



## CONTACT

sbellacosa@duffysweeney.com

## EDUCATION

Roger Williams University  
School of Law (J.D. 2018)

Completion of mediation  
training course and obtained  
a mediation certificate.

Roger Williams University  
(B.S. Legal Studies 2013)

Dean's List, Spring 2011 –  
Spring 2013

Roger Williams University  
Athletics Hall of Fame, 2017  
Inductee

## PRACTICE AREAS

Business Law

Mergers & Acquisitions

## BAR

Massachusetts (2018)

Rhode Island (2020)



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## SOPHIE R. BELLACOSA, ASSOCIATE

### OVERVIEW

Sophie Bellacosa is an associate at the firm and active as part of the business law and M&A teams.

Sophie has played an instrumental role in several significant deals including leading the due diligence for a multi-faceted transaction involving a major cannabis software company in the successful sale of substantially all of its assets to a subsidiary of a public corporation. Specifically, she led the Rhode Island seller-side due diligence for the multi-state merger of two of its cannabis dispensary subsidiaries as well as assisted with the antitrust filings for the premerger notification to the FTC and DOJ.

She also led the due diligence — which included review of government defense contracts and obtaining regulatory approvals — for a transaction where the firm successfully represented a private defense contractor in the acquisition of its business

Active in the community, Sophie is a board member for the Young Professionals Committee of the Rhode Island Society of CPAs.

Prior to joining the firm, she clerked at Duffy & Sweeney, worked as a legal extern for the Executive Counsel in the Office of the Governor, completed two summer internships at local law firms, and achieved certification as a mediator.

During law school she was assistant editor of the Roger Williams University Law Review, a member of the Honor Board, and a member of the Sports & Entertainment Law Society. During her undergraduate years at Roger Williams University, Sophie was a member of the Varsity Sailing Team, helping lead her team to win the Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association, Coed-Dinghy Team Race National Championship in 2011. She was named to the ICSA All-American First Team in 2012 and inducted in the Roger Williams Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017.

### COMMUNITY

Sophie is active in the community as a board member of the Young Accountants Network of the Rhode Island Society of CPAs, whose mission is to increase engagement among young professionals.

She completed a for-credit internship where she served as a victim advocate for the Women's Resource Center, working with domestic-abuse victims, advocating on their behalf at arraignments to either obtain or remove protective orders against defendants.

An avid sailing enthusiast, Sophie was a member of the Varsity Sailing Team at Roger Williams University where she helped lead her team to win the Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA), Coed-Dinghy Team Race National Championship in 2011. She was named to the ICSA All-American First Team in 2012 and inducted into the Roger Williams Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017.

### PUBLICATIONS

Sophie authored "2016 Survey of Rhode Island Case Law, Am. Condo. Ass'n, Inc. v. Mardo," in the *Roger Williams Law Review* which dealt with real property rights involving a dispute over permission for a Newport condo owner to build an addition.



## ANDREW G. BLAIS, ASSOCIATE

### OVERVIEW

Andrew Blais is a litigator with experience in various fields of litigation, including land use and zoning, construction and business disputes. He is an ardent advocate for his clients, with whom he works to develop lasting relationships.

Prior to his arrival at Duffy & Sweeney, Andrew worked as a Rhode Island Superior Court Law Clerk and spent four and a half years in private practice.

Andrew has worked to overturn a receivership appointment for a closely held limited liability company, and to secure a preliminary injunction on behalf of a real estate developer against a Town that had tried to unconstitutionally prevent the developer's construction. He successfully overturned the RI Department of Health's suspension of a doctor's medical license in a professional license defense matter.

He is an honors graduate of Roger Williams University School of Law, where he was a member of the Moot Court and the Law Review. During his time at school, Andrew served as an intern for the Honorable Chief Justice Frank J. Williams. He was a co-author of an article entitled *Apple of Gold and Picture of Silver: How Abraham Lincoln Would Analyze the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause* in the Roger Williams University Law Review (Winter, 2017 issue).

He is admitted to practice law in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

### PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- Co-Author, *Apple of Gold and Picture of Silver: How Abraham Lincoln Would Analyze the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause*, 22 Roger Williams U. L. Rev. 1 (Winter 2017)

### CONTACT

ablais@duffysweeney.com

### EDUCATION

Roger Williams University  
School of Law (J.D. 2016)

University of Rhode Island  
(B.A. in Journalism and Political  
Science, 2009)

### PRACTICE AREAS

Litigation

Real Estate & Land Use

Construction Law

### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (2016)

Massachusetts (2017)



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## CONTACT

jceleste@duffysweeney.com

## EDUCATION

Roger Williams University  
School of Law (J.D. 2000)

University of Rhode Island  
(B.S. 1997 with distinction)

## PRACTICE AREAS

Business Law

Construction Law

Mergers & Acquisitions

Real Estate

Shareholders Disputes

Employment Law

Banking & Finance

Hospitality

## BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (2000)

Federal District Court, RI  
(2001)



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## JOSHUA L. CELESTE, PARTNER

### OVERVIEW

Joshua Celeste has a broad-based corporate law practice and is known for successfully navigating multi-faceted business transactions that fortify his clients' businesses and position them to prosper. He works with corporate clients on domestic and international acquisitions, dispositions, and mergers; complex restructurings and recapitalizations; and diverse governance issues. He has handled significant real estate development matters in conjunction with his corporate practice including property acquisitions; project development and construction; and leasing and financing.

Josh has counseled a variety of forward-thinking companies ranging from local, start-up private entities to national, publicly traded companies. He has handled offerings and placements of debt and equity securities, equity investments and acquisitions ranging in value from \$10 to \$100 million, venture capital financings ranging in value from \$500,000 to \$10 million, and revolving credit and term loan facilities ranging in size from \$1 to \$50 million.

*The "smart, savvy and easy to deal with" Joshua Celeste is "a very strong advocate for his clients" in transactional corporate matters such as M&A and recapitalizations, and advisory matters such as corporate governance. Clients praise Celeste for "moving the ball forward" and "following through to make sure the transactions are structured properly."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business 2019

*"Joshua Celeste specializes in both international and domestic M&A, dispositions, restructurings and recapitalizations. He also advises on real estate matters including project development and construction. Sources praise his 'very good technical knowledge' and describe him as 'very responsive to his clients' needs."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business 2018

### EXPERIENCE

Josh has effectively represented clients in the following transactions:

- The members of a leading energy conservation and infrastructure company (NASDAQ) in the sale of its membership interest in a multi-million transaction.
- A hotel owner in a multi-million portfolio transaction that involved both debt and equity financing. The transactions included the acquisition of five hotel properties in New England and disposition of three hotel properties that significantly advanced and upgraded its property holdings in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.
- The merger and consolidation of two significant Southeastern New England waste transportation and recycling businesses that doubled in size, revenue and market share.
- The sale of a leading spring and metal stamping business together with a 120,000 square foot manufacturing facility.
- The successful capitalization of a Rhode Island start-up company in the bio-technology sector through both angel and venture capital financing that allowed the company to successfully commercialize its technology on a national scale.
- The refinancing of a hotel portfolio comprised of twelve (12) hotels by a real estate private equity fund.
- The multi-million dollar private, equity-backed sale of an over-the-counter pharmaceutical maker where the seller stayed active and maintained an ownership stake. The deal involved issues of licensing and real estate at the state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Rhode Island.
- Three major transactions in New England that expanded the holdings of a hotel ownership and management properties client including the acquisition of: vacant property plus the development and permitting of a 100-room Hilton in Maine; an existing Days Inn facility in New Hampshire; and a 130-room Best Western Plus in Massachusetts.
- An eight-figure stock deal for the sale of a software company with proprietary software for the waste industry — transfer stations, recycle facilities or collection companies — to an Ireland-based company looking to expand its US operations.
- A seven-figure offering of common stock to facilitate research and development and, ultimately, the growth and commercialization of new intellectual property in the field of label media, creating new jobs in the engineering and chemistry space and an expanded facility.
- The acquisition of medical device manufacturing business located in the Netherlands from an international conglomerate.

