

Joseph J. O'Hara Jr.

Of Counsel

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Joe O'Hara spent the first thirty-seven years of his legal career mastering the challenge of trial work, handling everything from complex commercial disputes to catastrophic personal injury cases to unconstitutional conditions in a now closed jail. His trial work took him across the country, and his record of success on behalf of his clients was extraordinary—so extraordinary, in fact, that the firm's largest client recruited him to come in house to create and implement a nationwide strategy to manage company-threatening litigation for almost a dozen years.



In 2018, Joe launched the final phase of his legal career representing inmates who suffered devastating constitutional violations at the hands of police and prosecutors. Joe was a key member of the RSHC trial team that delivered a 2021 \$25.2M trial verdict involving a rigged lineup. Joe served a similar role in a physical abuse/fabricated confession case that resulted in a \$14.5M settlement. More recently, Joe led RSHC teams that in 2024 won a petition for an inmate who suffered an unconstitutional sentencing and in 2025 won a petition before the Illinois Torture Commission. Joe continues to both lead and advise RSHC teams seeking to free and compensate those wrongfully incarcerated.

CREDENTIALS

Education

Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, J.D., 1981, Editorial Board, *Northwestern University Law Review*
Marquette University, B.S., 1975

Bar Admissions

Illinois
New York (Inactive)
Ohio (Inactive)
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (Trial Bar)
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin

Professional Memberships

Former Member of Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel
Former Member of the Board of Directors
Former Executive Editor, IDC Quarterly

Past Teaching Appointments

Faculty Member, Illinois Defense Counsel (IDC) Trial Academy

Honors & Awards

RSHC Pro Bono Award (2023)

2016 Irish Legal 100

2014 Chicago Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions-Defendants “Lawyer of the Year”
Best Lawyers®

The Best Lawyers in America

Best Lawyers® (Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions-Defendants, 2007-2016)

Illinois Leading Lawyer

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2003-2005, 2008-2015, 2018-2025)

Illinois Super Lawyers

Thomson Reuters (2005-2009, 2011-2012, 2014-2017, 2019-2026)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Civic and Charitable Memberships

Chamber Music Festival of Saugatuck, MI

President (2023 – Present)

St. Luke's Hospital (Maumee, OH), Former Member of Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Finance Committee

Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Former Member of Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Orchestra Relations Committee

Chair of Music Director Search Committee