Brian O'Connor Watson



Partner

Direct: 312.471.8776 **Email:** bwatson@rshc-law.com

Brian gets things done: a nationally ranked lawyer with engineering and business expertise who's just as comfortable trying cases in the courtroom as he is creating solutions at the negotiation table.

As a trusted advisor and first-chair trial lawyer, Brian represents clients on both sides of the "v" through every stage of litigation from pre-suit negotiations through trials and verdicts to appeals and judgment enforcement.

Earlier in his career, Brian got graduate degrees in engineering, business, and law—all while working full time and cherishing caffeine—so he's spent time with clients on their 100-degree factory floors, their unpredictable fields, their innovative tech centers, and their company headquarters.

Brian dedicates countless hours personally and professionally to pro bono and community service in a broad range of areas from constitutional, voting, and civil rights to family, housing, and consumer protection. He's deeply committed to helping those most in need.

Brian is the Lead of the firm's Product Liability, Mass Torts & Environmental Practice Team.

EXPERIENCE

Clerkships

Judicial Extern, Honorable Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois
Judicial Extern, Honorable Ronald S. Davis, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, Law Division

Representative Engagements

- *Cotter Corp. (N.S.L.) v. United States*, 127 F.4th 1353 (Fed. Cir. Feb. 10, 2025) (winning precedent-setting reversal, and prosecuting indemnity case against government under Price-Anderson Act)
- *Bewley v. NCAA*, No. 23 CV 15570, 2024 WL 113971 (N.D. Ill. Jan. 10, 2024) (winning dismissal and defeating temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction of alleged antitrust and name, image, and likeness case)
- *Kitchin v. Bridgeton Landfill, LLC*, No. 4:18 CV 672 CDP, 2024 WL 379285 (E.D. Mo. Feb. 1, 2024) (winning dismissal of alleged nuclear radiation class action on federal preemption under Price-Anderson Act)
- *Orleans International Inc. v. Alterna Capital Solutions*, No. 2:21-cv-11335, 2023 WL 10350602 (E.D. Mich. Dec. 8, 2023) (winning dismissal of alleged breach of contract case)
- *Habich v. Exelon Corp.*, No. 22-cv-04438, 2023 WL 11229316 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 28, 2023) (winning dismissal of alleged nationwide class action case)
- *Gray v. Modine Manufacturing Co.*, No. 18CM-CC00218 (Mo. Cir. Ct. Aug. 31, 2023) (winning trial to verdict in trichloroethylene (TCE) chemical exposure and alleged wrongful death case)
- *Magnuson v. Exelon Corp.*, No. 4:21-CV-04142-SLD-JEH, 2023 WL 2300391 (C.D. Ill. Feb. 28, 2023) (winning dismissal of alleged Sarbanes-Oxley Act whistleblower action)

