

Robert C. O'Brien

PARTNER EMERITUS

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OFFICE Los Angeles

A former U.S. ambassador and the 27th National Security Advisor, Robert O'Brien co-founded the firm with [Stephen G. Larson](#) and is partner emeritus at Larson. Robert is an accomplished litigator, a skilled neutral, and an experienced diplomat.

Recognized as one of the "Top 100 Lawyers in California" by *Daily Journal* and one of the "500 Leading Lawyers in America" by *Lawdragon*, Robert forged his career as lead trial and appellate counsel in high-profile matters.

In his [commercial litigation](#) practice, Robert handles [class action](#), [entertainment](#), [intellectual property](#), [environmental](#), business torts, and complex contractual matters in state and federal courts. He is regularly appointed as a mediator, arbitrator, and discovery referee, having served as the Special Master in several of the largest cases in the Central District of California, including *MGA v. Mattel* ("Barbie v. Bratz"), *United States v. Standard & Poors* and *In re Allergan Securities Litigation*. Prior to co-founding the firm in 2016, Robert was the California managing partner of a national Am Law 200 firm for nearly a decade and, earlier in his career, was an associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP.

In addition to his litigation and alternative dispute practices, Robert is one of the country's leading diplomats and advisors on national security issues. As National Security Advisor, he brought a renewed focus to defense and industrial base issues, orchestrated the historic Abraham Accords in the Middle East, brokered economic normalization between Serbia and Kosovo, and achieved increased cooperation with America's allies across the Indo-Pacific. Previously, Robert was the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA) and held the personal rank of ambassador. As SPEHA, he coordinated the government's diplomatic engagements on overseas hostage-related matters and successfully negotiated the return of over 25 hostages and wrongfully detained Americans.

Robert was the U.S. Alternate Representative to the 60th session of the U.N. General Assembly and a member of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee. He was the founding co-chairman of the State Department's Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan, serving under Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Robert was a senior legal officer at the U.N. Security Council in Geneva, Switzerland, and a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve JAG Corps. He was a member of the International Republican Institute delegations that observed the presidential election in the Republic of Georgia in October 2013 and the parliamentary election in Ukraine in October 2014. Robert was also a Pacific Council on International



EDUCATION

- University of California, Berkeley School of Law, J.D.
- University of California, Los Angeles, B.A., cum laude

ADMISSIONS

- California
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of International Trade
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S.D.C Central District of California
- U.S.D.C Eastern District of California
- U.S.D.C Northern District of California
- U.S.D.C Southern District of California

PRACTICE AREAS

- Appellate Litigation

Policy observer of the 9/11 Military Commission pretrial proceedings in Guantanamo Bay.

Robert is the recipient of the National Security Medal, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the National Defense Service Medal, the Legion d'honneur (chevalier), the Republic of China (Taiwan) Order of the Brilliant Star with Special Grand Cordon, and the Kosovo Presidential Medal of Merits. The National Museum of the Surface Navy named Robert the recipient of the 2021 Freedom of the Seas Award. Following the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020, a tree was planted on behalf of the State of Israel at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Forest in the Hills of Jerusalem in Robert's honor. In 2019, Robert received the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson Award for the Defense of America and Israel. The U.C. Berkeley School of Law presented Robert with the Stefan A. Riesenfeld Memorial Award for outstanding contributions to the field of international law in 2011.

Robert is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Pepperdine School of Public Policy and a Carnegie Distinguished Fellow at the Columbia University Institute of Global Politics. He also serves as the Chairman of the Global Taiwan Institute (GTI) Task Force on US-Taiwan Relations, and he is a co-chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Commission on Hostage Taking and Wrongful Detention. In 2017, the *Los Angeles Business Journal* named Robert one of the 500 "Most Influential People" in Los Angeles.

- Complex Civil Litigation
- Class Action
- Commercial Litigation
- Environmental, Natural Resource, and Basic Materials Litigation
- Intellectual Property and Patent Litigation
- International Arbitration
- Media and Entertainment Litigation
- Partnership Disputes and Securities Litigation

Robert's Awards & Recognitions

- *Washingtonian*, 500 Most Influential People Shaping Policy, 2022 - 2023
- Benchmark Litigation, Litigation Star,
- Daily Journal, Top 100 Lawyers in California,
- Los Angeles Business Journal, LA500: The Most Influential People in L.A., 2017
- Los Angeles Business Journal, Top Litigators & Trial Lawyers,
- Lawdragon, 500 Leading Lawyers in America,
- National Security Medal,
- National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal,
- Department of Defense, Medal for Distinguished Public Service,
- National Defense Service Medal,
- Legion d'honneur (chevalier),
- Kosovo Presidential Medal of Merits,
- The National Museum of the Surface Navy Freedom of the Seas Award,