



# Joseph R. Swee

*partner*

Joe is a partner in the firm's Litigation Department. His practice focuses on complex commercial litigation. He has successfully represented clients in federal and state courts throughout the country as well as in arbitrations before AAA, JAMS and FINRA. He has experience with disputes involving breach of contract, fiduciary duties, business torts, unfair competition, restrictive covenants, trade secrets and business control matters. He has represented clients in litigation matters involving a diverse array of industries including hospitality, financial services, real estate development, food and beverage, and retail and consumer goods.

In addition to litigation, Joe regularly counsels clients regarding a range of contracts and other business matters. He works closely with owners of luxury hotels, resorts and private clubs on matters involving hotel management agreements, relationships with brand management companies, leasing and more. He advises clients working through disputes with suppliers in the food and beverage industry. He advises professionals in the financial services industry in connection with employment transitions with a focus on restrictive covenants, confidential information and trade secrets. And he has represented clients in civil, criminal and internal investigations involving claims of government contracting fraud, antitrust violations and executive misconduct.

Before joining Porter Wright, Joe practiced at a commercial litigation boutique in Chicago. Prior to that, Joe served as a law clerk for the Hon. Jeffrey T. Gilbert of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

## REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

### Litigation

- Represented the owner of a luxury hotel and premier private club in an insurance coverage and bad faith action in California state court arising out of two catastrophic events that caused more than \$60 million in claimed losses under a layered program of all-risk commercial property insurance subscribed to by a large group of national and international insurers and syndicates

## CONTACT

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## EDUCATION

University of Illinois Chicago School of Law, J.D., *summa cum laude* & *Phi Beta Kappa*, 2015

- The John Marshall Law Review, Executive Student Publications Editor

The University of Chicago, M.L.A., 2020

Northwestern University, B.A., *magna cum laude*, 2011

## SERVICES

### Litigation

- Arbitration and mediation
- Commercial litigation
- Hospitality
- Insurance litigation
- Non-competition and trade secrets litigation

### Business Competition, Advice & Litigation

### Business Growth & Operation

- Hospitality

- Represented the owners of luxury hotels located in Manhattan and Santa Barbara in an AAA arbitration and federal litigation against a brand management company involving claims of mismanagement and for termination of hotel management agreements
- Represented an owner of a St. Louis boutique hotel in a Missouri state court action involving claims for breach of fiduciary duty and conspiracy based on alleged mismanagement of the hotel
- Represented the owner of a Manhattan luxury hotel in federal litigation involving breach of contract, indemnity and negligence claims arising out of a \$100 million+ renovation project
- Represented the owner of a luxury resort and related parties in a California state court action involving contract and tort claims arising out of the termination of a service provider at the property
- Represented financial advisors at a large financial services firm in FINRA arbitrations involving restrictive covenant, confidential information, trade secret and unfair competition claims
- Represented an ultra-high-net-worth individual and a related entity in federal and state courts against palimony and related claims
- Represented minority investors in an arbitration against a European parent company and its international and domestic subsidiaries arising out of the restructuring of a large real estate development project
- Represented a large commercial real estate development company in a contract, fraud and breach of fiduciary duty action in Illinois state court involving over \$9 million in damage claims
- Represented an owner of a closely-held tax credit financing company before the Delaware Court of Chancery in a business control dispute against a partner
- Represented an owner of a closely-held tax credit financing company in an Illinois state court action involving claims for breach of fiduciary duty and conspiracy based on the diversion of company assets
- Represented a multinational toy company in federal litigation involving claims for breach of contract and infringement against a former licensee and related defendants
- Represented a multinational toy company against a mobile game development company in a JAMS arbitration involving claims for breach of contract and infringement
- Represented the former owner of a mortgage company in federal litigation against claims brought by the federal government under the False Claims Act and FIRREA

#### Appeals

- Represented a national paper goods and gift retailer before the Illinois Appellate Court in a breach of contract disputes

#### Business Competition and Advice

- Counseled financial advisors concerning employment transitions with a focus on restrictive covenant, confidential information and trade secrets matters

#### SERVICES (CONTINUED)

##### Investigations, White Collar Defense and Shareholder Litigation

##### Real Estate

- Hospitality
- Real estate litigation

##### Labor & Employment

- Hospitality

##### Entrepreneurship & Startups

- Hospitality

- Counseled large, privately-held food manufacturer in connection with matters involving contracting and supplier disputes
- Counseled owners of luxury hotels, resorts and private clubs located in Manhattan, Santa Barbara and Los Cabos in connection with matters involving hotel management agreements, brand manager relationships, leasing, and other contract and business issues
- Counseled multinational toy company in connection with contract, charitable coventurer and other business issues
- Counseled the owner of a luxury automotive dealership concerning antitrust matters in connection with limitations on vehicle resales by customers
- Counseled partner in RIA wealth management firm in connection with acquisition by an RIA aggregator
- Counseled senior executive at investment and asset management platform focused on US power generation assets in connection with acquisition by global private markets firm

### Investigations and White Collar Defense

- Conducted an internal investigation of alleged misconduct by a chief executive officer for the board of a climate intelligence and finance company
- Conducted an internal investigation of alleged misconduct by a chief financial officer on behalf of ownership of a family of hospitality companies
- Represented a North American division of a publicly-traded food services company in a federal criminal investigation of alleged fraud in government contracting
- Represented a paving company in a civil antitrust investigation by the Illinois Attorney General related to an alleged refusal to deal
- Represented an attorney in a proceeding before the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission

### BAR ADMISSIONS

- Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- DRI
- American Bar Association
- Seventh Circuit Bar Association

### HONORS | AWARDS

- Order of John Marshall
- John Marshall Distinguished Scholar

### COMMUNITY

- Associate Board of Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, Board Member
  - Volunteer Chair, 2026
- Equestrian Connection, Volunteer
- Lake Forest – Lake Bluff Running Club, Member
  - Vice President, 2026
  - Male Runner of the Year, 2025