JOSHUA L. CELESTE, *PARTNER* continued

## RECOGNITION

Joshua Celeste was recognized by *Best Lawyers* in the area of Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law for 2020. He was also recognized for Professional Excellence in the Law in 2019 in the area of Business Law by *Rhode Island Monthly*.

According to one source, "*he is a true business partner who makes me feel valued as a client.*" | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers For Business

*The "smart, savvy and easy to deal with" Joshua Celeste is "a very strong advocate for his clients" in transactional corporate matters such as M&A and recapitalizations, and advisory matters such as corporate governance. Clients praise Celeste for "moving the ball forward" and "following through to make sure the transactions are structured properly."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business 2019

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*"Joshua Celeste specializes in advising clients on international and domestic M&A, reorganizations and debt and equity securities. Clients appreciate his connectivity, saying that he is excellent at identifying opportunities ..."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business 2017



## COMMUNITY

### Professional & Community Involvement

- Button Hole, a non-profit initiative governed by The Golf Foundation of Rhode Island – Member, Board of Directors
- Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank – Member, Board of Directors
- March of Dimes, Rhode Island Chapter – Former Member, Board of Directors

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- "**Selling A Business: Ensuring Clients Achieve Maximum Value**" was the title of a presentation by Michael Sweeney, Jean Harrington and Joshua Celeste at the Rhode Island Society of CPAs. It covered the need for strong representation from a team of legal, financial, tax and other professionals to complete the successful sale of a business in today's competitive marketplace. The group analyzed the anatomy of a sale including key market terms and concepts, negotiation tactics, and critical financial and accounting aspects of every deal. The course provided strategies from the letter of intent through closing including the use of post-closing earn-outs, net working capital PEGS and adjustments, financial statement reps and warranties plus other key areas where a CPA plays a pivotal role in the deal process. (December 2015)

### My Blog Posts

- NDAs: You Can't "Un-know" Confidential Info
- Securing Equity Capital To Create A Business Enterprise

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## ROBERT M. DUFFY, *FOUNDING PARTNER AND SHAREHOLDER*

### OVERVIEW

Robert Duffy is a founding shareholder of the firm. With more than three decades of experience, Bob has handled federal and state court trial and arbitration litigation throughout the United States.

His diverse and complex business litigation and trial practice includes a focus on intellectual property — including patent and ERP software — as well as construction, fiduciary, shareholder, M&A, and health care. His clients range from financial services companies to physician groups and healthcare systems to technology companies to manufacturing and distribution companies.

Recognized for his counseling as much as for his trial work, Bob routinely advises business owners, chief executives and boards of directors on business litigation avoidance and strategy. He regularly counsels corporations and shareholders on fiduciary duty matters. He has successfully counseled and litigated matters involving ERP implementations and SAP ECC functionality and ASAP methodology.

In the healthcare arena, he has helped clients with matters of credentialing, captive insurance, physician and system agreements, general employment, and corporate and shareholder transactions.

Bob is certified as an arbitrator by the American Arbitration Association. He is an adjunct professor for the Providence College School of Business where he teaches "Legal Environment for Business II."

Bob continues to be recognized by numerous lawyer-ranking and other rating organizations. He is consistently included as a *Best Lawyer* in the practice areas of Commercial Litigation, Insurance Litigation, Intellectual Property, M&A Litigation and Securities Litigation. He was recognized by *Best Lawyers* as the sole 2019 "Lawyer of the Year" for Intellectual Property Litigation in the Providence metro region.

He has consistently been named a *Super Lawyer* and was also included in the Super Lawyers' Top Ten List for Rhode Island. He continues to be recognized annually by *Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business* for Commercial Litigation. He was selected by the National Trial Lawyers Association as a "Top 100" trial lawyer and has been named a Litigation Star for *Benchmark Litigation* and an IP Star by *Managing Intellectual Property* magazine.

*Robert Duffy has an excellent reputation in the market for his practice in complex business litigation, which focuses particularly on IP matters. He specializes in cases involving ERP software. He also frequently advises clients on product liability and fiduciary duty disputes. Market commentators describe him as "unflappable" and "nimble in court," as well as highlighting his "complete grasp of facts and strategies." | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*

*"Robert Duffy garners praise from his clients who say that he's smart on litigation and any kind of dispute, and knows how to manage the litigation process ..." | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*

### EXPERIENCE

As a trial lawyer for three decades, Bob has handled hundreds of commercial and intellectual property cases across the country, many through trial and appeal.

He has served as lead trial counsel for clients in intellectual property, maritime, broker dealer, ERP, trade secret, technology and contract litigation in numerous states including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, California, Texas and Florida.

He has represented clients as lead counsel in matters of corporate governance and fiduciary disputes, life insurance coverage and settlement litigation, merger-and-acquisition litigation and beyond.

Recent matters include:

- After an 11-day trial in Superior Court, Robert Duffy successfully defended trustees against fiduciary claims and obtained an award of both executor and trustee compensation.
- After a 9-day arbitration, Robert Duffy successfully defended a boat manufacturer against claims of fraud, defect and product liability arising out of the manufacture of 3 large passenger ferries.
- Robert Duffy successfully prosecuted to settlement, on the eve of trial, claims on behalf of its technology client arising out of a failed SAP global ERP implementation.

### RECOGNITION

Bob continues to be recognized by numerous lawyer-ranking and other rating organizations. He is consistently included as a Best Lawyer in the practice areas of Commercial Litigation, Insurance Litigation, Intellectual Property, M&A Litigation and Securities Litigation. He was recognized by Best Lawyers as the sole 2019 "Lawyer of the Year" for Intellectual Property Litigation in the Providence metro region.

### CONTACT

rduffy@duffysweeney.com  
401.457.1802

### EDUCATION

J.D., Suffolk University Law School (*cum laude*)

B.A., Providence College (*cum laude*)

### PRACTICE AREAS

IP & Technology Litigation

Business Litigation

M&A Litigation

Broker-Dealer & Securities Litigation

Shareholder Disputes

Trade & Antitrust Litigation

Fiduciary Litigation

Insurance Coverage Litigation

Construction Law

### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Massachusetts (1988)

Rhode Island (1990)

United States District Court,  
District of Massachusetts (1989)

United States District Court,  
District of Rhode Island (1991)

United States Court of Appeals,  
First Circuit (1990)

United States Tax Court (2000)



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BUSINESS LAW & LITIGATION

ROBERT M. DUFFY, *FOUNDING PARTNER AND SHAREHOLDER* continued

He was selected by the National Trial Lawyers Association as a "Top 100" trial lawyer. He continues to be included as a Litigation Star in Benchmark Litigation and as an IP Star by Managing Intellectual Property magazine.

