

## Bilal Zaheer

Partner

Chicago

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When business relationships unravel, Bilal provides advice to clients that is grounded in principled judgment and strategic tenacity. A seasoned trial attorney with nearly 20 years of courtroom experience, he tailors legal solutions to fit business realities and navigates clients through litigation's toughest moments.

### OVERVIEW

Bilal is a trial attorney with nearly two decades of experience representing clients in high-stakes, complex commercial disputes, often stemming from failed deals, unfair competition, and governance breakdowns. He is frequently called to advise on “corporate divorces,” where once-promising business relationships have turned adversarial and the financial and reputational risks are highest. His clients span a range of industries, including technology, life sciences, health care, financial services, and industrial, and include early-stage companies, *Fortune* 500 companies, private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies, executives, and boards. Bilal has significant experience in trade secret misappropriation and restrictive covenant litigation, representing both plaintiffs and defendants in federal and state court proceedings involving emergency injunctive relief, misappropriation claims under the Defend Trade Secrets Act and state law, and the enforcement of noncompetition, nonsolicitation, and no-hire agreements in the post-employment and sale-of-company context. He regularly counsels clients on protecting trade secrets and valuable information in connection with employee transitions, corporate transactions, and competitive threats.

As an experienced trial attorney and member of the Trial Bar for the Northern District of Illinois, Bilal has first-chaired trials and arbitrations across the U.S. and served as lead counsel in bet-the-company disputes, as well as complex disputes involving international companies and cross-border issues. He helps clients efficiently navigate complex issues and delivers legal strategies that align with the client's business objectives. What sets him apart is his ability to understand both the legal and human dynamics involved in high-pressure commercial disputes, which allows him to serve as a steadying force in uncertain times. Bilal brings a focus on outcomes, whether that means resolving disputes before litigation or taking them all the way through trial.

Bilal serves as a professional development partner for the firm's Business Litigation Practice Group and co-chairs the firm's AAPI Affinity Group.

### REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

#### Noncompete + Trade Secret Litigation

- Led a multioffice team in representing a health care technology startup in bet-the-company litigation with more than \$200 million in a dispute concerning the rights to cutting-edge health care technology; litigated claims for trade secret misappropriation, unfair competition, commercial disparagement, computer fraud, tortious interference, defamation, and breach of six different commercial contracts, including noncompetition, nonsolicitation, and confidentiality provisions arising out of a merger agreement.
- Defended a specialty generic pharmaceutical manufacturer against claims for trade secret misappropriation under federal and state law and breach of a business-to-business no-hire agreement; asserted counterclaims for breach of contract and tortious interference.
- Defended a Chinese manufacturer and its U.S. subsidiary in a federal jury trial involving claims of trade secret misappropriation and damages claims of more than \$100 million.
- Defended a global manufacturer of custom electronic components against allegations of trade secret misappropriation and tortious interference with certain post-employment restrictive covenants.
- Pursued claims on behalf of a national home services company in action for injunctive relief against a former employee for violation of post-employment restrictive covenant agreements and related business torts.
- Defended a pharmaceutical company against allegations of trade secret misappropriation, breaches of noncompetition and nonsolicitation provisions in asset purchase agreement, and breaches of related confidentiality agreements.
- Pursued claims on behalf of a financial services company against former employees for violations of noncompetition and customer nonsolicitation agreements.
- Represented a global expert network platform in multiple matters involving allegations of trade secret misappropriation and alleged violations of employee restrictive covenants.

### **Corporate Governance, M&A and Related Litigation**

- Advises clients on a range of disputes arising from complex commercial agreements and corporate transactions (including mergers, acquisitions, going private transactions, partnerships, joint ventures, LLC operating agreements, books and records demands), post-closing disputes (including earn-outs, breaches of representations, and warranties and indemnification), and shareholder derivative claims asserted against companies, boards of directors, and corporate officers.
- First-chaired a five-day state court bench trial defending an insurance broker against claims brought by a court-appointed corporate receiver for aiding and abetting in the alleged diversion of millions of dollars in insurance commissions; defeated the plaintiffs' claims and secured a defense judgment that was affirmed on appeal involving issues of first impression under Illinois law.
- Defended a group of former directors and officers of an insolvent medical device company against a \$50 million claim for breach of fiduciary duty and related claims asserted by a post-confirmation litigation trustee.
- Served as lead attorney in representing a group of shareholders, including the company's former CEO, in a shareholder derivative lawsuit asserting breach of fiduciary duty claims against the corporation's officers and directors for waste of corporate funds and improper related party transactions; secured appellate reversal of the trial court order dismissing the case in an appeal involving issues of first impression under Illinois corporate governance law.
- Served as lead associate representing a bankruptcy court-appointed litigation trustee in a series of federal and state court cases, including trial and appeal, against the corporation's former executives to enforce more than \$70 million in promissory notes executed in connection with funding an employee stock option program; litigated claims and defenses under federal securities laws and Federal Reserve Board regulations.
- Defended a Chinese auto parts manufacturer in a Delaware books and records litigation initiated by shareholders after the company announced a going private transaction.
- Represented a financial advisory firm in connection with a shareholder derivative litigation arising out of a going private transaction.

