



William Savitt

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William Savitt is the co-chair of the Litigation Department of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz. His practice focuses on representing corporations and directors in litigation involving mergers and acquisitions, proxy contests, corporate governance disputes, class actions involving allegations of breach of fiduciary duty and regulatory enforcement actions relating to corporate transactions. Mr. Savitt writes and speaks extensively on corporate and securities law topics and is an adjunct law professor at Columbia Law School in the field of transactional litigation.

Mr. Savitt has played a leading role in high-stakes corporate governance and merger-and-acquisitions litigation in the Delaware Court of Chancery and in courts around the country. Among recent examples, Mr. Savitt successfully litigated the landmark case of *Corwin v. KKR Financial* in the Court of Chancery and the Delaware Supreme Court; defended Allergan in response to a hostile bid from Pershing Square and Valeant; defended Sothebys' shareholder rights plan against an activist investor attack; was lead trial counsel in the successful and unprecedented litigation effort of Vulcan Materials Company to obtain a court order enjoining an attempted hostile takeover by an industry rival; has defended corporate bylaw and charter provisions in courts around the country; has tried numerous M&A cases to successful verdict; and was lead attorney in the United States and Canada in Lions Gate Entertainment's successful multi-national defense of Carl Icahn's takeover attempt. Mr. Savitt is a recognized authority

on multi-jurisdictional corporate litigation and has defended numerous corporate merger and class action fiduciary challenges in Delaware, New York, California and elsewhere, including recent successful defenses of the New York Stock Exchange’s merger with the InterContinental Exchange, the going-private sale of Dell, Inc. and the merger between Saks Fifth Avenue and Hudson’s Bay Company.

Mr. Savitt graduated *magna cum laude* from Brown University and received a M.Phil. from Columbia University in European legal history. He graduated from Columbia Law School in 1997, where he was editor-in-chief of the *Columbia Law Review*. Upon graduation from law school, Mr. Savitt served as a law clerk to the Honorable Pierre N. Leval of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit for the 1997 term and to the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the Supreme Court of the United States for the October 1998 term. Among other professional recognitions, Mr. Savitt has been named by *Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers for Business* as a leading securities litigator, by *Lawdragon* as one of the 500 leading lawyers in the United States, by Benchmark Litigation as a “litigation star” and as a leading authority in the *International Who’s Who of Corporate Governance*. He is a member of the American Law Institute, the Board of Directors of the New York Legal Aid Society and the Board of Trustees of the *Columbia Law Review*, Inc., and is a past executive director of Interfaith Hunger Appeal, a New York-based international hunger relief organization.

Clerkships

Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Supreme Court of the United States, 1998 – 1999

Honorable Pierre N. Leval, United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, 1997 – 1998

Recent Publications

[REITs in 2021](#), January 11, 2021; also available at [Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance](#).

[Section 220 as Pre-Complaint Discovery—Recent Developments](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, December 15, 2020.

[Delaware Reaffirms Director Independence Principle in Founder-Led Company](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, November 13, 2020.

[ISS Proposes Explicit Support of Delaware Choice of Forum in Exclusive Forum Selection Charter and Bylaw Provisions; Addresses Federal Forum Selection](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, October 20, 2020.

[California Court Rules that “Bump-Up Exclusion” Bars Coverage of Settlement of Deal Litigation Claims](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, October 17, 2020.

[On the Purpose and Objective of the Corporation](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, August 5, 2020.

[On the Purpose of the Corporation](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, May 27, 2020.

[Some Thoughts for Boards of Directors in 2020: A Mid-Year Update](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, July 2, 2020.

[A Framework for Management and Board of Directors Consideration of ESG and Stakeholder Governance](#), in Compliance & Enforcement, a blog of NYU Law’s Program on Corporate Compliance and Enforcement, June 4, 2020.

[The Corporate Governance Review](#), U.S. chapter, Law Business Research, London, Tenth ed. 2020 (Ninth ed. 2019, Eighth ed. 2018, Seventh ed. 2017, Sixth ed. 2016, Fifth ed. 2015, Fourth ed. 2014, Third ed. 2013, Second ed. 2012, First ed. 2011).

[Reopening to a New Normal: Considerations for Boards](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, May 19, 2020.

[Citing Thin Board Record: Delaware Court of Chancery Again Sustains Oversight Claim](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, May 18, 2020.

[Federal District Court Dismisses Challenge to Board Diversity Statute](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, April 24, 2020.

[Governance Litigation and the Covid-19 Pandemic](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, April 19, 2020.

[Professor Bebchuk's Errant Attack on Stakeholder Governance](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, March 4, 2020.