



## INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN SAN DIEGO

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#### LAW

### Michael J. Whitton

Once one of the youngest Eagle Scouts in San Diego County, Troutman Sanders attorney Whitton was inspired to pursue a law career by meeting a number of scoutmasters who happened to be lawyers.

"I really wanted to be my own boss and be able to do my own thing, and I thought that [practicing law] gave me the most advantage and opportunity to be able to do that," said Whitton, who grew up in Oceanside and went to Notre Dame for his undergraduate degree and Juris Doctorate.

At Troutman Sanders, Whitton buys and sells finance, puts joint-venture partnerships together and does the transactional work for businesses that own significant real estate assets and whose businesses depend on those assets.

"I deal with a fair amount of the resort industry... hotels, golf courses and country clubs, marinas, those sorts of things. Self-storage facilities, some hospitals, power plants, automobile dealerships, you name it," said Whitton.

His career began in San Diego with Miller Boyko & Bell in 1992. The firm merged into Ross Dixon & Bell, which merged into Troutman Sanders in 2009.

"So, I've really never left the firm," said Whitton, who cited his work on behalf of billionaire Bill Koch — winner of the America's Cup in San Diego in 1992 — as



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one of his career highlights.

"We represented him on a major lawsuit, a qui tam (whistleblower) lawsuit against a big oil and gas company in the mid-continent states," Whitton said. "We did that early on and it was a great success, and Bill Koch has been our client ever since on all of his operating businesses, which have taken us worldwide, and we've done very interesting things that I never thought my

legal career would take me into."

Also notably, Whitton represented a client trying to restore historic Belmont Park to its former glory, against the opposition of local attorney Cory Briggs.

"Cory Briggs wanted to basically terminate the lease (obtained by his client from the city of San Diego) and basically have it go back to park land," Whitton said. "And we prevailed on that litigation, so that was fun."

— Tony Lovitt