- *Butler v. Mallinckrodt LLC*, No. 4:18-CV-01701-AGF, 2022 WL 4598531 (E.D. Mo. Sept. 30, 2022) (winning summary judgment in consolidated nuclear radiation cases under Price-Anderson Act)
- *Gonzalez v. Dhillon*, No. 20-C-2111, 2022 WL 4448740 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 23, 2022) (defeating summary judgment in pro bono employment discrimination case)
- *Butler v. Mallinckrodt LLC*, No. 4:18-CV-01701-AGF, 2022 WL 970876 (E.D. Mo. Mar. 31, 2022) (winning exclusion of three experts in consolidated nuclear radiation cases under Daubert)
- *US Foods, Inc. v. Enspire Training, LLC*, 182 N.E.3d 922 (Ind. Ct. App. 2022) (winning reversal in commercial internet contract dispute, and trying case to verdict)
- *In re Cotter Corp., (N.S.L.)*, 22 F.4th 788 (8th Cir. 2022) (winning reversal in nuclear radiation case under Price-Anderson Act)
- *Lynch v. USF Propco II, LLC*, No. 19SL-CC03201, 2021 WL 7179455 (Mo. Cir. Ct. Nov. 12, 2021) (winning summary judgment in alter ego and premises liability case)
- *Energotech Projects Ltd. v. Neptun Light, Inc.*, No. 18 L 64 (Ill. Cir. Ct. Lake Cnty. Mar. 30, 2021) (winning trial to verdict in commercial breach of contract case)
- *Exelon Bus. Servs. Co., LLC v. Pelco Structural, LLC*, No. 16-CV-611, 2020 WL 7027565 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 30, 2020) (winning verdict of $2.75 million in commercial construction case)
- *Dish Network L.L.C. v. Cox Media Grp.*, No. 20 C 570, 2020 WL 4053604 (N.D. Ill. July 20, 2020), 2020 WL 5296910 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 4, 2020) (winning dismissal and defeating preliminary injunction in contract and business tort case)
- *In re Appointment of Special Prosecutor (Laquan McDonald)*, No. 2016 MR 000501 (Ill. Cir. Ct. Cook Cnty. 2016-19) (investigating and trying case related to the alleged involvement of Chicago Police Department personnel in the killing of Laquan McDonald)
- *Gonzales v. WATCO Companies LLC et al.*, No. 2015-00615 (Tex. Dist. Ct. Harris Cnty. Dec. 16, 2019) (winning summary judgment in catastrophic railroad injury case)
- *Krik v. Exxon Mobil Corp.*, 870 F.3d 669 (7th Cir. 2017) (winning appeal in products liability case, and trying case to verdict)
- *Pecher v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, 859 F.3d 396 (7th Cir. 2017) (winning appeal on a product liability theory against a patent licensor)
- *Am. Senior Communities, LLC v. Burkhart*, No. 1:17-CV-03273-TWP-DML, 2019 WL 6170064 (S.D. Ind. Nov. 19, 2019), 2019 WL 4688708 (S.D. Ind. Sept. 26, 2019) (winning pretrial motions and prosecuting complex civil RICO, fraud, and business tort case)
- *Major League Baseball Properties & Chicago Cubs Baseball Club v. Stevens et al.*, No. 1:16-cv-09140 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 22, 2016) (winning injunctive relief and judgment in trademark infringement action)
- *Wiederhold v. Deere & Co.*, No. 1316-CV13192, 2016 WL 4621145 (Mo. Cir. Ct. June 30, 2016) (winning verdict in products liability case)
- *Suoja v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, 211 F. Supp. 3d 1196 (W.D. Wis. 2016) (winning verdict in products liability case)
- *Hollingsworth v. Deere & Co.*, No. 12-L-1744 (Ill. Cir. Ct. Madison Cnty. Feb. 18, 2016 (trying case to mid-trial resolution of products liability action)
- *Krik v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, No. 10-CV-07435, 2015 WL 5050143 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 25, 2015) (winning trial to verdict in products liability action)
- *Arendt v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, No. 13-C-727, 2015 WL 3452549 (E.D. Wis. June 1, 2015) (winning summary judgment in wrongful death products liability case)
- *Smego v. Mitchell*, No. 3:08-cv-03142-SEM-TSH, 2015 WL 728550 (C.D. Ill. Feb. 20, 2015), jury verdict (Feb. 27, 2015) (winning exclusion of plaintiff's liability experts in pro bono constitutional dental care action and trying case to verdict)

- *Padilla v. Hunter Douglas Window Coverings, Inc.*, 14 F. Supp. 3d 1127 (N.D. Ill. 2014) (winning exclusion of plaintiff's liability experts in wrongful death products liability case)
- *Krik v. Crane Co.*, 76 F. Supp. 3d 747 (N.D. Ill. 2014); *Krik v. Crane Co.*, 71 F. Supp. 3d 784 (N.D. Ill. 2014) (winning exclusion of plaintiff's liability experts in products liability case)
- *Ahnert v. Brand Insulation Inc.*, No. 13-C-1456, 2014 WL 4257740 (E.D. Wis. Aug. 29, 2014) (winning summary judgment in wrongful death product liability case)
- *Boyer v. Weyerhaeuser Co.*, 39 F. Supp. 3d 1036 (W.D. Wis. 2014) (winning dismissal of product liability theory against a patent licensor)
- *Bowles v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, 2013 IL App (4th) 121072, 996 N.E.2d 1267 (4th Dist. 2013) (winning appeal of summary judgment in complex civil conspiracy and product liability case)
- *In re Asbestos Prods. Liab. Litig. (No. VI)*, No. 13-1999, 2013 WL 3295312 (3d Cir. June 26, 2013) (winning dismissal of appeal in consolidated product liability actions)
- *Lamb v. Graco Children's Prods. Inc.*, 291 F.R.D. 665 (N.D. Fla. 2013) (winning summary judgment in putative consumer fraud class case)
- *In re Asbestos Prods. Liab. Litig. (No. VI)*, 289 F.R.D. 424 (E.D. Pa. 2013) (winning exclusion of expert testimony in consolidated product liability case)
- *Ellis v. Pneumo Abex Corp.*, No. 11-cv-01128, 2013 WL 1099016 (E.D. Pa. Jan. 3, 2013) (winning summary judgment in complex civil conspiracy and product liability action)
- *Purepecha Enters. Inc. v. El Matador Spices & Dry Chiles*, No. 11-cv-2569, 2012 WL 3686776 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 24, 2012) (winning summary judgment in a trademark infringement and unfair competition case)
- *McCune v. Graco Children's Prods. Inc.*, 495 Fed. App'x 535 (5th Cir. 2012) (winning appeal of verdict in product liability case)
- *Posey v. Pruger*, 762 F. Supp. 2d 1086 (N.D. Ill. 2011) (winning dismissal of pro bono civil rights case)

