



John B. Owens
Nominee to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

On August 1, 2013, President Obama nominated John B. Owens to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. As a litigation partner in the San Francisco office of Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, and a former federal prosecutor and Supreme Court law clerk, Mr. Owens has extensive trial and appellate experience in both the public and private sectors. In nominating Mr. Owens, President Obama observed that he “will bring an unwavering commitment to fairness and judicial integrity to the federal bench.”¹

Biography

John Owens was born in 1971 in Washington, D.C. In 1993, he graduated with a bachelor of arts from the University of California, Berkeley. He earned his J.D. from Stanford Law School in 1996, graduating first in his class and earning the Stanford Law Review Board of Editors Award.²

After law school, Mr. Owens clerked for Judge J. Clifford Wallace on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The following year, he clerked for Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the United States Supreme Court. After these distinguished clerkships, Mr. Owens worked as trial attorney in the Department of Justice’s Office of Consumer Litigation (now Consumer Protection Branch) from 1998 to 1999, and as a litigation association at O’Melveny & Myers LLP in Washington, D.C. from 2000 to 2001. In 2001, Mr. Owens became an Assistant United States Attorney in the Central District of California. He transferred to the Southern District of California in 2004. In 2008, he was named Deputy Chief of Major Frauds in that district, and he was elevated to Chief of the Criminal Division in 2010. In 2012, Mr. Owens joined the firm of Munger, Tolles, & Olson as a partner.

Legal Experience

Mr. Owens’s practice has focused primarily on complex and large-scale criminal matters at both the trial and appellate levels. He also handled affirmative civil litigation for DOJ and investigated violations of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and other consumer protection laws. As a litigator in private practice, he has represented individual and corporate clients in criminal cases as well as a variety of civil and administrative matters.

¹ White House Press Release, *available at* <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/01/president-obama-nominates-three-serve-united-states-courts-appeals>.

² Senate Judiciary Committee Questionnaire, *available at* <http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/nominations/113thCongressJudicialNominations/upload/Owens-Senate-Questionnaire-Final.pdf>.

Throughout his more than 11 years as a federal prosecutor, Mr. Owens prosecuted a broad range of criminal cases. In the Central District of California, he began in the General Crimes Section, where he prosecuted crimes involving violence, narcotics, and white collar fraud. When he moved to the Southern District in 2004, Mr. Owens focused on complex white collar crimes, including fraud, health care, money laundering, public corruption, tax, intellectual property, and national security cases, as well as cases involving human and narcotics trafficking.

Among Mr. Owens's more high-profile prosecutions is *United States v. Cao*,³ a case involving a complex investment fraud scheme used to defraud victims out of millions of dollars. After a week-long trial, Mr. Owens earned a conviction on multiple counts, and the trial judge imposed a 30-year sentence—one of the longest white collar sentences ever in the Southern District of California. For his work as lead counsel on *Cao*, the U.S. Secret Service honored Mr. Owens with the Secret Service Honor Award. Mr. Owens was also honored for prosecuting *United States v. Treadwell*.⁴ *Treadwell* involved a nationwide investment scheme in which investors lost more than \$40 million. At the conclusion of trial, all three defendants were convicted of conspiracy and wire fraud, and the lead defendant was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment. The case was later featured on CNBC's "American Greed" television program, and Mr. Owens received the Director's Award for his "superior performance as Assistant United States Attorney" at trial.

Throughout his career, Mr. Owens has maintained a substantial appellate practice. As a prosecutor in the Central and Southern Districts of California, he was counsel of record in more than 20 cases before the Ninth Circuit, and as Criminal Chief he reviewed every Circuit brief written by his office. Mr. Owens has also worked on appellate matters in private practice, including in the U.S. Supreme Court. His amicus Supreme Court litigation at Munger Tolles has been the focus of his *pro bono* work.

Professional Awards and Community Activities

Mr. Owens has been honored by the Department of Justice and other federal agencies for his work in public service. His awards include DOJ's Director's Award for superior performance in a managerial role and for superior performance as an AUSA; the Secret Service Honor Award; the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General Award for Prosecutorial Efforts; and the Internal Revenue Service Recognition Award for criminal investigation.

Since October 2012, Mr. Owens has been counsel of record in three *pro bono* matters on behalf of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the California Attorneys for Criminal Justice. Mr. Owens also has been a frequent guest lecturer at law schools on appellate and white collar criminal matters, and has worked with high school students to increase their understanding of the legal system.

The American Bar Association awarded Mr. Owens its highest rating of unanimously well qualified to serve on the federal appellate bench.

³ See *United States v. Cao*, 2013 WL 2367782 (9th Cir. 2013).

⁴ See *United States v. Treadwell*, 593 F.3d 900 (9th Cir. 2010).