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## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT:

**Richard A. Rothman,**  
Special Pro Bono counsel and former  
Co-Head of the Complex Commercial  
Litigation practice

**Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP**



**R**ichard A. Rothman has had a groundbreaking career including wins across the country in trials, arbitrations and investigations dealing with some of the seminal business topics of the last 40 years—from airline takeover battles to the World Trade Center bombing and the fall of Lehman Brothers, to name a few.

Rich served as lead counsel for American Airlines, Thomson Reuters, GE, Lehman Brothers, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Sanofi Aventis, and Sotheby's in high-stakes disputes that made headlines. Rich has also won every appeal he argued in the D.C., Second, Third, Seventh, Eighth and Tenth Circuits and the N.Y. Court of Appeals. At the same time, he has been a leader in the public service arena for decades, and now serves as Special Pro Bono Counsel at Weil. He also played a leadership role at Weil, Gotshal & Manges—including as co-head of the firm's Complex Commercial Litigation Department, a member of the Management Committee, and chair of the firm's Pro Bono and Governance Committees.

**American Airlines.** For 25 years, Rich served as one of American Airlines' principal litigators, handling major cases, including commercial, antitrust, and bankruptcy litigations. Among other cases, he served as lead litigation counsel in American's successful battle against Carl Icahn arising from American's 2001 acquisition of TWA. Rich also successfully represented American in appeals he argued in the D.C, Third, Eighth and Tenth Circuits, as well as in the global antitrust investigations related to passenger fuel surcharges and in a major antitrust case in Texas against Sabre, a global ticket distribution system, which settled in the midst of trial.

**Reuters.** Starting in 1995, Rich served as one of Reuters' principal litigation counsel. Among numerous matters, he served as lead

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



Photo: Ryland West

trial counsel in a five-year arbitration brought by Cantor Fitzgerald seeking damages totaling hundreds of millions of dollars due to Reuters' termination of a long-term contract worth in excess of \$250 million. After three years, Reuters defeated all of Cantor's claims and received a multi-million dollar payment to settle the case.

**Lehman Brothers.** In 2010, Rich served as lead trial counsel for Lehman Brothers in the action challenging Bank of America's seizure of \$500 million of deposited funds shortly before Lehman's bankruptcy. After trial, a Manhattan federal bankruptcy court judge ordered BofA to repay the \$500 million plus interest. Rich was selected as *The American Lawyer's* "Litigator of the Week" on Nov. 19, 2010, for this win.

**Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.** Rich led the Port Authority's successful defense of multiple high profile cases, each seeking hundreds of millions of dollars in damages, including the litigation arising from the 1993 terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center. Rich was hired after the Appellate Division affirmed a jury's finding that the Port Authority, which owned the World Trade Center, was liable for the enormous damages resulting from the bombing. In September 2011, Rich won a landmark ruling when the N.Y. Court of Appeals reversed the Appellate Division and held that the Port Authority had immunity from all the tort claims asserted against it.

**Sanofi-Aventis.** In 2011, Rich served as lead counsel for Sanofi in the company's successful defense of an arbitration involving a multi-hundred million dollar contract dispute with Warner Chilcott over rights to market and distribute the billion-dollar osteoporosis medication Actonel. The case helped establish Weil's ongoing litigation relationship with Sanofi, facilitating the practices of numerous Weil lawyers, some of whom now lead the firm's Litigation practice.

**Public Service.** Rich has a record of public service leadership stretching back 30+ years, including as President of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, President of the Federal Bar Foundation, Trustee of the Federal Bar Council and chair of the Council's Second Circuit Courts and Public Service Committees, Director of the Legal Aid Society, and Trustee and Counsel to the Board of the American Red Cross of Greater New York. He's currently co-chair of the Board of Graham Windham, a leading agency providing services for underserved children and families. Rich has been honored for his public service. In 2017, he received the Abely Award from Sanctuary for Families, and the Distinguished Alumni Award from Washington University Law School. In 2018, he received the Human Services Council's Changemakers of New York Award, and in 2019 and 2021, he received the Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Award from Sanctuary for Families.

**Special Pro Bono Counsel.** Since 2017, after a life-altering battle with cancer diverted his career, Rich has singularly devoted his time to pro bono representations and public service work. In his role as Special Pro Bono Counsel—a first for the firm—he has helped steer Weil's pro bono priorities while playing lead roles on important matters, particularly those in which the firm has represented victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. Rich was trial counsel on the Weil team that successfully represented a victim of domestic violence who fled from Morocco with her four-year-old daughter in a federal proceeding brought by her husband under the Hague Convention seeking to force the child's return to Morocco. The court denied the husband's petition in a 96-page opinion.

He has helped numerous victims of human trafficking vacate criminal convictions that resulted from their having been trafficked, and in some cases to avoid deportation as a consequence. Rich founded and is co-chair of the Incarcerated Gender Violence Survivors Initiative, a coalition including over 15 law firms that assists women serving long sentences for crimes committed against their abusers gain parole, clemency or reduced sentences. He was also a member of the team that won parole for Clifford Hampton, who served more than 61 years at Louisiana's notorious Angola prison.

**Publishing:** Rich has published numerous works throughout his career, including *Litigating Complex Cases: From the Inside Out*; "Lessons from a Life in the Law" and "Four Practical Rules for Winning Complex Cases" – both published in *Litigation* magazine; "Preparing Senior Officers to Testify"; "How to Become a Trusted Advisor;" and, most recently "New York's Broken Parole Process: We Can Learn From Louisiana" (2020), published in the *New York Law Journal*.

*Submitted by Weil, Gotshal & Manges.*