Before Trial*, The Rutter Group
- *Product Liability Litigation: Current Law, Strategies, and Best Practices*, Practising Law Institute

Honors & Awards

- Recognized by *Best Lawyers*® 2021 for Insurance Law and Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions - Defendants in Los Angeles, CA; Richard has been listed in *Best Lawyers*® since 2012 and he has also been named “Lawyer of the Year” (Insurance Law) in local jurisdiction (2021)
- Benchmark California Star (2019), National Practice Area Star and Local Litigation Star (2019-2020) for Energy & Natural Resources, General Commercial, Product Liability, and Securities by *Benchmark Litigation*
- “Life Sciences Star” for Product Liability by *LMG Life Sciences* (2018-2020)
- Ranked to the “Hall of Fame” for Insurance and recommended for General Commercial Disputes, Healthcare, and Product Liability and Mass Torts by *The Legal 500 US*
- Leading Lawyer, *Chambers USA*
- Client Service All-Star, *BTI*
- Southern California “Super Lawyer,” *Law & Politics* magazine
- World’s Leading Product Liability Lawyers, *Expert Guides*
- Top 3,000, *Lawdragon*