

Johanes Maliza

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Overview

Johanes' practice includes commercial litigation, white-collar defense and internal corporate investigations. To each body of law, he brings deep experience in trials and briefing, at all phases from pre-litigation counsel through appeal. With a 15-year record of success in state and federal courts across the country, he is a first-chair trial lawyer for clients facing high-stakes litigation.

In commercial litigation, Johanes has experience in all phases of litigation in state and federal courts - from pre-pleading counsel to discovery, motions practice, post-trial briefing and appeals. As a first-chair attorney, he has led trial teams, argued and won dispositive motions and successfully brought appeals on behalf of private and institutional clients.

Johanes is a member of the Trial Bar in the Northern District of Illinois, as well as the federal courts in the Central District of Illinois and the Northern and Southern Districts of Ohio. When necessary, Johanes has briefed and argued dozens of appeals in the United States Courts of Appeal. He is a member of the bar of the Third, Sixth, and Seventh Circuit Courts of Appeal.

Johanes advises C-Suite Executives and Boards of Directors of public and privately held companies regarding compliance programs, litigation strategy and responses to unexpected corporate challenges. When necessary, he conducts internal investigations in response to whistleblower complaints, civil investigative demands, subpoenas and law enforcement inquiries.

In criminal law, has extensive experience in all dealings with law enforcement. He helps clients navigate and negotiate grand jury subpoenas or civil investigations from the U.S. Department of Justice and state attorneys general. Where negotiation breaks down, he has sat first-chair in trials and appeals across the country. In addition to institutional representation, he represents individuals charged with fraud, money laundering, healthcare-related crimes and all other manner of Class A felonies.

Johanes is recognized as a member of the Criminal Justice Act Panel for the Northern District of Ohio. Membership on the CJA panel, which requires approval by judges and court staff, is only afforded to practitioners with significant experience representing people charged with serious criminal offenses in federal court and who demonstrate a commitment to indigent defense.

Johanes is an adjunct law professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Law and a guest instructor at the University of Chicago, including courses on bribery and federal criminal law. He is also a Commissioner on the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission, appointed by the Governor of Illinois. His pro bono work includes post-conviction petitioning, immigration and refugee representation, and homeowner rights cases.

Prior to law school, Johanes was a professional soccer player for three years in Major League Soccer (San Jose Earthquakes) and the United Soccer Leagues (Puerto Rico Islanders), after playing collegiately at Stanford. He is fluent in Spanish and French, and has represented clients on four continents.

Representative Matters

- Obtained successful defense verdict after 8 day trial on Sarbanes-Oxley whistleblower trial in federal court.
- Earned dismissal of false advertising and unfair competition claims against consumer-facing tech company in federal court.
- Represented cable television provider on administrative law and anti-trust (Sherman Act) claims.
- Defended freight logistics and company in breach of contract dispute and obtained dismissal on jurisdictional grounds.
- Represented real estate investment company in multi-party data breach litigation, winning dismissal of all claims and a favorable settlement.
- Represented international health care product manufacturer in breach of contract claim stemming from debt offering and warranty offering.
- Representing a global luxury goods retail conglomerate in a arbitration alleging breach of contract claims.
- Represented a global consumer goods conglomerate in connection with fraud and other claims arising from advertising and media buying services.

Credentials

EDUCATION

- Harvard University Law School, 2010, J.D.
- Stanford University, 2003, B.A.

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Ohio
- Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, including Trial Bar
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio

Memberships

- Member, Criminal Justice Act Panel for the Northern District of Ohio
- Member, Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission

Awards & Recognition

- Fellow, Chicago Urban League IMPACT Leadership Development Program, Class of 2026
- Listed, “Stand-Out Lawyer” by Thomson Reuters, 2026

News & Insights

- 16 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2026 Legal 500 City Elite Rankings
  July 28, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Attorneys Mark Silberman, Ryan Levitt, Johanes Maliza, SaDella Duval D’Adrian and Meghan Golden Published in IICLE Federal Criminal Practice 2026
  July 1, 2026 | Contributed Content & Presentations
- California Food Fight: The SF City Attorney’s Snack Attack
  February 19, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights

- Thomson Reuters Honors Eight Benesch Attorneys as 2026 "Stand-Out Lawyers"
  February 4, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Partner Johanes Maliza Selected to Chicago Urban League's 2026 IMPACT Leadership Development Program
  September 4, 2025 | Press Releases
- Meuti, Maliza, and Boninger File Petition for Writ of Certiorari in Supreme Court
  March 6, 2023 | Press Releases
- Benesch's new Cleveland Partners mentioned in Crain's Cleveland People on the Move
  January 30, 2023 | Media Mentions
- Johanes Maliza and Mark J. Silberman contribute articles to Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education publication | Federal Criminal Practice 2023 Edition
  January 3, 2023 | Contributed Content & Presentations
- Benesch Names 20 New Partners for 2023
  January 2, 2023 | Press Releases
- Nora K. Cook, Johanes C. Maliza, David M. Hopkins and David A. Rammelt mentioned in Law360 | "Smucker's Says Marketing Firm Overcharged, Underserved it"
  December 21, 2022 | Press Releases

Speaking & Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

- No Harm, No Foul? The Rise of Injury-less Claims | Bryna Dahlin, Johanes Maliza, Michael Meuti
  November 4, 2026 | Speaking Engagement