CREDENTIALS

Education

Chicago-Kent College of Law, J.D., 2010, *cum laude*
Dean's Honor List
Merit Scholarship
CALI Awards for highest grade awarded in The Corporation and the Constitution, Disability Law, Energy Law, Illinois Civil Procedure, Intellectual Property in the High Tech Era, Legal Writing IV, Litigation Technology, Mediation, Patent Office Practice, and Police Misconduct Litigation

Purdue University, West Lafayette, M.S., Engineering, 2005

DePaul University, Kellstadt Graduate School of Business, M.B.A., Applied Economics, Operations Management, 2004, *with distinction, Delta Mu Delta*

Michigan Technological University, B.S., Electrical Engineering, Economics Minor, 2002, *cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Illinois
Indiana
Missouri
Wisconsin

U.S. Supreme Court
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado
U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (Trial Bar)
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin

Professional Memberships

Chicago Bar Association
Federal Bar Association
Illinois State Bar Association
Indiana State Bar Association
Law360, Illinois Editorial Board (2025)
Missouri Bar Association
Wisconsin Bar Association

Honors & Awards

The Best Lawyers in America, *Best Lawyers®* (Commercial Litigation, 2022-2027; Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions - Defendants; Product Liability and Litigation - Defendants, 2027)
Legal 500 Chicago Elite (Commercial Disputes, 2026; Product Liability, 2026)
Chicago Notable Rising Stars in Law, *Crain's Chicago Business* (2021)
Illinois Leading Lawyer in Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury Defense Law: General, and Products Liability Defense Law, *Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers* (2022-2025, 2027)
Illinois Emerging Lawyer in Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury Defense Law: General, and Products Liability Defense Law, *Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers* (2017-2021)
Top 100 Emerging Lawyers, *Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers* (2020)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

"Legal Challenges and Opportunities at the Intersection of AI Data Centers and Power Infrastructure," (co-author) *RSHC Insight* (February 20, 2025)

"Look Out Companies: You Might Be Sued Wherever You Register To Do Business," (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (June 28, 2023)

"Communicate With Care Lessons from *United States v. Google*," (speaker) Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP (RSHC) Client CLE (October 2022)

"3 Ways Law Firms Can Guard Against Burnout," (co-author) *Of Counsel: The Legal and Practice Management Report* (January 2021)

"Does Allowing Employees to Work From Home Put Corporations at Risk of Expanding Where They Can Be Properly Sued Under Illinois's Venue Statue? The Illinois Supreme Court Weighs In," (co-author) *Illinois State Bar Association's Bench & Bar Section Council Newsletter* (November 2020, vol. 51, no. 4)

"Brian O'Connor Watson, Skilled Advocate Goes Toe-to-toe With Tough Trial Law Adversaries," (editorial profile) *Emerging Lawyers Magazine* (February 2020)

"Appellate Court Clarifies 'Sole Proximate Cause,'" (author) *Illinois State Bar Association's Bench & Bar Section Council Newsletter* (August 2018, vol. 49, no. 2)

"The Seventh Circuit Rejects Plaintiff's Cancer Causation Theory," *Illinois State Bar Association's Bench & Bar Section Council Newsletter* (September 2017)

"Recent Developments in Toxic Torts and Environmental Law," *Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Law Journal* (Winter 2017)

"Recent Developments in Toxic Torts and Environmental Law," *Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Law Journal* (Fall 2013)

"Defending Product and Service Providers Overseas," The Network of Trial Law Firms (June 15, 2012)