

Robert Knuts

Partner

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Education

Georgetown University Law Center,
J.D., 1981; *Georgetown Law Journal*
The George Washington University,
B.A., 1978

Admissions

New York State
U.S. District Courts for the Eastern
and Southern Districts of New York
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second
Circuit



Bob brings more than three decades of litigation experience to his practice, focusing on government investigations and private civil lawsuits involving alleged financial misconduct.

Bob represents companies and individuals under investigation by the DOJ, the SEC, FINRA, and state regulatory authorities. He has handled insider trading allegations against directors, lawyers, and traders involving equities, options, credit default swaps, and distressed debt securities; accounting fraud issues arising from earnings reports, reserves concerning mortgage loans and securities, and cash flow disclosures; and alleged violations of financial industry regulations, including broker-dealer and investment advisor registration requirements, improper mark-ups of securities, and research analyst disclosures. He also represents audit committees of public companies in connection with internal investigations mandated by outside auditors and the reporting of such investigations to the SEC as well as company employees as witnesses in connection with internal investigations.

In the civil arena, Bob represents plaintiffs and defendants in private court actions and arbitrations concerning investment partnerships, complex financial products, alleged breach of fiduciary duties, contract claims, and fraud complaints.

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Bob also provides regulatory advice to registered investment advisors concerning SEC compliance and examinations issues as well as guidance concerning lawful trading after receipt of nonpublic information.

From 1994 to 2003, Bob served as a member of the SEC's Division of Enforcement in New York. In various supervisory positions at the SEC, he directed investigations concerning accounting fraud, insider trading, market manipulation, offering fraud, and investment company/investment advisor act violations. He also served as lead trial counsel for the SEC in contested litigations, including two insider trading jury trials, and assisted the DOJ in parallel criminal/civil investigations.

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Experience

- **When under investigation, lawyers look to Bob for help:** The SEC regularly investigates the role played by lawyers in potential violations of the federal securities laws. When faced with career-threatening charges from the SEC, lawyers frequently rely on Bob to convince the SEC that no violations on their part occurred. Bob's successful representations have included the general counsel of a large investment company, a premier law firm that acted as underwriters' counsel in a municipal securities offering, and the general counsel and chief compliance officer of a registered investment advisor.
- **Cutting-edge insider trading issues:** After conducting two federal insider trading jury trials while at the SEC, Bob is often retained to counsel persons under investigation for insider trading. These representations involved the first SEC insider trading action concerning distressed debt securities; the first SEC insider trading action regarding ETFs; several investigations that focused on communications by research analysts; and numerous traditional insider trading investigations involving directors, officers, and employees.
- **Focused internal investigations:** When an employee of a public company reports internal allegations of improper accounting, audit committees must navigate difficult cross-currents while acting in the long-term interests of the public company, communicating effectively with the public company's outside auditor, and determining whether any wrongdoing actually occurred. Bob has guided audit committees in connection with internal investigations related to a wide variety of accounting issues and, when necessary, successfully communicated the results of those investigations to the SEC.
- **Defrauded investors:** Bob regularly represents small companies and individuals who have been defrauded by financial services firms and individual brokers. In this area, Bob's experience as an SEC enforcement attorney provides him with an edge in finding the evidence needed to prove the claims. Bob has recovered more than \$10 million for clients such as a development-stage pharmaceutical company whose reserves were mismanaged and several families who were victimized by a broker's misappropriation of their assets.

Recognitions

Selected to the Top-Rated Securities Litigation Attorneys list, Thomson Reuters' *Super Lawyers* (2006-2010, 2013-2021)

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Received the Stanley Sporkin Award, the Division of Enforcement's highest honor, for "exceptionally tenacious and insightful contributions" to the Enforcement program (2001)

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