Thomas J. Cole, Jr.

Partner

Philadelphia

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D 215.981.4507



Tom serves as chair of Troutman Pepper Locke. In that capacity, Tom leads the strategic and operational initiatives of the firm. With an eye on the key industries supporting economic growth, he has helped the firm achieve transformational change while maintaining a steady focus on client success and a high-performance culture.

OVERVIEW

Recognized for his steady leadership and market focus, Tom works with firm leaders across practices and administrative areas to create and advance the firm's goals. Over the span of five years, he has played a leading role in two major firm combinations. As managing partner and then chair of Troutman Pepper, he oversaw the firm's combination with Locke Lord, resulting in the formation of Troutman Pepper Locke, a firm with approximately 1,600 attorneys and more than 30 offices. In 2020, as managing partner of Pepper Hamilton, Tom helped lead the firm's merger with Troutman Sanders, resulting in the formation of Troutman Pepper.

During Tom's tenure as Troutman Pepper's managing partner, the firm recognized material revenue gains, attracted top talent in areas crucial to clients' needs, delivered and then executed on the firm's first strategic plan, grew brand recognition, and helped launch a market-leading client value program. He is also focused on the impact of emerging technologies on the firm and the profession, having directed the formation of the firm's Generative AI task force and strongly supported the development of the firm's proprietary GenAI tool, Athena.

Recognized for his business acumen and pragmatic approach, Tom is a source of guidance for the firm's clients on issues of significance. He is an accomplished labor and employment attorney who provides strategic advice and counseling to help clients achieve immediate and long-term objectives.

Tom co-leads the firm's Executive Committee and serves as chair of the Policy Committee.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a large employer in a multi-plaintiff ERISA action.
- Successfully settled significant DOL wage and hour audits on behalf of clients in the retail, technology, and manufacturing industries.
- Negotiated and drafted executive employment and separation agreements.
- Drafted and advised on the enforcement of restrictive covenant agreements across various industries.

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- Advised on large-scale reductions in force, including WARN Act issues.
- Advised large organizations in the marketing and professional services industries on wage and hour issues associated with an overhaul of their compensation systems.
- Successfully negotiated collective bargaining agreements in multiple manufacturing facilities.
- Obtained a broad order, including an award of penalties, against an electrical union on behalf of area contractors.
- Successfully represented retailers, manufacturers, and transportation companies in defeating attempts by certain unions to organize employees.
- Conducted nationwide harassment training for a manufacturer of pharmaceutical devices.

AWARDS

- *The Legal Intelligencer and Law.com Pennsylvania Legal Awards*: Finalist, Managing Partner of the Year (2026)
- *Super Lawyers®:* Pennsylvania (2009-2021)
- Thomson Reuters Stand-out Lawyer (2019-2021) – independently rated lawyers
- *Best Lawyers in America®:* Philadelphia “Lawyer of the Year” for Labor Law – Management (2020, 2025)
- *Best Lawyers in America®:* Employment Law – Management (2011-2027); Labor Law – Management (2011-2027)

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Labor + Employment

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Employment Counseling
- Labor + Employment
- Labor + Employment Litigation + Dispute Resolution
- Litigation + Trial
- Traditional Labor

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Board of directors, The Greater Philadelphia Chamber

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Chair and managing partner, Troutman Pepper, 2020-2024
- Managing partner, Pepper Hamilton, 2013-2020

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- New England Law - Boston, J.D., *cum laude*, 1989
- Brown University, B.A., 1986

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BAR ADMISSIONS

- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania

CLERKSHIPS

- Hon. President Judge Vincent A. Cirillo, Superior Court of Pennsylvania, 1989-1991

MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Interviewed, "Troutman Pepper Locke Chair Tom Cole on Strategic Growth, Firm Transformation, and Building High-Performing Teams in *The Legal Intelligencer* Managing Partner of the Year Finalist Q&A," *The Legal Intelligencer*, June 8, 2026.
- Interviewed, "Troutman Pepper Locke Chair Tom Cole on Navigating Uncertainty, the Promise of AI, and Training the Next Generation of Lawyers in *The Legal Intelligencer* Law Firm of the Year Finalist Q&A ," *The Legal Intelligencer*, May 29, 2026.
- Quoted, "Troutman Pepper Locke: Raising the Bar for Client and Community Service in Pennsylvania and Beyond," *MyFrontPageStory.com*, May 2, 2025.
- Quoted, "2024 Law Firm of the Year Finalists: Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders," *The Legal Intelligencer*, May 13, 2024.
- Quoted, "Troutman Pepper Promotes 26 Attys to Partnership Ranks," *Law360*, January 4, 2023.
- Quoted, "In Their Words: BigLaw Leaders on Why They Merged," *Law360*, May 18, 2022.
- Quoted, "In Pursuit of Merger, Pepper Hamilton Delivered Another Year of RPL Gains," *The Legal Intelligencer*, March 5, 2020.
- Interviewed, "2020 Law Firm of the Year Finalist," *The Legal Intelligencer*, October 1, 2020.