

Justin O. Sorrell

Partner

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Biography

Justin is a problem-solver who seeks creative solutions to his clients' legal issues while understanding and advising his clients of the business impact of litigation and transaction choices to help guide his clients' decision-making. Justin has served as outside corporate counsel, including handling bank loan transactions, real estate transactions, and commercial leases, and loan work-outs and bankruptcy matters.

When disputes arise and an amicable resolution is not possible, Justin is an experienced litigator who aggressively and diligently pursues his clients' interests in many types of disputes in federal and state courts across Indiana. He often represents businesses and employers in lawsuits including wage and retaliation claims, trade secret and confidentiality claims, non-competition and non-solicitation covenants, breach of contract claims, collections, and appeals. Justin also defends health-care providers against licensing complaints, including against consumer complaints and administrative complaints brought by the Office of the Attorney General. He has helped numerous clients amicably resolve contentious disputes, saving them and their businesses significant time and money.

Additionally, Justin has significant experience in defending claims involving construction-related commercial property damage, products liability, and insurance coverage, and he serves as local counsel in federal and state courts across Indiana as well as before Indiana administrative agencies, including defending employers before the Indiana Worker's Compensation Board and the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Board of Safety Review. He also has significant experience in discovery of electronically-stored information (ESI), and advises clients on how to maximize value and minimize expense.

After earning his law degree, Justin served as a judicial clerk for the Honorable L. Mark Bailey at the Court of Appeals of Indiana.

Prior to beginning his legal career, Justin grew up in Vermont, and was a professional musician with experience performing around the globe, including for Princess Cruises, Disneyland, and Walt Disney World.

Education

Indiana University Maurer School of Law, JD, 2012

Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, MM Jazz Studies, 2009

Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, BM Piano Performance, French Minor, 2005

Bar & Court Admissions

- Indiana, 2012
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, 2013
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, 2014

Representative Matters

Appellate Matters

- Defended adverse party's appeal of trial court's entry of summary judgment in favor of client. Court of Appeals clarified circumstances under which private organization is not liable for alleged actions of a purported subsidiary organization. *White et al. v. The American Legion, Inc. et al.*, 24A-CT-1043 (Ind. Ct. App. 2025) (publication information not yet available).
- Prosecuted appeal of denial of motion to dismiss claims for intentional infliction of emotional distress. Won reversal of trial court's decision and dismissal of emotional distress claims. Court of Appeals clarified that, under Indiana law, non-dependent children are not proper parties to seek damages, and intentional infliction of emotional distress claims are not permitted under Indiana's General Wrongful Death Statute: *Edna Martin Christian Center, Inc. et al. v. Smith*, 202 N.E.3d 1118 (Ind. Ct. App. 2023).
- Prosecuted appeal of denial of summary judgment sought on behalf of truck leasing company. Won partial reversal of trial court's decision, and entry of summary judgment on one of the plaintiffs' claims.: *Penske Truck Leasing Co., L.P. v. McGrath*, 157 N.E.3d 5 (Ind. Ct. App. 2020).
- Defended adverse party's appeal of entry of summary judgment and dismissal of lawsuit in favor of truck leasing company and truck driver: *White v. Holland*, 19A-CT-967 (Ind. Ct. App. 2019) (memorandum decision), *trans. denied*.
- Prosecuted appeal of punitive damages award entered in favor of adverse party. Won reversal of punitive damages award: *West v. J. Greg Allen Builder, Inc.*, 92 N.E.3d 634 (Ind. Ct. App. 2017), *trans. denied*.
- Prosecuted appeal of summary judgment entered in favor of adverse party. Won reversal of summary judgment and remand for new trial in favor of patron: *Miller v. Rosehill Hotels, LLC*, 45 N.E.3d 15 (Ind. Ct. App. 2015).

Construction

- Defended general contractor against large claims for breach of contract and pursued general contractor's claims against subcontractors in parallel arbitration and lawsuit proceedings relating to a large, mixed-use development in Marion County. Case settled favorably after commencement of arbitration hearing and before commencement of trial.
- After three-day bench trial, obtained defense verdict in favor of a contractor alleged to have negligently maintained a lift station that malfunctioned and caused damage to commercial property in excess of \$1 million.
- Prosecuted large claims for negligence and breach of contract on behalf of general contractor against subcontractors relating to substantial renovations to a large industrial facility. Case settled favorably prior to trial.
- Defended business property owner against mechanics' liens asserted by numerous subcontractors following general contractor's filing for bankruptcy protection. All disputes were settled favorably prior to trial.
- Defended breach of contract lawsuit brought against home repair contractor. The plaintiff alleged that our client failed to perform specific repairs in a workmanlike manner, thus breaching its contract. Our defense focused on the doctrine of accord and satisfaction, because the plaintiff had accepted a check along with a contractual reduction in price. The Court entered judgment for our client, with costs.
- Assisted real estate developer with replatting and rezoning real estate in Marion County.

