Geoff Beckham

Partner

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Practice Areas

Business & Commercial Litigation

Bar Memberships

California

Geoff is a litigation and regulatory enforcement attorney with over 20 years of experience advising financial services firms on complex legal and compliance matters. Through his experience as in-house and outside counsel, Geoff represents retail brokerage firms, investment advisors, and their registered representatives in securities arbitration forums, such as FINRA and AAA, managing matters from initial claim through hearing and resolution. He also provides strategic counsel on pre-litigation disputes, trust and fiduciary matters, and enterprise-level complaints management. Geoff's securities practice spans a wide variety of claims, including suitability, churning, fraud, misappropriation, violation of state and federal securities laws, elder abuse, breach of contract, and breach of fiduciary duty. He also has driven favorable outcomes in matters seeking to collect on outstanding promissory note balances while defending the firm against employment-related counterclaims by former representatives.

Geoff's background also includes serving as an Assistant General Counsel at Wells Fargo and Corporate Counsel at Charles Schwab. He is known for his ability to translate complex financial products and regulatory requirements into practical legal guidance, balancing litigation, regulatory, and reputational risk with business objectives. His litigation experience informs a pragmatic ability to assess risk and advise on the design and effectiveness of controls frameworks in highly regulated environments. He has extensive experience managing cross-functional teams, supervising attorneys through discovery and trial phases of litigation, and advising on high-stakes disputes across the financial services industry. Geoff is also an active leader within the legal community, contributing to pro bono initiatives and mentoring the next generation of legal professionals.

Other Info About Geoff

Experience

Geoff has handled scores of securities matters against brokerage firms and their licensed representatives, and has arbitrated dozens of cases to completion. He also provided pre-dispute and litigation support for the banking, lending, and trust business of a national firm, addressing disputes arising from high-net-worth trust and fiduciary relationships.

Defended a national brokerage firm against a large volume of retail client arbitration claims relating to the failure of the auction rate securities market, obtaining collectively favorable results.

Obtained a complete defense award in a FINRA arbitration on behalf of a national brokerage firm in a claim involving a short-selling strategy in a meme stock amidst the artificial market activity generated by social media forces in 2021.

Assisted with the complete defense in AAA arbitration of a real estate asset management division facing suitability and breach of contract claims involving the recommendation that a family office invest in commercial real estate shortly before the COVID pandemic caused the dislocation of that market.

Obtained multiple dismissals of FINRA Arbitration claims that violated the forum's six-year eligibility rule, despite arguments that the jurisdictional statute of repose should be tolled.

Prevailed through a state court dismissal of a breach of fiduciary duty claim, resulting in an appellate decision holding that a broker-dealer had no relationship with and therefore owed no duty to the beneficiary of a deceased retail brokerage client.

While managing the settlement of over three dozen arbitration complaints involving a product-related suitability issue, partnered with colleagues to negotiate the strategic resolution of a related regulatory enforcement action.

Successfully obtained summary judgment on behalf of a national broker-dealer to dispense with a claim involving the delayed transfer of over $11MM in securities.

Obtained a complete defense award on behalf of a national brokerage firm and its registered representative in a multi-million-dollar elder abuse claim arising from an external fraud scheme.

Education

UC College of the Law, San Francisco, J.D., 2002

University of California, Berkeley, B.A. History, Minor in Public Policy, 1998

Courts

All United States District Courts in California

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit