



Margarita K. O'Donnell

Partner

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Practice Focus

- Antitrust
- Business Litigation
- Cultural Assessments and Internal Investigations
- Investigations
- Legal Profession and Ethics
- Pro Bono
- Sports
- White Collar Defense

Education

- New York University School of Law, J.D., *cum laude*, 2009
 - Notes Editor, *New York University Law Review*
 - Root-Tilden-Kern Scholar
 - Institute for International Law and Justice Scholar
- Columbia University, B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2004
 - Phi Beta Kappa
 - Charles A. Beard Prize

A skilled litigator, Margarita K. O'Donnell focuses on white collar criminal defense, investigations, and complex civil disputes. Drawing on her experience as a former public defender for the District of Columbia, where she represented hundreds of felony and misdemeanor clients—including through trial—she brings strong advocacy and a carefully honed understanding of strategy to her engagements.

Frequently, Maggie represents individuals and corporations in investigations by federal law enforcement agencies and in grand jury investigations, including investigations by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Most recently, she served as a key member of a monitorship team imposed and approved by the DOJ. Maggie also has extensive experience representing clients in a range of complex litigation matters, including State Attorney General actions.

Maggie's international experience is particularly valuable to her clients in matters with cross-border dimensions. Having lived in various countries in Latin America, Europe, and Southeast Asia, she has cultivated strong cross-cultural communication skills and has experience conducting proceedings in Spanish, with working knowledge of French and Portuguese.

As co-chair of the American Bar Association (ABA)'s National White Collar Crime Institute, Maggie is responsible for developing and organizing one of the most widely attended gatherings of white collar practitioners from across the United States and around the world. It routinely draws significant governmental interest and participation and is often the first source for discussion of emerging government enforcement priorities.

Maggie also co-leads Zuckerman Spaeder's award-winning Pro Bono Program. In this role, she identifies opportunities for the firm's attorneys to advocate on behalf of those without the means to hire legal counsel, coordinates with legal services organizations, and supports the firm's engagement in local communities.

Experience

- Represented a major Chinese company providing litigation strategy advice in litigation over company control related to its acquired U.S. assets, which spanned multiple U.S. jurisdictions and involved cross-border legal actions as well. The matter settled, resulting in the withdrawal of all lawsuits and the client securing full control of the domestic and overseas assets at issue. The case marked the largest cross-border corporate control battle involving a Chinese enterprise in the oil and gas sector in recent years.
- Served in leadership role in independent compliance monitorship team imposed by the DOJ to ensure that a global banking and financial services firm developed an effective compliance program and complied with certain U.S. federal criminal and regulatory laws.
- Represented a foreign national and various corporate entities in the U.S. and abroad in the FIFA investigation.
- Represented a whistleblower in DOJ and SEC proceedings, relating to FCPA and regulatory violations in a Latin American country.
- Represented an individual in Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), the Southern District of New York (SDNY), and SEC proceedings relating to wire fraud and commodities and securities fraud.
- Defended a client in an FCPA and money laundering investigation by the DOJ related to alleged public corruption in Venezuela.
- Represented individuals in criminal appeals to the Eleventh Circuit and the D.C. Circuit.
- Represents a foreign government official and charitable foundation in a complex civil litigation and appellate matter involving novel issues of jurisdiction and international law.
- Represents a national pharmacy chain in defense of thousands of lawsuits by state and local governments to recover costs alleged to have been caused by the shipment and dispensing of prescription opioids.
- Obtained dismissal on summary judgment of a federal civil lawsuit against an MLB player related to claims of assault, battery and civil conspiracy.
- Represents individuals charged with criminal offenses in D.C. Superior Court and investigations by D.C. law enforcement agencies.
- Represented a pharmacist in disciplinary proceedings by a state board and a physician in disciplinary proceedings by two state boards.
- Pro bono representation of individuals in immigration proceedings, criminal proceedings, and plaintiff's side federal employment discrimination lawsuit.

Bar Admissions

- District of Columbia
- New York

Court admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
- U.S. District Court, District of Columbia
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York

Clerkships

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
 - Hon. Julio M. Fuentes
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania
 - Hon. Louis H. Pollak

Government Service

- Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia
 - Public Defender

Professional Leadership

- Co-Chair, ABA National White Collar Crime Institute
- Planning Committee Member, ABA Global White Collar Crime Institute
- Board Member, Rising for Justice (formerly D.C. Law Students in Court)
- Member and Volunteer, Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia
- Member, Women's White Collar Defense Association

Recognitions

- Margarita K. O'Donnell Recognized as an Emerging Woman Leader in Law by DCA Live
- Zuckerman Spaeder Attorneys Recognized on the DC Courts' 2022 Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll