



William Cole

Partner Emeritus



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legal expertise

Serving as lead counsel in numerous employment discrimination, whistle blower, ERISA, LMRA Section 301 and wrongful termination cases, labor arbitrations, National Labor Relations Board hearings, and other administrative proceedings. Serving as lead counsel defending multiple employers in wage and hour and employment discrimination actions. Chief negotiator in numerous private and public sector collective bargaining negotiations. Representation of multi-employer Taft-Hartley Benefit Plans. Representation of and advising employers regarding ERISA issues.

representative matters

- Representation of major motion picture studios and producers in several industry-wide arbitrations with the Screen Actors Guild, Directors Guild and Writers Guild.
- Ongoing representation of several significant benefit plans providing both day-to-day and litigation counsel.
- Represented major motion picture and television companies in class action wage and hour and age discrimination cases.
- Represented a large aerospace corporation in several wrongful discharge and employment discrimination litigation and arbitration matters.
- Successfully represented major motion picture company in jury trial of Federal Section 301 action.
- Successfully represented employers in numerous arbitrations including industry-wide cases for multiple employers.
- Chief negotiator for a major beer distributor in talks with the Teamsters union.

practice areas

labor & employment

employment litigation & counseling

labor litigation & counseling

admissions

California

U.S. District Court

Central District of California

Eastern District of California

Southern District of California

U.S. Court of Appeal

Fourth Circuit

Ninth Circuit

education

Stanford University, J.D., 1977;
Order of the Coif

University of California, Irvine,
B.A., 1974; *magna cum laude*;
Phi Beta Kappa

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- Negotiating national collective bargaining agreements for a group of television producers.
- Successfully represented all of the major studios and networks in a closely-watched arbitration against the WGA in which it was determined that a portion of the 2008 New Media deal is not retroactive.

honors & awards

- Named "Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers* for:
 - Litigation - Labor and Employment, Los Angeles (2018)
 - Labor Law - Management, Los Angeles (2012)
- "Leading Labor & Employment Lawyers in California," *Chambers USA* (2006-2007, 2009-2014)
- Recognized by *Best Lawyers in America*® in the fields of:
 - Employment Law - Management (2011-2015, 2019-2026)
 - Entertainment Law - Motion Pictures and Television (2011-2015, 2019-2026)
 - Labor Law - Management (2011-2015, 2019-2026)
 - Litigation - Labor and Employment (2011-2015, 2019-2026)
- "Top Labor & Employment Lawyers in California," *Daily Journal* (2011)
- "100 Most Powerful Employment Attorneys," *Human Resource Executive* (2011, 2018)
- "The Nation's Most Powerful Employment Attorneys," *Lawdragon* (2008-2016)
- "Top 5% of lawyers in Southern California," *Southern California Super Lawyers* (2004-2026)
- "Top 100 Power Lawyers" list, *The Hollywood Reporter* (2008-2010)
- "Leading Management Labor & Employment attorneys in California," *Who's Who Legal: California* (2008-2010)
- "Who's Who in Entertainment Law," *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2010)
- "Top Labor & Employment Attorneys," *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2009)
- "Top 3% of Attorneys Nationwide," *The Legal News* (2009)
- "Who's Who in LA Law," *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2007)
- AV® Preeminent™ Rating, Martindale-Hubbell



professional, business and civic affiliations

- Former Management Co-Chair, American Bar Association Sports and Entertainment Committee, Labor and Employment Law Section (2001 - 2005)
- Executive Committee, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Labor Law Section (1989-1990)
- Board of Directors, PBS Foundation
- Co-chair, MSK Labor Department
- MSK Governing Board
- MSK Executive Committee
- Former MSK Managing Partner (1991-1997)

headlines

12 MSK Attorneys Named to the 2026 Edition of Southern California *Super Lawyers*
Super Lawyers, February 20, 2026

37 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*® for 2026
Best Lawyers, August 21, 2025

13 MSK Attorneys Named to the 2025 Edition of Southern California *Super Lawyers*
February 18, 2025

34 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2025
August 15, 2024

12 MSK Attorneys Named to the 2024 Edition of Southern California *Super Lawyers*
January 10, 2024

38 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2024
August 17, 2023

15 MSK Attorneys Named to the 2023 Edition of Southern California *Super Lawyers*
January 10, 2023

16 MSK Attorneys Named to the 2022 edition of Southern California *Super Lawyers*
January 20, 2022

26 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2022
August 19, 2021



William Cole

14 MSK Attorneys Named to the List of 2021 Southern California *Super Lawyers*
January 21, 2021

33 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2021
August 20, 2020

27 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*© for 2020
August 15, 2019

William Cole Named to *Lawdragon* Most Powerful Employment Lawyer "Hall of Fame"
March 8, 2019

MSK Attorneys Named to the List of 2019 *Southern California Super Lawyers*
January 30, 2019

The Best Lawyers in America© 2019 Recognizes 24 Attorneys from MSK
August 15, 2018

MSK Practices and Attorneys Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2018 Guide
May 3, 2018

