

**PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA**

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PRACTICE AREAS:

[Commercial Litigation](#)

STATE ADMISSIONS:

Pennsylvania

COURT ADMISSIONS:

U.S. District Court for the Eastern
District of Pennsylvania

U.S. District Court for the Middle
District of Pennsylvania

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third
Circuit

EDUCATION:

J.D., Boston College Law School,
1994; Winner of the 1994 National
Administrative Law Moot Court
Competition

B.A. in Political Science,
Swarthmore College, with honors,
1990

Jonathan W. Hugg

MEMBER

Jonathan Hugg concentrates on commercial and appellate litigation and counseling, with an emphasis on financial institution, real estate, and municipal matters. Jonathan has over 30 years of wide-ranging experience prosecuting, defending, and resolving contractual disputes and business torts across Pennsylvania and up and down the Northeast Corridor. He frequently litigates cases in the Commerce Program of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia. Jonathan also frequently advises lenders regarding regulatory compliance and risk issues.

Jonathan regularly represents financial institutions, lenders, real estate developers, and businesses, including related to: commercial loan work-outs; lender liability matters, including to consumers; fraudulent transfers; privacy and bank secrecy; disputes arising under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC), including lien priority disputes; bankruptcy trustees and adversary matters in bankruptcy court; loan participation agreements, and check fraud and warranties. He frequently counsels and represents companies and their directors, officers, and employees involved in pre-indictment investigations by federal and state authorities.

Jonathan served as an assistant district attorney in the Appeals Unit of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, where he prosecuted more than 130 matters, both as appellee and appellant, before the Pennsylvania Supreme and Superior Courts. He maintains an active appellate practice.

Jonathan often publishes and speaks regarding emerging business law issues.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Bankruptcy & Restructuring

- Prosecuted 5-year fraudulent transfer action, through state, federal, and bankruptcy courts, to achieve full recovery of defaulted multi-million-dollar commercial loan; bankruptcy court granted administrative claim status to community bank client, thereby allowing bank to "prime" IRS and all other creditors.
- Lead counsel in a 3½ year commercial loan workout involving nine separate federal and state lawsuits in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. The community bank client substantially recovered the entire eight-figure, ten-year-old debt owed by the bank's borrower, with significant contributions from his foreign partners, despite fraudulent transfer and lien priority issues.

- Defeated on summary judgment a million-dollar claim by U.S. bankruptcy trustee attempting to strip bank of collateral lien in securities accounts.
- Achieved 100% recovery of the principal balance of an under-secured, non-performing multi-million-dollar commercial loan in rare Chapter 12 farm bankruptcy.

Financial Services Litigation

- Persuaded a private arbitrator to dismiss for lack of subject matter jurisdiction consumer fraud and RICO claims against a community lender client arising from the origination and administration of a “solar loan.”
- Leveraged motion for court-appointed receiver to extract 100%, eight-figure loan payoff plus substantial counsel fees from community bank’s largest recalcitrant commercial borrower. Success in this “bet the company” litigation significantly improved not only the bank’s finances, but also its future prospects in a time of intense scrutiny by regulators and the market.
- Negotiated 85% reduction of mid-six figure administrative penalty imposed by state regulator upon community bank client.
- Persuaded trial court to dismiss contentious consumer protection claim alleging the forged execution of loan documents and credit damage; appellate court unanimously affirmed, explicitly adopting the basis argued to the trial court.
- Negotiated through multiple, protracted mediations a no-cash settlement of multi-million-dollar consumer class action against community lender allegedly engaged in the unfair collection of defaulted loans.
- Defeated on summary judgment a multi-million-dollar lender liability claim by a prominent local nonprofit against an international bank.
- Quieted title and returned to first priority a multi-million-dollar residential mortgage held by a Fortune 10 bank against claim of consumer fraud by homeowner.
- Overcame jurisdictional objections and won an award of full counsel fees for community lender in protracted federal court action against, inter alia, the federal government, to interplead multi-million deposits by indicted fraudster.

Internal Investigations

- Served as Special Counsel to investigate allegations of sexual abuse in a municipal youth sports program.

