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Attorneys at Law

William Bernstein

PARTNER

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A Leader In The Plaintiffs' Bar

William Bernstein has practiced law for more than three decades. Who's Who Legal called him, "a leader in the plaintiffs' bar in the fields of complex civil litigation, antitrust, and consumer protection law."

Notable cases Bill has litigated include price-fixing suits against pharmaceutical companies on behalf of retail pharmacies, consumer claims against the world's largest vitamin manufacturers for crafting a global "vitamins cartel," charges against natural gas and energy companies for manipulating the price of natural gas and electricity in California during the California energy crisis of 2000-2001, and whistleblower claims against the Sutter hospital system for anesthesia service overcharges. These cases, in total, resulted in over \$1.3 billion in settlements for consumers and businesses.

Bill also oversaw negotiations in the landmark settlement and injunction against De Beers for monopolizing the trade of rough diamonds in the U.S. for nearly 60 years. As featured in the 2008 Plaintiffs Hot List, The National Law Journal wrote,

"The plaintiffs' firms' pluck, and some luck, resulted in a \$295 million settlement for De Beers' customers [and] secured De Beers' pledge to abide by federal and state antitrust laws and accept court oversight to ensure compliance."

Bill teaches settlement law as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of San Francisco. Bill has been repeatedly recognized as a "Super Lawyer for Northern California" by Super Lawyers magazine.

Areas of Practice

Antitrust, Consumer Protection, Securities, Qui Tam

Education

University of San Francisco School of Law, San Francisco, California, J.D. - 1975
Law Review: San Francisco Law Review, 1974 - 1975
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, B.A. - 1972
Honors: General Honors

Bar Admissions

California, 1975
New York, 1985
U.S. Supreme Court, 1985
U.S. Court of Appeals 3rd Circuit, 2008
U.S. Court of Appeals 9th Circuit, 1987
U.S. District Court, Central District of California, 1991
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California, 1991
U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, 1975
U.S. District Court, Southern District of California, 1992

Professional Associations and Memberships

Association of Business Trial Lawyers (Board of Governors, 2005 - Present)
Bar Association of San Francisco
Marin County Bar Association (Admin. of Justice Committee, 1988)
State Bar of California

Published Works

"The Rise and Fall of Enron's One-To-Many Trading Platform," American Bar Association Antitrust Law Section, Annual Spring Meeting, 2005
"Effective Use of Class Action Procedures in California Toxic Tort Litigation," Hastings West-Northwest Journal of Environmental and Toxic Torts Law and Policy, No. 3, Spring 1996

Classes/Seminars

Law of Settlements, University of San Francisco, School of Law, 2006 - Present

Honors and Awards

AV Preeminent Peer Review Rated, Martindale-Hubbell
Selected for inclusion by peers in The Best Lawyers in America in the fields of "Litigation - Antitrust," 2013 - 2026
"Super Lawyer for Northern California," Super Lawyers, 2004 - 2025
"California Litigation Star," Benchmark Plaintiff (ranked as one of California's leading litigators in antitrust law)
"Recommended Lawyer – Competition: Plaintiff," Lexology Index 2025
"Consumer Attorney of the Year Finalist," CAOC, 2014
"Top Attorneys In Antitrust Law," Super Lawyers Corporate Counsel Edition, 2010, 2012
"Lawdragon Finalist," Lawdragon, 2009 - 2011
Princeton Premier Registry, Business Leaders and Professionals, 2008 - 2009
"Top 100 Trial Lawyers in California," American Trial Lawyers Association, 2008

Who's Who Legal, 2007

Unsung Hero Award, Appleseed, 2006