### **Complex Commercial Litigation + Arbitration**

- Advises clients facing or pursuing commercial claims in litigation and arbitration, including breach of contract under the common law and Uniform Commercial Code, breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, claims arising under state deceptive trade practices statutes, tortious interference, commercial disparagement, defamation, and related business torts.
- Multiple representations of technology service providers and commercial purchasers of technology platforms in disputes involving “software as a service” (SaaS) and related technology agreements, including disputes arising from implementation failures, service level obligations and shortfalls, and disputes over AI-enabled functionality in software platforms.
- Defended a global manufacturer of material handling equipment in lawsuit alleging breach of contract, violation of the Texas dealer protection statute, deceptive trade practices act and related claims; obtained court order enforcing international arbitration provision.
- Secured a multimillion-dollar judgment for a global water treatment company in a federal lawsuit involving the breach of a joint venture agreement with a Chinese national; obtained dismissal of the joint venture partner’s fraud counterclaims.
- Defended a French industrial manufacturer and its affiliates against claims of ERISA withdrawal liability allegedly arising from restructuring transactions preceding an acquisition; obtained dismissal of the complaint on the merits and jurisdictional grounds in a case involving novel issues of ERISA law and civil procedure.
- Defended a global manufacturer of electronic components in litigation and arbitration against claims asserted by former company executives for breach of contract and related employment claims.
- Defended a financial services company in arbitration proceedings against claims asserted by a former company executive, who asserted claims for breach of employment agreement, wage act violations and retaliatory discharge under Dodd-Frank; asserted counterclaim for breach of fiduciary duty against former executive.
- Defended the subsidiary of a Chinese power company in breach of contract litigation brought by subsidiary’s former CEO in state court.
- Defended a Canadian subsidiary of a global food manufacturer in a federal lawsuit brought by a former vendor alleging breach of manufacturing and supply agreements under the Uniform Commercial Code and common law.
- Defended national toy retailer in a multimillion-dollar contract dispute with a Chinese vendor; secured dismissal of the vendor’s claims for fraud and equitable relief.
- Prosecuted a federal lawsuit on behalf of a Japanese airline carrier involving a breach of an aircraft purchase agreement and related Uniform Commercial Code issues; obtained dismissal of counterclaims.
- Defended a printing services company in a federal lawsuit against claims asserted under the Uniform Commercial Code by a commercial purchaser of paper products; obtained dismissal of the lawsuit on personal jurisdiction grounds.

## AWARDS

- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, Best Under 40 Award
- *Super Lawyers*® Illinois Rising Star, Business Litigation
- Leading Lawyers®, Emerging Lawyers

## TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Business Litigation
- Corporate Espionage Response Team
- Litigation + Trial
- Securities Litigation

## ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- [Business Litigation](#)
- [Corporate Espionage Response Team](#)
- [Corporate Governance](#)
- [Health Care + Life Sciences](#)
- [Litigation + Trial](#)
- [Private Equity](#)
- [Securities Litigation](#)

## PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Governing board member, The Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms
- Fellow, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (2017)
- Advisory board member, Muslim Bar Association of Chicago
- Member, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (past committee co-chair)

## EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

### EDUCATION

- University of Illinois College of Law, J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2006, member, *University of Illinois Law Review*
- Washington University in St. Louis School of Law, B.A., *with honors*, 2003, Phi Beta Kappa

### BAR ADMISSIONS

- Illinois

### COURT ADMISSIONS

- Supreme Court of the United States
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Indiana
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Indiana
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, "[Damages Decoded: How Receiving and Losing Trade Secrets Can Cost Your Company Millions,](#)" Troutman Pepper Locke Webinar, January 21, 2026.
- Speaker, "[Practical Steps for Protecting Trade Secrets,](#)" Troutman Pepper Locke Webinar, August 26, 2025.

- Speaker, “Mid-Level Associate Forum,” Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms, October 26, 2023.
- Speaker, “A Strategic Approach to Reviews and Feedback,” Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms: Mid-Level Associates’ Mini-Conference, August 24, 2022.
- Speaker, “Defending Breach of Fiduciary Duty Claims Against Directors and Officers of Distressed Companies in the Era of COVID-19,” August 12, 2020.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- Author, “Delaware Court of Chancery Finds That Crossing the ‘Fine Line Between Glaringly Egregious Conduct and an Aggressive Litigation Position’ Costs Gilead \$1.76 Million in Attorneys’ Fees,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, July 29, 2021.
- Author, “Delaware Supreme Court Rules Stockholders Are Entitled to Books and Records Based on ‘Investigatory Purpose’ Without Stating Objectives of Investigation,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, January 25, 2021.
- Author, “Delaware Court of Chancery Applies Revlon, Not Business Judgment Rule, Despite Stockholder Approval in *In re Mindbody, Inc.*,” Locke Lord QuickStudy. November 12, 2020.
- Author, “COVID-19 and Director Liability: Discharging Fiduciary Duties While Navigating the Financial Distress and Business Uncertainty Caused by the Pandemic,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, April 30, 2020.
- Author, “Practical Considerations for Commercial Litigation during the COVID-19 Era,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, April 9, 2020.

## **MEDIA COMMENTARY**

- Quoted, “[Mergers Are About People, Not Paperwork: Here’s Why](#),” *The Recorder*, February 3, 2025.