*"Robert Duffy has an excellent reputation in the market for his practice in complex business litigation, which focuses particularly on IP matters. He specializes in cases involving ERP software. He also frequently advises clients on product liability and fiduciary duty disputes. Market commentators describe him as "unflappable" and "nimble in court," as well as highlighting his "complete grasp of facts and strategies." (Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business)*

*"I consider Bob Duffy to be the best commercial litigator in Rhode Island. I've seen him go toe-to-toe with the biggest and most reputable firms in the country, and consistently outmaneuver and outperform them across the board. It's not just his combination of toughness, experience and knowledge of the law and our business, but also the strategic thinking that makes him the right choice for our lead trial attorney in nearly any case." (Client comment from Best Law Firms.)*

*"Bob Duffy is one the best businessmen I know, and he brings that perspective to his role as an attorney. He understands value and is relentlessly focused on delivering it. I trust Bob and his team to act in the best interest of my company, which is why I will use them again and again." (Client comment from Best Lawyers.)*



## COMMUNITY

### Professional & Community Involvement

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Co-Trustee

Rhode Island Bar Foundation, Member

Providence College School of Business, Adjunct Professor

Amos House, Former Chair of the Board

## PRESENTATION & PUBLICATIONS

"Service Charge Added to Trustees' Indemnification" was the title of the April 2018 article in *Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly* — featuring Stacey Nakasian and Robert Duffy — that addressed a Court decision approving payment of interest by a trust on legal fees incurred by the trustees. **Common Law Application of the Philosophy of Property: Where the Rubber Meets the Road** (German-American Philosophical Colloquium 2012). **Advising Victims of Securities Fraud** (Rhode Island Bar Association, May 2009) **The Law of the Internet in Rhode Island** (National Business Institute 2001) **Internet Basics for the Rhode Island Attorney** (National Business Institute 1999)

### My Blog Posts

- From RI Lawyers Weekly: Bob Duffy & Stacey Nakasian Prevail in Trust Dispute Re Attorneys' Fees
- Collapsing Broker Protocol Shifts Broker Recruiting Landscape

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## CONTACT

seckel@duffysweeney.com

## EDUCATION

Roger Williams School of Law (J.D. 2013)

Pennsylvania State University (B.S. Business Management 2010)

## PRACTICE AREAS

Business Law  
Employment Law  
Intellectual Property & Technology Law  
Mergers & Acquisitions  
Real Estate & Land Use

## BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (2018)  
Massachusetts (2013)  
Pennsylvania (2013)



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## SAMUEL G. ECKEL, PARTNER

### OVERVIEW

Samuel Eckel is active as part of the business law and M&A team.

He has worked on several high value transactions with consideration up to \$150,000,000 for clients that span industries including manufacturing, solar power and medical. In addition, Sam represents the firm's clients in all general corporate matters including contract negotiations, corporate reorganizations and real estate transactions.

Recently, he spearheaded a sell-side transaction where the firm represented the shareholders of a leading technology provider to school systems around the US, negotiating and preparing all deal documentation and advising the shareholders throughout the process. The transaction involved complicated tax matters as well as a pre-closing tax free reorganization.

Before joining Duffy & Sweeney, Sam worked as a commercial lease administration analyst for Jones Lang LaSalle, a leading financial and professional services firm that specializes in commercial real estate services and investment management worldwide. Sam was also a contract attorney at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius in the Philadelphia office and completed internships for the Rhode Island Center for Law and Public Policy, and the Office of the Attorney General in Philadelphia.

### COMMUNITY

Samuel Eckel was appointed to the board of directors for the South County Youth Soccer Club, a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting and developing youth soccer in southern Rhode Island.

### RECOGNITION

Sam Eckel was recognized by Super Lawyers as a Rising Star in 2021.



### PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Sam participated with Mike Sweeney in an event spearheaded by Jamie Hilton of UBS/The Hilton Group and colleagues from Carter Morse & Goodrich for the **Business Owner Webinar Series**. Each of the webinars in the three-part series equipped attendees with the latest planning ideas and considerations for mitigating taxes, merger and acquisition best practices to be mindful of their short-term and long-term exit strategy, and how to get the best outcome when an offer is made to buy a business.

He also co-authored the chapter on employment agreements in *A Practical Guide to Employment Law in Rhode Island* published by the MCLE New England (2016).

#### My Blog Posts

- Congratulations to Super Lawyers & Super Lawyers Rising Stars 2021
- ICYMI! Business Owner Webinar Series: Maximizing the Value of Your Business
- Business Owners with Exit Dreams May Leverage Middle-Market Momentum
- Protecting Your Product's Value via MAP Policies



## ROBERT D. EMERSON, *OF COUNSEL*

### OVERVIEW

Since 1996, Robert Emerson has been advising Duffy & Sweeney clients on a wide variety of topics including general corporate matters, federal and state securities laws, mergers and acquisitions, private placements, financing transactions, employee incentive plans and real estate purchasing and leasing. More recently, Bob's practice has expanded into the tax and estate planning arena for business principals and procurement contracting for a major financial institution.

### EXPERIENCE

Formerly a high school science teacher and math department chairman, Bob makes a concerted effort to apply his experience as an educator and explain the legal issues to his clients in all transactions in which he is involved, which often include:

- Choosing the best corporate, partnership or other entity for a business venture.
- Designing a capital raising transaction to comply with Regulation D or blue sky laws.
- Negotiating indemnities and liability limits in purchase or merger transactions.
- Creating a QSST to enable stock gifting by the principal of an S-Corporation.
- Structuring an employment agreement or stock plan to comply with Rule 409A.

### COMMUNITY

#### Professional and Community Involvement

Bob is an active ornithologist who organizes the Newport-Westport Christmas Bird Count, serves on the RI Avian Records Committee, and regularly contributes to various citizens science initiatives including breeding bird surveys sponsored by the US EPA, MA Division of Fish and Wildlife, MA Audubon and other research-oriented organizations. Bob coordinated the Harvard Club of Rhode Island's Book Award to 40 area high schools for over a decade and is an active volunteer for the Walnut Hill School for the Arts.

### CONTACT

remerson@duffysweeney.com

### EDUCATION

Harvard College (A.B Biology  
*Cum Laude* 1979)

Boston College Law School  
(J.D. 1991)

### PRACTICE AREAS

Business Law

### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (1991)

Massachusetts (1992)

Federal District Court , RI (1992)

Federal District Court, MA  
(1992)



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## CONTACT

[sfriedel@duffysweeney.com](mailto:sfriedel@duffysweeney.com)

## EDUCATION

Boston University School of Law (J.D. 2015)

Northeastern University (B.S., *summa cum laude*, Political Science 2011)

## PRACTICE AREAS

Litigation

Insurance Coverage

## BAR

Massachusetts (2015)

New York (2015)

Rhode Island (2016)

United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island (2016)

United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts (2016)



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## STEPHANIE F. FRIEDEL, ASSOCIATE

### OVERVIEW

Stephanie Friedel is a litigator, guiding a wide range of clients from global businesses to shareholders to individuals through many stages of litigation.

She routinely appears in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island courts advocating for her clients in discovery disputes, mediation and arbitration, obtaining injunctive relief, and engaging in dispositive motion practice.

Before joining D&S, Stephanie spent more than four in private practice, and completed an externship at the First Circuit Court of Appeals and a fellowship in the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

While in law school at Boston University School of Law, Stephanie was active in the Civil Litigation Clinic and interned for Shelter Legal Services, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and The Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

She joined the Board of Directors for the Providence Children's Museum in 2022.

### EXPERIENCE

Stephanie successfully barred a claim for half a million dollars against an estate in a Rhode Island Probate Court and defeated a motion for summary judgment in Providence Superior Court concerning a dispute between a local business and a contractor.

She has represented the minority shareholders of a close corporation frozen out of their employment and management roles, and defended a moderately sized employer against claims it violated state and Federal wage laws.

She was part of the effort that vindicated the rights of a co-owner of a small LLC against claims she was not an owner or member of her business, and represented a small business owner in voiding an employment contract drafted by and for the benefit of its in-house counsel in violation of the RI Rules of Professional Responsibility.

She represented an LLC in enforcing and collecting upon an arbitration award won in Virginia; and representing homeowners seeking various land permits.

### COMMUNITY

Stephanie is active as a member of the Rhode Island Women's Bar Association and the Rhode Island Bar Association.

She joined the Board of Directors for the Providence Children's Museum in 2022; its mission is to champion lifelong learning through play, creativity and exploration.

During law school, Stephanie was active in the Civil Litigation Clinic.

### PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

#### My Blog Posts

- Attorney Spotlight: Q&A with Stephanie Friedel
- Three Associates Are Blog Contest Winners
- From RILW: Stacey Nakasian & Stephanie Friedel Defeat Effort To Disqualify Client's Counsel
- We Are Never (Ever) Getting Back Together
- Supreme Court Decision Impacts Insureds: Delay Could Mean Waiver of Rights



## CONTACT

pguida@duffysweeney.com

## EDUCATION

Union College (B.A., 1973,  
*cum laude with distinction*  
in Political Science)

Case Western Reserve  
University (J.D., 1976)  
An Editor of Law Review

## PRACTICE AREAS

Banking & Finance  
Business Law  
Construction Law  
Real Estate & Land Use  
Securities Law

## BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (1983)  
Massachusetts (1986)  
Ohio (1976)  
United States Court of Appeals  
for the Sixth Circuit (1979)



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## PATRICK A. GUIDA, PARTNER

### OVERVIEW

Patrick Guida is part of the firm's banking and finance, business law, and real estate law teams. He has been providing legal services to institutional banking clients throughout New England for more than three decades, and previously served as in-house counsel for two major banks. In 2022, he was elected President of the American College of Commercial Finance Lawyers and named an Excellence in the Law Hall of Fame honoree by Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly. He was recognized by *Best Lawyers* as the 2019 "Lawyer of the Year" for Banking and Finance in the Providence metro region.

He is known for his precision in complex financing transactions, often representing institutional lenders and borrowers — including major banks — in deals involving historic redevelopment, economic development bonds, affordable housing, and private business acquisition and expansion. He has established a special expertise in the financing of healthcare provider transactions. He is experienced in sophisticated syndicated and participated deals, representing lead and agent bank lenders.

Patrick also represents major real estate developers in their project development, permitting, borrowing and leasing transactions, including major development projects within the Capital Center District in downtown Providence. Patrick brings to the table a wealth of alternative financing options that help divergent parties reach mutually beneficial accord and compromise during the negotiation process.

*The "very knowledgeable" Patrick Guida is considered by market observers to be "a great banking and finance lawyer." He is noted for his representation of both lenders and borrowers in connection with a broad range of lending transactions, and is particularly revered for his expertise in healthcare financings.* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business 2019

### EXPERIENCE

Patrick has represented several national and regional lending institutions in the structuring, documenting and implementation of numerous financing transactions including:

- Major commercial and industrial development projects.
- Federal and State historic tax credit redevelopments of several major, commercial and multifamily residential projects.
- State and state agency issue industrial development bond transactions.
- State and state agency issue health and educational institution bond transactions.

### RECOGNITION

*Patrick Guida leads the firm's banking and finance practice and specializes in complex financing transactions, particularly within the healthcare industry. He is also involved in matters dealing with economic development bonds and private business acquisition. Clients praise his "impressive" work and describe him as an "extremely qualified, highly experienced attorney who provides excellent counsel."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business 2018

Active in the leadership of notable professional groups locally and nationally, Patrick has served (since 2012) as one of the five Rhode Island members of The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, also commonly known as the Uniform Law Commission.

In 2022, he was named an Excellence in the Law Hall of Fame honoree by Lawyers Weekly, and he was elected President of the American College of Commercial Finance Lawyers. He was originally elected in 2018 to the Executive Committee of the American College of Commercial Finance Lawyers. He was the first Fellow (2011), first Regent (2013) and first Officer (2018) elected from Rhode Island in the history of the organization. Election to the ACCFL is based on commercial finance law focus; preeminence in the field; and substantial contributions to learning and scholarship through teaching, lecturing or published writings.

He has been the program chair and a speaker for both the American Law Institute-Continuing Legal Education "Commercial Lending Today" program (since 1998) and for the Rhode Island Bar Association Annual "Commercial Law Update" (since 2010).

Patrick was honored in 2014 as a Distinguished Service Award winner by the National Association of State Boards of Education, the highest honor the NASBE can bestow on a state board of education member.

He was recognized by *Best Lawyers* as the 2019 "Lawyer of the Year" for Banking and Finance Law in the Providence metro region. Patrick earned additional recognition in the area of Commercial Finance Law. He continues to be noted by *Best Lawyers* in both areas.

# DUFFY & SWEENEY, LTD

BUSINESS LAW & LITIGATION

PATRICK A. GUIDA, *PARTNER* continued



## COMMUNITY

### Professional & Community Involvement

- *Executive Committee Member, Vice-President, Regent and Fellow:* American College of Commercial Finance Lawyers
- *Commissioner:* National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws
- *Member,* Rhode Island Bar Association Executive Committee and House of Delegates
- *Chair,* 2019 Rhode Island Bar Association Annual Meeting
- *Member:* Rhode Island Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Committee and Creditors-Debtors Rights Committee
- *Fellow:* Rhode Island Bar Foundation
- *Chair:* Rhode Island Fellows of American Bar Foundation
- *Co-Chair:* Barrington Building Committee for \$68.4 million middle-school project
- *Past President:* National Association of State Boards of Education
- *Past Vice-Chair:* Rhode Island Board of Education
- *Past Chair:* Rhode Island Board of Education – Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
- *Past Member and Former Chair:* Barrington (Rhode Island) School Board

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Patrick presented at the 2018 ALI-CLE conference in New York in May on the topic of "**Advanced Commercial Finance 2018: Critical Issues Below the Surface.**" He was one of three authors for "**Sample Nonrecourse Loan Carveout and Springing Recourse Provisions with Borrower Comments**" published by the American Law Institute in February of 2017. He has been the program chair and a speaker for both the American Law Institute-Continuing Legal Education "**Commercial Lending Today**" program (since 1998) and for the Rhode Island Bar Association Annual "**Commercial Law Update**" (since 2010). See the latest ALI-CLE program information and the latest RIBA program information.

### My Blog Posts

- Patrick Guida Elected President of American College of Commercial Finance Lawyers
- Congratulations to Super Lawyers & Super Lawyers Rising Stars 2021
- Patrick Guida Authors Article on COVID Contracts for Bar Journal
- Important Landlord Rights & Tenant Responsibilities During COVID-19
- Banks, Borrowers and Securities Issuers Beware: LIBOR on the Decline
- New Guidelines for IP in Commercial Finance Benefit both Lenders and Businesses

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## JEAN A. HARRINGTON, PARTNER

### OVERVIEW

A partner at Duffy & Sweeney, Jean Harrington is chair of the business law team with special expertise in mergers and acquisitions, representing sophisticated private investment funds, multi-national corporations and other market participants in their most challenging transactional matters. She is known for engineering creative resolutions which unite divergent parties and bring complex deals to fruition.

Jean was selected as the Lawyer-of-the-Year for the practice area of Mergers & Acquisitions by *Best Lawyers* in the Providence Metro Region for 2022. Also, for 2022, Jean was noted as the "Go-To-Lawyer" for the category of Business Law by *Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly*.

*Jean Harrington is a well-regarded attorney in the corporate law arena. She chairs the firm's corporate department and is noted for her handling of M&A on behalf of blue-chip corporations and private investment funds. Sources note that she "does an excellent job" in connection with complex transactional matters. | Chambers USA: American's Leading Lawyers for Business 2019*

### EXPERIENCE

- Represented a software development and services provider for commercial and industrial environments in the 2014 sale of substantially all of its assets in a transaction that included sophisticated tax planning and carryover investment in the new entity by management.
- Represented a real estate project development and management company in its acquisition of a Newport-based yachting and entertainment venue in 2014. The eight-figure transaction involved a private placement of equity under Rule 506 of Regulation D of the securities laws as well as traditional bank financing.
- Represented a Netherlands-based wind turbine manufacturer in establishing US operations and the development of wind turbine installations throughout the United States.
- Represented a real estate developer in the acquisition and financing of a large scale commercial residential mill project and related equity, bank and tax credit financing.
- Represented a private equity fund in the formation of two multi-million dollar REOC investment funds and negotiated the investment therein by several large pension funds.
- Represented a Rhode Island manufacturing company in the sale of substantially all of its assets to an international publically traded strategic buyer for in excess of \$60 million.
- Represented several manufacturing companies in multi-million dollar transactions involving the sale of their businesses with a roll-over investment component to large private equity firms.

### RECOGNITION

Jean was selected as the Lawyer-of-the-Year for the practice area of Mergers & Acquisitions by *Best Lawyers* in the Providence Metro Region for 2022.

She continues to be recognized by *Best Lawyers* in the area of Mergers & Acquisitions, Corporate Law, Securities/Capital Markets Law, Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law, and Real Estate Law. She was included by *Chambers USA* as a leader-in-field for the Providence metro area for corporate and commercial law. The recognition is based on criteria that include technical legal ability, professional conduct, and client service.

*Jean Harrington is a well-regarded attorney in the corporate law arena. She chairs the firm's corporate department and is noted for her handling of M&A on behalf of blue-chip corporations and private investment funds. Sources note that she "does an excellent job" in connection with complex transactional matters. | Chambers USA: American's Leading Lawyers for Business*

*"Jean Harrington is well known for her expertise in M&A and complex transactional matters. She deals with a range of industrial, real estate and commercial clients and is well regarded in the market as both 'extremely knowledgeable' and an 'exceptional technical attorney who provides an excellent client service.'" | Chambers USA: American's Leading Lawyers for Business 2018*

*"Jean Harrington has a fabulous reputation and is well known in the market for her sophisticated corporate practice, M&A deals and corporate advice." | Chambers USA: American's Leading Lawyers for Business 2017*

### CONTACT

[jharrington@duffysweeney.com](mailto:jharrington@duffysweeney.com)

### EDUCATION

Brown University  
(BA with Honors)

Boston College Law School  
(JD magna cum laude)

### PRACTICE AREAS

Mergers & Acquisitions

Business Law

Banking & Finance

Employment Law

Real Estate

Shareholder Disputes

Hospitality

Construction Law

### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Massachusetts

Rhode Island

Connecticut



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JEAN A. HARRINGTON, *PARTNER* continued



## COMMUNITY

### Professional and Community Involvement

- Member of Board of Directors of Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
- Member, American Bar Association – Business Law, Real Property, Construction Industry and Taxation Law sections
- Member, Rhode Island Bar Association
- Former member of the Board of Directors for the Employers Association of the NorthEast (EANE), a 900-member association that provides talent, training and tools to retain, develop and engage employees
- Former Presenter "Organizing A Rhode Island Business," Rhode Island Bar Association

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Jean Harrington presented the Rhode Island Bar Association program on "**Choice of Entity**," a cornerstone of the legal offerings at the June 2019 Annual Meeting. Jean Harrington co-authored an article in *Providence Business News* entitled: "**Business execs optimistic about 2019, but challenged to find professional-level talent.**" The article provided highlights and take-aways from the survey findings shared by the Employers Association of the NorthEast (EANE). Meredith Wise, President of EANE, co-authored the article. Jean was part of the firm's corporate team that presented a program entitled "**Selling a Business: Ensuring Clients Achieve Maximum Value**" for the RI Society of CPAs and its members in December of 2015. This program analyzed the anatomy of a sale including key market terms and concepts, negotiation tactics, and critical financial and accounting aspects of every deal. For many years, Jean presented the annual seminar on corporations law for the Rhode Island Bar Association.

### My Blog Posts

- PBN: Jean Harrington & Greg Tumolo Weigh In On Business Interruption Insurance
- Client Alert: PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM | ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS
- Partnering with Greater Prov Chamber on Cash Flow Webinar
- Leveraging RWI to Maximize Deal Value and Secure A Good Night's Sleep!
- When Profit is Not the Only Point

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## STACEY P. NAKASIAN, PARTNER

### OVERVIEW

Stacey Nakasian has over thirty years' experience litigating complex commercial issues and leads the firm's litigation practice. She is known for her proactive and tenacious approach that both achieves results and advances her clients' needs and goals.

Adept at crafting litigation strategies tailored to her clients' business objectives, Stacey has prevailed in a wide range of cases including director and officer liability claims and shareholder disputes, construction litigation, fiduciary liability cases, intellectual property lawsuits and non-compete claims, and insurance coverage disputes.

She continues to be a resource for business interruption insurance disputes resulting from COVID-19 shutdowns, and was featured in a 2020 *Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly* article on "Force Majeure." and provided in-depth commentary for a 2021 *Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly* regarding a Superior Court ruling in what may be Rhode Island's first ruling in a business interruption insurance coverage.

Stacey is certified as an arbitrator by the American Arbitration Association and was noted in *Rhode Island Monthly's* Professional Excellence in the Law 2021 and 2022 for the practice area of Arbitration and Mediation.

She has been recognized as **Lawyer-of-the-Year** in the Providence metro region by *Best Lawyers* four (4) times: for 2022 and 2013 in the practice area of **Intellectual Property Litigation**, and in 2019 and 2015 as Lawyer-of-the-Year for **Trusts and Estates Litigation**.

She continues to be honored as a Best Lawyer by *US News & World Report* and by *Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business* for the categories of **commercial litigation, trusts and estates, IP, shareholder disputes, securities and insurance coverage disputes**.

### EXPERIENCE

- Stacey prosecutes and defends cases before Federal and State courts across the country, as well as in private arbitration settings. She has tried numerous cases to a jury, regularly appears in court to present or defend issues before judges, and has argued many appeals.

#### CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE

- Secured summary judgment in favor of a condominium developer defending a claim by the condominium association regarding the exact property submitted to the condominium. In affirming the developer's ownership of the disputed tract, the Court clarified how real estate deeds and condominium documents are interpreted under Rhode Island law.
- When a business owner refused to pay a D&S client for construction of a warehouse claiming the warehouse had construction defects, Stacey overcame the allegations and secured an arbitration award for the general contractor for the full amount due

#### BROKER-DEALER LITIGATION

- Secured a \$268,000 award in an action against an investment advisor, the advisor's supervisor and the investment firm in a six-day arbitration, building the case that the brokers and firm had violated various securities regulations and common law duties by recommending and purchasing unsuitable investments
- Won a \$438,000 award, including punitive damages, in an arbitration against brokers and brokerage firms on claims for churning and failure to supervise

#### FIDUCIARY & TRUST LITIGATION

- Successfully defended trustees against fiduciary claims and obtained an award of both executor and trustee compensation after an 11-day trial in Superior Court
- On behalf of beneficiaries of \$500 million trust, Stacey led the briefing and argument that resulted in a court order allowing early termination of the trust and distribution of trust assets. The case made new law in RI regarding the circumstances under which a Court can deviate from the terms of a trust at the request of the trust's beneficiaries

#### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LITIGATION

- Secured a \$1.2 million judgment, including attorneys' fees and punitive damages, in a trade secrets case tried to a jury on behalf of a manufacturer against its former employee and competitor
- In a trade secret and unfair competition case in California Superior Court against one of the nation's largest video publishing companies and its wholly-owned video game developer, Stacey obtained an injunction requiring the developer to turn over work product it was withholding

#### RECEIVERSHIP LITIGATION

- Represented the Small Business Association in a complex federal receivership case in which the receivership estate's former managers asserted a substantial claim against the estate's assets; Stacey succeeded in getting the claim withdrawn, thus preserving the estate's assets for the other creditors

### CONTACT

snakasian@duffysweeney.com  
401.457.1828

### EDUCATION

University of Virginia  
(B.A., *cum laude*, 1984)

The George Washington  
University Law School  
(J.D., 1990, Order of the Coif)

### PRACTICE AREAS

Litigation  
Fiduciary & Trusts Litigation  
Intellectual Property &  
Technology Law Litigation  
Insurance Coverage Litigation  
Real Estate & Land Use  
Shareholder Disputes  
Construction Law

### BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (1993)  
First Circuit Court of Appeals  
United States Supreme Court  
(2010)



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STACY P. NAKASIAN, *PARTNER* continued

## OTHER LITIGATION

- Stacey succeeded in proving that a Superintendent of Schools knowingly violated the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act. Based on the evidence Stacey presented, the Court ordered the school committee to pay a civil penalty and Stacey's client's legal fees
- Stacey served as law clerk to the Solicitor General of the United States and to the Honorable George H. Revercomb of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.
- On behalf of beneficiaries of \$500 million trust, Stacey led the briefing and argument that resulted in a court order allowing early termination of the trust and distribution of trust assets. The case made new law in RI regarding the circumstances under which a Court can deviate from the terms of a trust at the request of the trust's beneficiaries
- In a trade secret and unfair competition case in California Superior Court against one of the nation's largest video publishing companies and its wholly-owned video game developer, Stacey obtained an injunction requiring the developer to turn over work product it was withholding
- Stacey succeeded in proving that a Superintendent of Schools knowingly violated the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act. Based on the evidence Stacy presented, the Court ordered the school committee to pay a civil penalty and Stacey's client's legal fees

Stacey served as law clerk to the Solicitor General of the United States and to the Honorable George H. Revercomb of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

## RECOGNITION

Stacey Nakasian has been recognized as Lawyer-of-the-Year in the Providence metro region by *Best Lawyers* four (4) times: for 2022 and 2013 in the practice area of **Intellectual Property Litigation**, and in 2019 and 2015 as Lawyer-of-the-Year for **Trusts and Estates Litigation**. She continues to be honored by *Super Lawyers* and by *Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business* for the categories of **commercial litigation, trusts and estates, IP, shareholder disputes, securities and insurance coverage disputes**.

*Stacey Nakasian is noted for her work defending commercial clients in a wide variety of claims relating to insurance coverage, shareholder disputes, IP and others. One interviewee says: "She is basically everything you want in an attorney — very smart, professional." | Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business 2020*

*Stacey Nakasian is recognized for her work in shareholder disputes, fiduciary and trusts cases, and IP and technology law litigation. One interviewee attests that she is "incredibly talented, knowledgeable, strategic and perhaps the best-prepared counsel I have ever engaged." | Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business 2019*

*Sources praise her "exceptional technical knowledge," describing her as "levelheaded, patient and thorough" and "a strong and relentless litigator." | Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business 2018*

*"Working with Stacey Nakasian at D&S on my only arbitration ever was an amazing experience. We won a full award and our team was clearly superior to our competition. It felt good to have the best attorney in the room!" | Matt Sluter, New England Construction*

*"I was fortunate to have found Stacey Nakasian at D&S last year and she took over my case. Prior to working with Stacey, I was certainly losing an uphill battle and was also completely deflated with the legal system and processes. She managed to fight tooth-and-nail through mediation to deliver an outcome that I was not only comfortable with but also relieved to reach. Both Stacey and her team at D&S were understanding, efficient, communicative and provided me with the confidence that the fate of my lawsuit was in the best of hands. I couldn't be more grateful for the work that Stacey did, that confidence that she conveyed and the effectiveness of her approach. I would highly recommend her to anyone." | Anonymous*

In 2021 and 2022, Stacey was noted for Excellence in Law by Rhode Island Monthly in the practice area of Arbitration & Mediation. She is certified as an arbitrator by the American Arbitration Association

Stacey was named the 2014 "Industry Leader for Professional Services" in the *Providence Business News* Business Women Awards program.

She was part of the Top 50 Female New England *Super Lawyers* for 2013 and has been included in *Super Lawyers* since 2010, recognized in the categories of **business litigation, IP litigation, and estate & trust litigation**.