Litigation

- Overcoming the strong presumption against pre-judgment attachment, persuaded trial judge to issue an injunction freezing the assets of a vendor that refused to return almost \$1 million inadvertently wired to it by client.
- In criminal matter against out-of-state public company for alleged state law regulatory violations, won two “Not Guilty” verdicts at trial and persuaded prosecutor to withdraw remaining charge.

- Successfully appealed denial by state Department of Revenue of six-figure research and development (R&D) tax credit for technology client, overcoming allegation that the client had untimely filed its application.
- Over more than two years of court-supervised multi-party negotiations among adjacent real estate developers, secured no-payment settlement, full release, and dismissal of alleged nuisance and construction defect claims.
- Obtained dismissal on the eve of the trial of a multi-million dollar claim against a commercial landlord for alleged breach of a lease; landlord received full indemnification from the violating tenant, including counsel fees.
- Persuaded trial court to strike *lis pendens*, confess error, reverse its grant of summary judgment, and enter a declaratory judgment that community bank client attempting to sell commercial property was entitled to retain entire six-figure deposit, despite agreement of sale allowing buyer “sole discretion” to cancel transaction; demonstrated in discovery that buyer violated implied duty of good faith and fair dealing by fabricating documentation allegedly justifying termination of deal.
- Won a \$1.7 million fraud verdict after a 10-day trial in the Commerce Program of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County.
- Defeated defamation and invasion of privacy claims against a U.S. Congressman for allegedly false campaign literature and tactics.
- Obtained an extremely rare writ of prohibition against a trial judge, on an emergency basis, from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in the case of *Mayer v. Garman*, 912 A.2d 762 (Pa. 2006).
- Authored the winning brief in the unanimously decided Pennsylvania Supreme Court case of *Sphere Drake v. PGW*, 782 A.2d 510 (Pa. 2001).
- Briefed and argued the Commonwealth’s case in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s unanimous decision in *Commonwealth v. Collins*, 702 A.2d 540 (Pa. 1997).
- Won a civil contempt finding and five-figure award of counsel fees for human services non-profit against a recalcitrant vendor after a 3-day remote bench trial in the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County.
- After twice obtaining dismissal of claims, negotiated settlement on behalf of commercial landlord of multi-million-dollar action by national tenant to enforce right of first refusal and re-development provisions of lease, thereby enabling sale of landlord’s billion-dollar real estate portfolio.

Municipal

- Lead counsel in three-year defense of a suburban municipality and 25 current and former officers and employees in an unprecedented lawsuit filed by a real estate developer seeking recovery in excess of \$80 million based on an alleged conspiracy between elected officials, municipal staff and solicitor and community members to deny land use approval for proposed construction.
- Devised and executed successful legal, lobbying and media

strategy to defeat powerful and vocal institutional and community support for the grant of a multi-million-dollar government subsidy to client's direct competitor.

- Represented a grassroots citizens' group in its successful effort, including more than 20 contentious public hearings, to thwart the rezoning and sale of one of the last old growth forests in suburban Philadelphia.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Philadelphia Bar Association, Business Law Section, Business Litigation Committee, Vice Chair
- American Bar Association, Business Law Section, Member

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Senior Hearing Committee Member, 2005-2011, 2022 through June 2028.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2025 & 2026 for Municipal Law
- Recognized by Thomson Reuters as a Stand-out Lawyer for 2025 and 2026
- Selected for inclusion in Pennsylvania Super Lawyers for Business Litigation, 2014-2020

NEWS AND INSIGHTS

PUBLICATIONS

- "[Philadelphia Implements New Commerce Case Management Program Order](#)," co-author, The Legal Intelligencer, January 9, 2026.
- "[Recent Developments in Business Courts 2024](#)," *ABA Business Law Today*, March 2024.
- "[The 4 Top Philadelphia Commerce Court Opinions Of 2023](#)," *Law360*, December 2023.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "Commerce Court 101: Navigating Pennsylvania's Business Court 2026," panel presenter for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE program, April 2026.
- Presented continuing legal education ethics program "Is It Your Conflict? Recognizing and Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Commercial Litigation" as part of the 2025 Annual State of the Commerce Court Update hosted by the Philadelphia Bar Association's Business Litigation Committee, August 2025.
- Participated as panelist in continuing legal education program "Prehearing Conferences and Disciplinary and Reinstatement

Hearings” as part of the Pennsylvania Disciplinary Board’s annual training for new hearing committee members, July 2025.