



William Savitt

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William Savitt is Co-Chair of the Executive Committee and Co-Chair of the Litigation Department of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz. His practice focuses on complex commercial litigation and the representation of 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. Mr. Savitt represented Twitter in successful litigation against Elon Musk when Musk sought to terminate his \$44 billion merger agreement, compelling the deal to close on its agreed terms in October 2022. Among other recent engagements, Mr. Savitt represents OpenAI in its industry defining litigation; Coinbase in landmark litigation against the Securities Exchange Commission; successfully represented Boardwalk Pipelines in an appeal from the largest class action damages award in Delaware history; litigated the pathbreaking 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 "Band One" leading securities litigator, by *Lawdragon* as one of the 500 leading lawyers in the United States, one of the 500 leading global litigators, and as one of 100 Leading AI & Legal Tech Advisors, by *Benchmark Litigation* as a "litigation star" (including recent induction into *Benchmark Litigation's* Hall of Fame), as a leading authority in the *International Who's Who of Corporate Governance*, and was named to the inaugural *Forbes* list of America's Top 200 Lawyers. 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, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 1997–1998

Recent Publications

[In-Depth: Corporate Governance \(formerly The Corporate Governance Review\)](#), U.S. chapter, Lexology (formerly Law Business Research), London, Sixteenth ed. 2026 (Fifteenth ed. 2025 Fourteenth ed. 2024, Twelfth ed. 2022, 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).

Corporate Sustainability and ESG, in *Business and Commercial Litigation in the Federal Courts*, Robert L. Haig, ed., Thomson Reuters, Fifth ed. 2025.

Mergers and Acquisitions, in *Commercial Litigation in the New York Courts*, Robert L. Haig, ed., Thomson Reuters, Fifth ed. 2026.

[Risk Management and the Board of Directors](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, September 25, 2025.

[FCC Ruling on AI-Facilitated Fraud Illustrates the Need for Forward-Looking Enterprise Risk Management](#), in NYU Law School's Blog on Compliance and Enforcement, March 10, 2024.

[Wachtell Lipton Discusses AI in the 2024 Proxy Season: Managing Investor and Regulatory Scrutiny](#), in Columbia Law School's Blog on Corporations and the Capital Markets, March 4, 2024 and [NYU Law School's Blog on Compliance and Enforcement](#), March 19, 2024.

[Wachtell Lipton Discusses Executive Order on the Risks of Artificial Intelligence](#), in Columbia Law School's Blog on Corporations and the Capital Markets, November 3, 2023 and [NYU Law School's Blog on Compliance and Enforcement](#), November 3, 2023.

[Risk Management and the Board of Directors](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, September 30, 2023.

[Artificial Intelligence: The New Boardroom Challenge](#), in NYU Law School's Blog on Compliance and Enforcement, September 29, 2023.

[Caremark Exposure—And What to Do About It](#), in NYU Law School's Blog on Compliance and Enforcement, January 31, 2023.

[Cross-Border M&A - 2023 Checklist for Successful Acquisitions in the United States](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, January 7, 2023.

[Risk Management and the Board of Directors](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, September 17, 2022.

[Expanding on the SEC's Proposal to Modernize Section 13\(d\) and \(g\) Beneficial Ownership Reporting](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, April 14, 2022.

[Cross-Border M&A – 2022 Checklist for Successful Acquisitions in the United States](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, January 22, 2022.

[REIT M&A and Strategy in 2022](#), January 3, 2022.

Corporate Sustainability and ESG, in *Business and Commercial Litigation in the Federal Courts*, Robert L. Haig, ed., Thomson Reuters, Fifth ed. 2021.

Mergers and Acquisitions, in *Commercial Litigation in the New York Courts*, Robert L. Haig, ed., Thomson Reuters, Fifth ed. 2021.

[Court of Chancery Upholds Enforcement of Advance Notice Bylaw](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, October 20, 2021.

[Delaware Supreme Court Announces New Demand Futility Test](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, September 28, 2021 and [Columbia Law School's Blog on Corporations and the Capital Markets](#), October 1, 2021.

[Some Personal Reflections on Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Contribution to Business Law](#), in 121 Colum. L. Rev. 623 (2021).

[Delaware Supreme Court Eliminates “Dual-Natured” Direct and Derivative Claims](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, September 23, 2021.

[Vermont's Fossil Fuel Suit Underscores Climate-Change Pressures Faced by U.S. Companies](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, September 17, 2021.

[Boeing's MAX Woes Reach the Boardroom](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, September 13, 2021 and [Columbia Law School's Blog on Corporations and the Capital Markets](#), September 14, 2021.

[More Myths from Lucian Bebchuk](#), in Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, August 24, 2021 and Columbia Law School's Blog on Corporations and Capital Markets, August 25, 2021.