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BUSINESS LAW & LITIGATION

STACEY P. NAKASIAN, *PARTNER* continued

Stacey P. Nakasian



Litigation - Intellectual Property  
Providence, Rhode Island



## COMMUNITY

### Professional & Community Involvement

Stacey serves as a member of the board of trustees for the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and a former member of the board of the Women & Infants Foundation.

Stacey serves as Chair of the Board of Admissions & Education of the United States Federal District Court for the District of Rhode Island. She is a past president and serves on the Board of the Federal Bar Association, RI Chapter. She is the former chair of the Local Rules Committee of the US District Court for the District of Rhode Island.

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Stacey Nakasian was part of a panel for **Rhode Island Professional Day** which focused on **Partnering with a Corporate Fiduciary**. The panel took a deep dive into why and when to consider the appointment of a corporate fiduciary (bank or trust company) as trustee.

**"The Check Fraud Pandemic"** by Stacey Nakasian in Providence Business News (March 2018). Check fraud is on the rise and poses a real threat to local businesses.

**"Plain Language guides ruling in removal of trustee without cause"** was the title of a February 2018 Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly front-page article concerning a trust case decided by the Rhode Island Superior Court. Stacey Nakasian successfully represented two trustees who removed their co-trustee, without cause, pursuant to a provision in the trust document.

**"Early Termination (and Modification) of Trusts"** – Webinar sponsored by Lorman Education Service and presented by Stacey Nakasian in August 2017.

**"Protecting Trade Secrets"** by Stacey Nakasian in Providence Business News (February 2017). Successful businesses secure patents for their inventions, trademarks for their brand designations and copyrights for their original works, but they sometimes overlook a fourth category of intellectual property: trade secrets.

**"Internet advertising isn't sufficient for personal jurisdiction"** was the title of a January 2017 Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly article where Stacey Nakasian commented on how the D&S team succeeded in getting a lawsuit transferred to a client's home jurisdiction.

**"Non-Competes in a High-Tech World"** – Legal Tech Seminar Series with Tech Collective.

**"Cutting Edge Topics in IP Law"** – Rhode Island Bar Association Annual Meeting. 2014.

### My Blog Posts

- From RI Lawyers Weekly: Bob Duffy & Stacey Nakasian Prevail in Trust Dispute Re Attorneys' Fees
- Stacey Nakasian Offers Commentary for RI Lawyers Weekly in Business Interruption Insurance Dispute
- From RI Lawyers Weekly: Stacey Nakasian Successfully Defends Condo Law Case in RI
- From PBN: WorkShare for Business in Crisis by Stacey Nakasian & Jared Sugerman
- Coronavirus FAQs For Employers: Workshare
- Coronavirus FAQs For Employers: Force Majeure Contract Provisions
- Client Alert: NEW NON-LIQUIDATING RECEIVERSHIP PROGRAM: A LIFELINE FOR RI BUSINESSES
- Stacey Nakasian Featured in RILW "Force Majeure" Article
- Partnering with Greater Prov Chamber on Cash Flow Webinar
- We've Got You Covered: Insurance Coverage for Coronavirus-Related Business Losses

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## ERIC E. RENNER, *PARTNER*

### OVERVIEW

Eric Renner joined the law firm of Duffy & Sweeney as a litigation partner, effective February 1, 2022. He continues his practice in complex business litigation — including intellectual property and construction litigation — covering a variety of industries, technologies and jurisdictions.

Known for his level-headed, problem-solving approach, Eric has handled trademark, copyright and trade secret litigation; non-compete agreement claims; business torts and contract disputes; false advertising and unfair competition claims; commercial real estate and construction disputes, and many other areas that commonly affect individuals and businesses of all sizes.

He appears regularly in the United States District Courts for Rhode Island and Massachusetts, as well as in state trial courts throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Eric has more than sixteen years of experience. He is admitted in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

### COMMUNITY

Eric a member of the Federal Bench/Bar Committee and is active as a coach for the East Bay Bristol County Lacrosse Association.

### CONTACT

erenner@duffysweeney.com

### EDUCATION

Syracuse University College of Law (J.D., 2006)

University of Arizona (B.A. Psychology, 2002)

### PRACTICE AREAS

Litigation

Intellectual Property & Technology Law

Construction Law

### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island

Massachusetts

US District Court for the District of Massachusetts

US District Court for the District of Rhode Island

First Circuit Court of Appeals



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## CONTACT

jrocha@duffysweeney.com  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joelle-rocha-a052016/>

## EDUCATION

Roger Williams University  
School of Law (J.D. Honors  
Program, 2006)

University of Massachusetts,  
Dartmouth (B.A. Political  
Science, summa cum laude,  
2003)

## PRACTICE AREAS

Construction Law  
Litigation  
Real Estate

## BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island  
Massachusetts  
US District Court for the  
District of Massachusetts  
US District Court for the  
District of Rhode Island



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## JOELLE ROCHA, PARTNER

### OVERVIEW

Joelle Rocha is a partner with a focus on real estate development and land use; she also represents clients in business disputes and general commercial litigation. Previously, she served as Assistant to the Solicitor for the towns of Warren and Lincoln. She is admitted to practice in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Joelle has successfully permitted several of the State's largest mixed-use developments. She has represented private developers in residential, commercial, mixed use and solar projects and before municipal and state boards and agencies. She has secured tax stabilization agreements for several private development projects.

She has successfully litigated several class actions against municipalities regarding illegal and excessive impact fees and building permit fees, and recovered litigation costs for landowners and developers as a result of unlawful and unsubstantiated government actions. She has argued before the Rhode Island Supreme Court on behalf of several clients in matters involving recovery of attorneys' fees and challenges to local ordinances.

Joelle has been recognized by *Providence Business News* with its Forty Under 40 award, by *Super Lawyers* as a Rising Star, and in *Rhode Island Monthly* both for its Excellence in the Law in the area of Environmental Law/Land Use, and as the recipient of the Outstanding Women in Business award. Most recently, she was noted as a 2022 *Best Lawyer* in the area of Commercial Litigation.

### COMMUNITY

Active in the community, Joelle is a member of the Board at the Ocean State Montessori School and a member of Rhode Island Builders Association and its Legislative Committee. She is a former board member of Roger Williams University School of Law Alumni Association and the Rhode Island Soccer Association.

### RECOGNITION

Joelle has been recognized by *Providence Business News* with its Forty Under 40 award, by *Super Lawyers* as a Rising Star, and in *Rhode Island Monthly* both for its Excellence in the Law in the area of Environmental Law/Land Use, and as the recipient of the Outstanding Women in Business award. Most recently, she was noted as a 2022 *Best Lawyer* in the area of Commercial Litigation.

Best Lawyers, 2022

Super Lawyers Rising Star, 2011

Providence Business News Forty Under 40, 2018

RI Monthly Excellence in the Law, 2019-2020-2021

RI Monthly Outstanding Women in Business, 2020

University of Massachusetts (Dartmouth) Distinguished Alumni Award(2018)



### PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

#### My Blog Posts

- Joelle Rocha/Nicole Martucci Win Supreme Court Case for Property Purchaser



## MICHAEL T. SANDFORT, *ASSOCIATE*

### OVERVIEW

Mike is an associate at the firm and an active part of the business law, real estate, and M&A teams.