Employment

- Defended logistics company in federal lawsuit against allegations under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Case settled favorably prior to trial.
- Defended construction company against Indiana Department of Labor / Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) Safety Order and Notification of Penalty alleging safety violations. Case settled favorably prior to hearing.
- Prosecuted claims for breach of employment agreement against former employee of automobile business, including covenants not to compete and covenants not to solicit. Case settled favorably prior to trial.
- Prosecuted claims for breach of employment agreement against former employee of industrial services provider, including covenants not to compete and covenants not to solicit. Dispute settled favorably pre-suit.
- Defended volunteer fire department against allegations of negligence by former volunteer firefighter. Case settled favorably prior to trial.

Representative Matters *continued*

Intellectual Property

- Obtained final judgment and permanent injunction on behalf of international franchisor against franchisee for Lanham Act trademark violations.
- Defended internet marketing company against allegations of website content "scraping." Case settled favorably prior to trial.

Business and Transactions

- Negotiated and drafted multiple commercial leases, subleases, and purchase agreements for real estate in Marion County.
- Defended software developer against allegations of breach of contract and prosecuted allegations of breach of contract. Case settled favorably prior to arbitration.
- Prosecuted large breach of contract claim on behalf of industrial services provider. Case settled favorably prior to trial.
- Obtained summary judgment on large breach of contract claim on behalf of industrial materials supplier.
- Defended business owner against allegations of breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, deception, conversion, and embezzlement brought by business co-owner, and prosecuted allegations of fraud, conversion, embezzlement, breach of contract, indemnity, and contribution against co-owner. Case settled favorably prior to trial.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of recreational facility operator against claims of negligence.
- Served as local counsel for an international technology company in defending against allegations of negligence in both federal and state court. Case settled favorably prior to trial.
- Defended prominent local restaurant against wrongful death lawsuit alleging dram shop liability. Case settled favorably prior to trial.

Professional Licensing

- Defended physician against consumer complaint. Closing letter issued.
- Defended physical therapist against consumer complaint. Closed with warning letter issued.
- Defended physician against Pharmacy Board Administrative Complaint. Following evidentiary hearing, successfully limited imposition of discipline.
- Defended physician against Medical Board Administrative Complaint. Case settled favorably before hearing.

Practice Areas

- Business Litigation
- Commercial Litigation
- Construction
- Employment Law
- Intellectual Property Law & Litigation
- Labor & Employment Law
- Real Estate, Land Use & Zoning
- Workers Compensation Defense

Associations

- Indiana State Bar Association
- Indianapolis Bar Association
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Local Rules Advisory Committee
- Sagamore American Inn of Court
- Defense Trial Counsel of Indiana
- Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Indiana

Awards & Recognitions

Legal 500 Elite

- Commercial Disputes, 2026

Best Lawyers in America®, 2026

- Commercial Litigation
- Litigation — Labor and Employment
- Real Estate Law

Best Lawyers in America, "Ones to Watch" 2021 – 2025

- Commercial Litigation
- Labor and Employment Law — Management
- Litigation — Labor and Employment
- Real Estate Law

Indiana Super Lawyers®, 2026

- General Litigation

Indiana Super Lawyers Rising Star®, 2020 – 2024

- General Litigation

Indianapolis Bar Association

- Young Lawyers Division, Distinguished Leadership Award, 2018

Community Activity

Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee: Board of Directors, 2023 – present

Indiana State Bar Association:

- Leadership Development Academy, Class VII graduate, 2018
- Lawyer Advertising Rules Review Committee: Vice Chair, 2019 – 2021
Chair, 2021 – present

Indianapolis Bar Association: Young Lawyers Division, Vice-Chair, Education Committee, 2015 – 2018

Peace Learning Center, Member, Board of Directors, 2025 – present

Seven2Seven Condominium Homeowners Association, President, Board of Directors, 2021 – 2025

Association of General Contractors of Indiana: Leadership Program Graduate, 2020 – 2021