

Michael S. Nelson

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Michael Nelson is an experienced first-chair trial lawyer. Mike currently serves as Practice Group Coordinator for the firm's global Insurance Recovery and Counseling group. He represents corporate clients in complex coverage disputes against insurers and in high-stakes commercial litigation across the manufacturing, technology, advanced materials, aerospace, and energy sectors. Clients praise Mike for developing creative, business-aligned solutions to complex legal challenges that align with broader organizational goals. Mike is valued by clients and colleagues alike for his steady courtroom presence, deep knowledge of insurance and commercial law, and commitment to practical, business-driven advocacy.

He has been recognized in both Insurance Law and Commercial Litigation by *The Best Lawyers in America*® for multiple years.

Mike exclusively represents corporate policyholders and has helped clients recover billions of dollars from insurers under a wide range of policy types, including advertising injury, bodily injury, first party and third-party property, business interruption, directors and officers and cyber coverages. He has obtained bad faith verdicts against insurers for improper claims handling and has negotiated favorable policyholder resolutions, including coverage-in-place agreements and policy buyouts, in disputes arising from alleged asbestos, silica, mixed dust, and PFAS exposures. Mike also advises clients on risk management and insurance placement, helping them navigate coverage issues in corporate transactions and pre-litigation settings.

From the outset of his career, Mike has represented Fortune 100 companies in complex commercial litigation involving disputes with competitors, business partners, customers, and suppliers. His experience spans a broad array of contract types—sales and purchase agreements, service contracts, joint ventures, distribution, and licensing agreements—often governed by Article 2 of the UCC. He also has substantial experience defending corporations in consumer class actions, antitrust litigation, product liability, fraudulent conveyance, executive compensation, corporate veil piercing, and lost profits disputes.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* as a Recommended Lawyer for Insurance: Advice to Policyholders, 2026

- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® in Pittsburgh
  - Commercial Litigation, 2025-2026
  - Insurance Law, 2025-2026

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- American Bar Association
- Allegheny County Bar Association
- University of Pittsburgh Law Alumni Association Board of Governors (President-Elect)
- Woodland Hills Aquatic Team Board of Directors (Vice President)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, LITIGATING, SETTLING & MANAGING ASBESTOS CLAIMS CONFERENCE, Preparing for the Onslaught of Silica Litigation, June 2006
- Speaker, NATIONAL SILICA CONFERENCE, Insurance Coverage for Silica Liabilities, September 2004

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of Pittsburgh School of Law, 1996 *(Law Review)*
- B.A., University of Pittsburgh, 1993 *(cum laude)*

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of Pennsylvania
- United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
- United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- 19 May 2026, We Wrote the Book on Coverage. Now We Write the Blog.
- 17 January 2025, California Wildfires—Insurance Tips for Policyholders
- 28 September 2016, House Energy And Commerce Committee Calls For Modernizing The TCPA

- 17 May 2016, New York's Highest Court Issues a Noteworthy Decision, Rejecting "Pro Rata" Allocation in the Asbestos Bodily-Injury Context
- 29 September 2015, Better Late Than Never: The California Supreme Court Reverses Itself, Holding That Corporate Policyholders May Assign Insurance Rights Without Insurer Consent

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "Better Late Than Never: The California Supreme Court Reverses Itself, Holding That Corporate Policyholders May Assign Insurance Rights Without Insurer Consent," *FC&S Legal*, 5 November 2015

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Insurance Recovery and Counseling
- Appellate Litigation
- Commercial Disputes
- International Arbitration
- Restructuring and Insolvency

INDUSTRIES

- Aerospace and Defense
- Consumer Goods and Services
- Energy
- Household Goods
- Manufacturing
- Oil and Gas

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Commercial Disputes

- Defended a major dishwasher manufacturer in nationwide class actions alleging breach of warranty and consumer fraud; all cases dismissed without client payment.
- Represented an international appliance manufacturer in five class actions; all dismissed following disqualification of plaintiff's liability expert after a *Daubert* hearing.

- Served as first-chair trial counsel for a Fortune 100 technology company in a breach of employment compensation dispute; verdict entered for client after plaintiff's perjury was revealed.
- First-chair trial counsel for a Fortune 100 technology company in an IP licensing dispute; resolved favorably after trial through a mediated settlement that included a new cross-licensing agreement.
- Represented a Fortune 100 manufacturer in multiple take-or-pay contract disputes; all resolved successfully.
- Represented a manufacturer of industrial equipment in a dispute alleging breach of express and implied warranties that was resolved favorably after limited discovery.

Insurance Coverage and Asbestos Bankruptcy

- Secured US$1.7+ billion in the *In re Pittsburgh Corning* Chapter 11 case from 40+ domestic and foreign primary, umbrella, and excess insurers.
- Appointed as special insurance counsel for an American supplier of paints, coatings, and specialty materials, UGL, and current debtors in *Aldrich Pump* and *Murray Boiler*.
- Drafted and enforced key channeling injunction and insurance neutrality provisions in multiple Chapter 11 reorganizations.
- Secured favorable coverage-in-place agreements and policy buybacks for an international distributor of industrial, medical, and specialty gases facing silica personal injury lawsuits.
- Successfully resolved a claim brought by an insurer for breach of indemnity agreements without the need for protracted litigation.
- Negotiated policy buyouts for a supplier of building materials for commercial and industrial applications named as a defendant in asbestos litigation.
- Represented a steel manufacturer in litigation over coverage for remediation of environmental damage at sites across the northeast that was settled after appeals to the Second Circuit.
- Successfully resolved a claim brought by a major commercial laundry and drycleaning business for property damage and business interruption damages sustained after a major fire at its facility.