William Cole and Adam Levin Named to *Human Resource Executive's* List of Most Powerful Employment Attorneys
April 13, 2018

The Best Lawyers in America© 2018 Recognizes 24 Attorneys from Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP
August 15, 2017

MSK Practices and Attorneys Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2017 Guide
May 26, 2017

MSK Attorneys Named to the 2017 List of *Super Lawyers*
January 20, 2017

The Best Lawyers in America© 2017 Recognizes 22 Attorneys from Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp
August 22, 2016

MSK "Power Lawyers" Among Hollywood's 100 Fiercest Advocates
July 16, 2010

media mentions

William Cole and Adam Levin Recognized in *Human Resource Executive* List of Most Powerful Employment Attorneys
July 17, 2017

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William Cole

Adam Levin and William Cole Featured in *Lawdragon's* "100 Most Powerful Employment Lawyers" List
December 2016

MSK Practices and Attorneys Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2016 Guide
May 31, 2016

MSK Attorneys Named to the List of 2016 Southern California Super Lawyers
January 20, 2016

23 Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp Attorneys Featured in *Best Lawyers*
August 2015

William Cole and Adam Levin Recognized in *Lawdragon's* 2015 Guide to Most Powerful Employment Attorneys
June 18, 2015

Chambers USA 2015 Recognizes Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp
May 2015

18 Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp Attorneys Named to the 2015 Super Lawyers Business Edition
November 21, 2014

The Best Lawyers in America© 2015 Recognizes 21 Attorneys from Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp and Names 2 Attorneys "Lawyer of the Year"
August 2014

Chambers USA 2014 Recognizes 9 Attorneys and 3 Practice Groups from MSK Among Nation's Best
May 2014

26 MSK Attorneys Named to 2014 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List
January 2014

21 MSK Attorneys Selected for *Best Lawyers in America 2014*
August 15, 2013

MSK Attorneys and Practice Groups Recognized by *Chambers USA* 2013
May 2013

26 MSK Attorneys Named to 2013 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List
January 2013

21 MSK Attorneys Selected for *Best Lawyers in America 2013*
August 24, 2012

MSK Attorneys and Practice Groups Recognized by *Chambers USA* 2012
June 25, 2012



William Cole

MSK Labor & Employment Attorneys Named to List of Most Powerful Employment Lawyers in U.S.
June 18, 2012

25 Named to 2012 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List
January 23, 2012

William Cole Named 2012 Los Angeles Labor Law - Management Lawyer of the Year by Best Lawyers
October 5, 2011

MSK Attorneys Recognized Among "The Best Lawyers in America" for 2012
August 31, 2011

Bill Cole and Adam Levin Named to *Daily Journal's* Annual "Top Labor & Employment Lawyers" List
July 14, 2011

Bill Cole and Adam Levin Selected Among "Nation's Most Powerful Employment Lawyers"
June 20, 2011

Chambers USA Recognizes MSK Attorneys Among America's Leading Lawyers
June 10, 2011

24 Named to 2011 Southern California *Super Lawyers* List
January 25, 2011

Bill Cole and Russ Frackman Among "Who's Who in Entertainment Law"
October 12, 2010

The 2011 Best Lawyers in America Recognized MSK Attorneys from Nine Practice Areas
August 19, 2010

MSK Attorneys Recognized Among Nation's Best in *Chambers USA* 2010
July 1, 2010

28 Named to 2010 Southern California Super Lawyers List
January 26, 2010

Los Angeles Business Journal's 2009 "Who's Who in the Law" Lists MSK Attorneys Russell Frackman and Bill Cole
October 5, 2009

The Best Lawyers in America 2010
August 3, 2009

The Hollywood Reporter Recognizes Bill Cole and Russell Frackman to its List of 2009 "Power Lawyers"
July 29, 2009



William Cole

Bill Cole and Adam Levin Ranked Among the Nation's "Most Powerful Employment Attorneys" by *Human Resource Executive*
May 15, 2009

Who's Who Legal: California 2009
March 23, 2009

29 Chosen to 2009 Southern California Super Lawyers List
January 30, 2009

The *Best Lawyers in America* 2009
September 17, 2008

The 100 Most Influential Attorneys in Entertainment
July 23, 2008

MSK Home to 23 Southern California Super Lawyers for 2008
January 30, 2008

The Best Lawyers in America 2007
December 28, 2007

LABJ Finds MSK Partners The Best of the Bar in L.A.
August 20, 2007

Chambers USA Ranks MSK and Partners Russ Frackman and Bill Cole
June 15, 2007

client alerts

Tidal Wave of Wage/Hour Class Action Lawsuits Puts Employers at Risk
MSK Client Alert, July 2001

The California Workers' Compensation Appeals Board Says that Employees on Leave Must Receive Full Benefits -- But There Is a Way To Fight Back
MSK Client Alert, July 2001

U.S. Supreme Court Holds That Most Employment Agreements Requiring Arbitration of Claims are Covered Under the Federal Arbitration Act
MSK Client Alert, April 2001

events & speaking engagements

How to Keep Your Friends Close and Your Frenemies Closer
December 9, 2015

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