

Dedication to Justice Award Recipient



Michael de Leeuw is a litigation partner at Cozen O'Connor and is vice chair of the firm's national Business Litigation Group. He leads high-profile, complex matters in federal, state, and appellate courts across the country. Michael has a diverse practice that spans securities and antitrust litigation, appellate law, real estate disputes, defamation, as well as constitutional challenges in federal trial courts, circuit courts, and the United States Supreme Court. Throughout his career, pro bono work has always been a significant and critically important part of Michael's practice.

In 2019, Michael briefed, argued, and won a First Amendment case at the United States Supreme Court. In *Manhattan Community Access Center v. Halleck*, the Court reversed a Second Circuit Court of Appeals decision and provided much needed clarification for those rare instances where private entities can be considered "state actors" and therefore potentially liable for constitutional violations.

Michael's pro bono work has included high profile voting rights trials and appeals alongside lawyers from Cozen O'Connor, Fried Frank,

the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the ACLU, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. He has also represented individuals, reporters, and advocacy organizations in First Amendment challenges around the country, including representing the Innocence Project (and some of its individual lawyers) in a defamation case brought by the former (and infamous) chief forensic pathologist for the state of Mississippi, whose testimony had led to multiple wrongful convictions. Michael recently successfully represented a climate scientist who was sued for defamation for calling into question the bogus science behind a cult-like (and growing) movement that believes that governments around the world are engaged in a broad-based secret conspiracy of "geo-engineering" the Earth's climate using contrails from airplanes. He has represented individuals in family law issues and multiple families of those who died on 9/11. And he has authored dozens of Supreme Court amicus briefs on civil rights issues.

Michael has also spearheaded the pro bono partnership between Access Justice Brooklyn and Cozen O'Connor; a relationship that will surely be longstanding and impactful.