Prior to joining Duffy & Sweeney, Mike focused his practice on business law, commercial real estate, and public finance. In 2021 alone, Mike served as issuer's counsel on over \$400,000,000 in bonds while working with numerous collaborative teams. He has been involved in multiple corporate mergers and acquisitions, and has significant experience with complex commercial real estate transactions.

Admitted to practice law in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, he is a member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers and the Rhode Island Bar Association.

### CONTACT

[msandfort@duffysweeney.com](mailto:msandfort@duffysweeney.com)

### EDUCATION

Villanova University School of Law (LL.M. 2020)

Roger Williams University School of Law, (J.D. 2018)

Gettysburg College, (B.A. Political Science, 2015)

### PRACTICE AREAS

Banking & Finance

Business Law

Mergers & Acquisitions

Real Estate & Land Use

### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (2019)

Massachusetts (2021)



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## CONTACT

msweeney@duffysweeney.com

## EDUCATION

Providence College (B.S., 1985);  
St. John's University School of  
Law, (J.D., 1988).

Senior Staff Member, *St. John's  
Law Review*, 1986-1988.

## PRACTICE AREAS

Mergers & Acquisitions

Business Law

Shareholder Disputes

Banking & Finance

Intellectual Property &  
Technology Law

Hospitality

## BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island (1988)

Massachusetts (1990)



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## MICHAEL F. SWEENEY, *FOUNDING PARTNER AND SHAREHOLDER*

### OVERVIEW

Michael Sweeney is the president and co-founding shareholder of Duffy & Sweeney, a leading boutique business law firm headquartered in Providence.

Known as a savvy deal-maker and negotiator, Mike leads the mergers and acquisitions practice where he regularly handles mergers, sales and business acquisitions as well as recapitalizations and equity financings. He serves as general corporate counsel to a number of privately held, mid-market businesses. He is a frequent speaker and writer on contemporary middle-market strategies for companies.

Mike is recognized annually by key ranking organizations including Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers and Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business, among others. Most recently, he was recognized by Best Lawyers as the 2020 and 2019 "Lawyer of the Year" for the practice areas of Closely-Held Companies and Family Businesses Law and Corporate Law, respectively, in the Providence metro region.

*Michael Sweeney is a "very business-savvy" attorney who specializes in M&A, recapitalizations and equity financings. Sources praise him for "always looking out for the best interest of his clients." He is deemed to be "extremely knowledgeable in commercial transactions."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business (2019)

*"Michael Sweeney is well regarded for his abilities in M&A, equity financings and recapitalizations. Sources are impressed with his negotiating skills and praise him as a "talented lawyer with great business sense. He is sought out for his M&A expertise."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business (2018)

*"Mike Sweeney has a fine reputation for problem solving and is praised by clients who say his strength is the ability to see the big picture of what people are trying to accomplish. He solves problems, he doesn't create them."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business (2017)

### EXPERIENCE

Mike represents leading companies in technology, manufacturing and distribution, insurance, banking, trust and financial services, and e-commerce industries. He has counseled numerous clients from initial start-up formation through various stages of growth and financing, including initial and secondary public offerings and/or sale or merger.

Since the 2008 recession, Mike has successfully spearheaded numerous significant mid-market M&A transactions across the US, helping family and entrepreneur owners convert several billion dollars of private enterprise value into liquidity. He is a frequent speaker at middle-market forums with leading financial institutions and investment banks.

### RECOGNITION

Mike is recognized annually by key ranking organizations including *Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers and Chambers USA: America's Leading Guide for Business*, among others.

Most recently, he was included in *Rhode Island Monthly's* Excellence in Law for 2022 in the category of **Business Law**. He was recognized by *Best Lawyers* as the 2020 and 2019 "**Lawyer of the Year**" for the practice areas of **Closely-Held Companies and Family Businesses Law** and **Corporate Law**, respectively, in the Providence metro region. He was recognized as "**Lawyer of the Year**" in Rhode Island for **Mergers and Acquisitions Law** (2014) and again for **Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law** (2017) by *Best Lawyers*.

He received the **Deal Maker of the Year** award from *Finance Monthly* in 2012. Mike holds Martindale Hubbell's highest rating of AV.

#### "What Clients Say"

*Michael Sweeney is a "very business-savvy" attorney who specializes in M&A, recapitalizations and equity financings. Sources praise him for "always looking out for the best interest of his clients." He is deemed to be "extremely knowledgeable in commercial transactions."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business (2019)

*Michael Sweeney is well regarded for his abilities in M&A, equity financings and recapitalizations. Sources are impressed with his negotiating skills and praise him as a "talented lawyer with great business sense. He is sought out for his M&A expertise."* | From Chambers USA (2018)

*"Mike Sweeney has a fine reputation for problem solving and is praised by clients who say his strength is the ability to see the big picture of what people are trying to accomplish. He solves problems, he doesn't create them."* | Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business (2017)

*Co-founding partner Michael Sweeney is regarded as "not just a bright and intelligent legal technician, but someone who understands the business and who has a talent for negotiation."* He serves as general counsel to several businesses.

# DUFFY & SWEENEY, LTD

BUSINESS LAW & LITIGATION

MICHAEL F. SWEENEY, *FOUNDING PARTNER AND SHAREHOLDER* continued

"Michael Sweeney leads the firm's corporate/commercial team and his recent work involves international IP transfer issues and general corporate. He is described as *"astute on financial issues and extremely knowledgeable in commercial law in the USA and internationally."*



## COMMUNITY

### Professional & Community Involvement

Overseer, Providence Children's Museum (Chairperson 2008 – 09 Playworks Capital Campaign)

Commodore, Rhode Island Commodores

Member, Providence College President's Council

Fellow, American Bar Foundation & Rhode Island Bar Foundation

Member, Rhode Island Bar Association Business Organizations Committee, 1988-Present; Chair 1998 – 2006

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

5th Annual "Business Owners Forum" in conjunction with Bank of America / US Trust covering the M&A landscape, succession planning and key questions faced by business owners and their families. (2020)

"Midsize Firms luring 'Big Law' clients. See PDF of full article from Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly. (February 2017)

"Middle-Market Forum," in conjunction with US Trust, Bank of America, & Houlihan Lokey . See article in Providence Business News. (2016)

### My Publications, Publications & Posts

- ICYMI! Business Owner Webinar Series: Maximizing the Value of Your Business
- Lions and Tigers and Bears (... deferrals and defaults and workouts) OH MY!
- Mike Sweeney Part of RI & MA Lawyers Weekly Story on PPP
- Webinar with Greater Prov Chamber on Small Business Loan Form
- Client Alert: PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM | ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS
- Partnering with Greater Prov Chamber on Cash Flow Webinar
- Leveraging RWI to Maximize Deal Value and Secure A Good Night's Sleep!
- Is The Window Closing on the Decade-Long Sellers Market?
- Business Owners with Exit Dreams May Leverage Middle-Market Momentum
- Middle-Market M&A: The "Window" Is Open

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