

**Christopher J. Petersen | Partner**

Business Litigation

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## CO-CHAIR, GENERAL LITIGATION PRACTICE GROUP

Christopher Petersen is a litigation partner in Blank Rome's Los Angeles office. Chris concentrates his practice on complex business disputes, primarily in the real estate sector, and has experience in all phases of litigation. In addition to business and real estate disputes, he handles all areas of litigation and has significant experience in trusts and estates litigation and disputes related to California charter schools.

Over the last several years, Chris has tried or arbitrated three or four cases per year—a significant volume. Since joining Blank Rome in 2013, he has tried or arbitrated more than 30 cases, including as lead counsel on numerous trials and arbitrations.

In 2023, Chris was named a “Leader of Influence: Thriving in Their 40s” by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*. He was named a Southern California “Rising Star” by *Super Lawyers* from 2012 through 2020.

## Outside The Firm

Chris is a Southern California native and lives in Los Angeles with his wife and son. He comes from a family of educators and is a former high school teacher. He enjoys volunteering at the local YMCA, including as a youth basketball coach.

## Select Engagements

- Successfully litigated several issues of first impression under the Charter

Schools Act on behalf of many of the largest non-classroom-based charter schools in California, including issues impacting the locations at which these schools are permitted to operate. This also includes litigation defending the schools from claims by several public school districts regarding the interpretation and application of California Education Code § 47605.1(d), commonly referred to as the “unable to locate exception,” and California Education Code § 47605.1(f), commonly referred to as the “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) exception.”

- Represented three co-trustees of a family trust against claims by the fourth co-trustee for breach of fiduciary duty and misappropriation of trust assets. The focus of the action was whether the three co-trustees had properly used trust assets to care for the parties’ mentally and physically disabled adult brother (which was the intent of the settlors). Chris was part of the Blank Rome team that helped the three co-trustees present a precise and concise accounting and explanation of how the trust assets were used for the benefit of the disabled brother, and to defeat the claims of the fourth co-trustee that religious law trumped secular law to govern the distribution of trust assets.
- Successfully defended trustees of family trust with assets in excess of \$10 million as trial counsel in action seeking to surcharge and remove trustees based on alleged breaches of fiduciary duty and mismanagement of trust assets.
- Obtained judgment of foreclosure and order of sale in excess of \$10 million as trial counsel in breach of contract and judicial foreclosure action.
- Obtained multimillion dollar judgment against one of California’s largest property developers as trial counsel for a limited partner alleging claims for breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty and fraud.

## Admissions

- California
- U.S. District Court - Central District of California
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court - Southern District of California


## Education

- University of California, Santa Barbara, BA, with honors
- Southwestern Law School, JD, cum laude

## Recognitions

- 2023, “Leader of Influence: Thriving in Their 40s,” listed by *Los Angeles Business Journal*
- 2012–2020, Los Angeles “Rising Star” in Business Litigation, listed in *Super Lawyers*

## Professional Activities



As part his pro bono efforts, Chris has represented parents in all phases of the adoption process. Chris also represents individuals seeking temporary and permanent guardianship of minors at risk of entering the foster care system.

Chris was an adjunct professor of law at Southwestern Law School, where he taught civil pretrial practice.