Industries

Manufacturing

Consumable Goods

Mobility

Supply Chain

Practice Areas

Business & Commercial Litigation

Appellate

Intellectual Property

Litigation

Trial Work

Bar Memberships

Ohio

Ryan W. Goellner

Partner

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Ryan focuses on general corporate litigation, closely held business and shareholder litigation, media law, business tort and contract actions, and appeals. He has led a variety of work for both plaintiffs and defendants in creditor-debtor actions, including the administration of assignments for the benefit of creditors; construction suits; trade secret litigation; and real estate disputes. Ryan also has achieved significant appellate victories for clients in the areas of medical malpractice defense, closely held corporations, government contracting, and media law before the Supreme Court of Ohio, intermediate Ohio appellate courts, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. Ryan's media law practice has involved the recent successful defense of multimillion dollar defamation claims against several media conglomerates. He also has experience in helping clients navigate probate litigation, as well as liquor license and permitting laws in Ohio.

Prior to joining the firm, Ryan worked as a Legal Intern at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain, where he collaborated with prominent scholars at a renowned human rights institute. While attending the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Ryan served as a research assistant to several professors and co-authored an amicus brief to the North Carolina Supreme Court, wrote for and chaired the University of Cincinnati Law Review's Blog, and served as a Senior Articles Editor on Human Rights Quarterly.

Other Info About Ryan

Experience

Supreme Court of Ohio

WTOL Television, LLC v Cedar Fair, LP, 174 Ohio St.3d 376 (Ohio 2023). Obtained Ohio Supreme Court writ of mandamus on behalf of three television stations compelling Cedar Point Police Department (CPPD) to produce public records related to reports of sexual assaults in the Cedar Point staff dormitories.

State ex rel. More Bratenahl; Meade v. Village of Bratenahl et al., 157 Ohio St.3d 309, 2019-Ohio-3233, 136 N.E.3d 447 (Ohio 2019) – As counsel for amici curiae Ohio Coalition for Open Government, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and Ohio Association of Broadcasters, successfully obtained the Supreme Court of Ohio's unanimous reversal of lower court decisions permitting secret ballot voting in violation of the Ohio Open Records Act, and also obtained in the decision clarification of the fundamental requirement that the public have meaningful access to meetings of public bodies in the state of Ohio.

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

Hawaii Dept. of Human Services, Div. of Vocational Rehab. v. U.S. Dept. of Education, Rehab. Services Administration, 46 F.4th 1148 (9th Cir. 2022) – Represented the Department of Human Services in a dispute with the United States Army over the priority to be applied to the Department's state-licensed blind vendors for the award of a multimillion-dollar cafeteria service contract at a Hawaii Army base. From an adverse arbitration decision against the Department, we prosecuted a partially successful appeal to the district court, and then obtained complete success in the Ninth Circuit. The court's precedential decision resulted in immediate priority for blind vendors in the Army's cafeteria contracts in Hawaii, and binds the Army and federal agencies to apply the priority for blind persons in awarding these types of contracts across the western U.S.

Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals

Sandmann v. Rolling Stone, LLC, et al., 78 F.4th 319 (6th Cir. 2023). Successful defense of Sixth Circuit appeal filed by former Covington Catholic High School student who alleged he was defamed by news

coverage about his encounter with a Native American activist on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The Sixth Circuit affirmed the summary judgment award dismissing the defamation claims on the grounds the challenged statements were constitutionally protected opinion.

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals

Book People v. Wong, 91 F.4th 318 (5th Cir. 2024). Provided successful amici curiae support, contributing to the Fifth Circuit's ruling that a state statute mandating ratings on library materials violated the First Amendment. Filed on behalf of the Freedom to Read Foundation and the American Association of School Librarians.

Little v. Llano County, 103 F.4th 1140 (5th Cir. July 3, 2024). Provided successful amici curiae support, contributing to the Fifth Circuit's ruling that a county's removal of certain books from library shelves violated the First Amendment. Filed on behalf of the Freedom to Read Foundation, Texas Library Association and American Library Association.

Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals

Blankenship v. Fox News Network, LLC, et al., 60 F.4th 744 (4th Cir. 2023). Successful defense of Fourth Circuit appeal filed by former Massey Coal CEO and candidate for U.S. Senate. The Fourth Circuit affirmed the trial court summary judgment award dismissing defamation claims brought against clients MSNBC, CNBC, and NBCUniversal.

Ohio Courts of Appeals

Maas v. Maas, 2020-Ohio-5160, 161 N.E.3d 863 (1st Dist. 2020) – Represented the independent directors of the company against breach of fiduciary duty claims and obtained a complete dismissal of claims at summary judgment. Received a unanimous opinion applying the business judgment rule and affirming that victory on appeal.

Young v. Durrani, et al., 2016-Ohio-5526, 61 N.E.3d 34, (1st Dist. 2016) – successfully argued for application of statute of limitations and constitutionality of state of repose to various medical claims in lead

test case against hospitals related to series of allegedly deficient back surgeries.

Michigan Court of Appeals

Quigley v. Detroit Airlines N. Terminal Consortium, Inc., 2023 WL 3668115 (Mich. Ct. App., May 25, 2023) – Successfully obtained interlocutory stay and review of trial court decision denying motion to dismiss in wrongful death action against Schindler Elevator Corporation, which resulted in reversal and remand for trial court to apply court legal standard for dismissal.

Education

University of Cincinnati College of Law, J.D., 2015, *summa cum laude*
University of Cincinnati Law Review, Blog Chair
Human Rights Quarterly, Senior Articles Editor
Arthur Russell Morgan Fellow
Order of the Coif

Xavier University, B.A., History, 2012, *summa cum laude*, University Scholar

Courts

Supreme Court of Ohio

United States Supreme Court

Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals

Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio

United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio

Recognition

"Book Banners Are Everywhere. These lawyers Are Playing Offense." *Publishers Weekly,* September 2025

Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) Roll of Honor Award, 2024. Presented for pro bono work making significant contributions to the First Amendment freedom to read.

2024 Fellow, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

Selected to Ohio Rising Stars, 2019-2025

Frost Brown Todd Diversity and Inclusion Award, 2016

John R. Sayler Prize in Evidence, 2014

Henry Otterman Real Property Prize, 2013

Lawrence Maxwell Advocacy Prize, 2013

Professional Affiliations

Cincinnati Bar Association

Ohio State Bar Association

Federal Bar Association

Civic Activities

Phi Beta Kappa

Ohio Commission on the Rules of Practice & Procedure

Firm Committees

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee, Member

Litigation Support Committee, Member

Major Publications

Dueling Federal and State Actions: the Colorado River Doctrine, Frost Brown Todd Website, July 2023

Allegations of Scientific Misconduct Protected as Opinion or Substantially True, Media Law Resource Center, February 2021

The Burden of Applying Casey's "Undue Burden" Standard, University of Cincinnati Law Review, June 2014

The New Batson Challenge: Extending the Protections of Batson v. Kentucky to Gays and Lesbians, University of Cincinnati Law Review, October 2013

Will Divorce Bring Marriage Equality?, University of Cincinnati Law Review, September 2013

Featured Articles

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