



## John Lewis, Jr.

### Partner

Houston, Atlanta

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### Industries

Food, Beverage and Agribusiness,  
Banking and Financial Services,  
Life Sciences and Biotechnology

### Practices

Business Litigation,  
Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights,  
Commercial Class Actions,  
Employment Litigation and Policy,  
Securities Litigation,  
White Collar Defense and Government Investigations

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John has an unparalleled background as a board and C-suite advisor, problem-solver and strategist.

Before joining Shook, John held significant leadership roles for over a decade with The Coca-Cola Company at its global headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. First, he was global head of litigation, leading teams of internal and outside lawyers in enterprise disputes and investigations. As chief litigation counsel, he also led the first governance litigation in the company's history, defending company directors and senior officers in shareholder derivative cases. During the first joint DOJ/SEC investigation into its public filings, John led board-directed, Sarbanes-Oxley/Dodd Frank whistleblower investigations, collaborating with senior management, insurance carriers and media colleagues on legal risk management strategy. John was a "working" member of the teams he directed. He led hundreds of investigative interviews, personally prepared and defended multiple senior officer depositions and was actively involved in mock jury exercises. Over several years, he led the single largest potential litigation exposure in the history of the

company: a putative securities class action lawsuit that touched four continents and was resolved on terms favorable to the company.

Next, John served as Coca-Cola's first Global Anti-Bribery Counsel, responsible for the company's compliance with FCPA, the UK Bribery Act, U.S. trade sanctions compliance and similar anti-corruption laws worldwide. In this role, he led in-country training, audits and investigations for business units across Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. He partnered with M&A teams leading compliance-related due diligence regarding potential acquisition targets. He also personally advised and updated the board audit committee on such matters.

Finally, John joined Coca-Cola's global human resources executive team as the global Chief Diversity Officer. John had board-level accountability for all aspects of workplace fairness, including EEOC charges and regulatory inquiries, as well as related media and reputational concerns. John was the "voice and face" of diversity and inclusion at Coca-Cola, engaging both internal and external constituents, employee groups, community leaders, elected officials, insurance carriers, civil rights leaders, franchise bottlers and institutional investors, among other stakeholders.

Because of the breadth and depth of his experiences in legal, workplace culture and reputational concerns, John brings a unique perspective to confidential litigation assessments, corporate diversity compliance reviews, internal legal vulnerability assessments, and helping clients develop best-practice benchmarking.

Since joining Shook, John focuses on fiduciary matters and investigations. John has served as a panel Chapter 7 bankruptcy trustee for U.S. Bankruptcy Courts in Kansas City and Atlanta, administering assets in nearly 10,000 cases over a combined decade. John is currently serving as a court-appointed federal equity receiver in a \$300 million cryptocurrency/Ponzi scheme case pending in Houston federal court.

John's background enables him to bring solutions-based perspectives to his clients, drawing on a range of disciplines and a proven track record of success working with business leaders in public affairs, crisis communications, government relations, regulatory affairs and community ventures.

## **Representative Matters**

Led compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and related anti-corruption laws and regulations for a *Fortune* 100 company, personally conducting training, audits and investigations throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

Led legal team managing all aspects of one of the largest securities class action cases ever concluded in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Defended shareholder derivative lawsuits and led internal and governmental investigations, working directly with senior management and board all to successful outcome.

## **Bankruptcy Matters**

Represents creditors, avoidance defendants, lessors, asset purchasers, insurance carriers, trustees and other parties in both business and consumer cases across the country.

First-chaired dozens of trials and contested evidentiary hearings in bankruptcy courts nationwide.

As in-house litigation counsel for The Coca-Cola Company, created a profit center of bankruptcy matters by strategic participation on unsecured creditors' committees and creating aggressive claims management processes, improving the company's bankruptcy-related recoveries to more than \$10 million in a five-year period. As a result, was promoted to global head of litigation within four years of joining the company.

Previously served on the Official Unsecured Creditors' committees of Delta Airlines, Schlotzsky's Deli and Piccadilly Cafeterias, among others.

As an Honors Program Attorney in the U.S. Justice Department, Office of the U.S. Trustee, represented the government's interest in an assigned case docket of more than 200 active Chapter 11 cases filed at the height of the S&L crisis in the 1990s from creditors meeting through plan confirmation, conducting corporate debtor sworn examinations and appearing regularly in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland.

## **Selected Presentations**

*Building a High Performing Diverse Receivership Team*, National Association of Federal Equity Receivers, September 8, 2023.

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Avoiding Litigation Risk and Complying with Ethical Obligations*, Chicago Ethics CLE Conference, May 18, 2023 (Panelist).

*FCPA Houston: Handling Whistleblower Complaints, Compliance Breakdowns and More Takeaways*, American Conference Institute, January 26, 2023.

*The Fierce Urgency of Now: Diversity in Legal Recruiting Amidst the War for Talent*, Major, Lindsey & Africa, April 28, 2022.

*The General Counsel Perspective: Ways the Pandemic has Changed the Landscape of Your Company, Positively and Negatively*, Corporate Counsel Conference, Commercial Law Section, National Bar Association, February 25, 2021 (Moderator).

*Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices for Identifying and Addressing Implicit Bias*, CLE Webinar, Virtual In-House Counsel Forum, ACC Colorado, October 7, 2020.

*Navigating the Cannabis Conundrum*, ACC Houston Annual Symposium, Houston, August 15, 2019 (with Lynne Eckels and Stephanie McGraw).

*Implicit Bias and Debiasing*, CLE, Private Client Presentation, August 13, 2019 (with Alicia Donahue and Joan Camagong).

*Implicit Bias + Debiasing*, Update of the Law, CLE, Kansas City, Missouri, June 13, 2019.

*Building Your Law Department's Diversity Strategy*, State Bar of Georgia, Corporate Counsel Institute, 2017 (Faculty).

*OMG, There's Evidence in My Pocket!? How the Proliferation and Accessibility of Data Affects Discovery and What You Need to Know About the New Federal Rules*, National Association of Minority and Women-Owned Law Firms Annual Business Meeting, 2017 (Panelist).

*Navigating Ethical, Legal and Practical Implications of Data*, Association of Corporate Counsel, Georgia, 2017 (Panelist).

*Implicit Bias and the Lawyer's Role as Consensus Builder*, Southwire Company, LLC, 2017 (Faculty).

*FCPA Compliance Audits: Best Practices in 2016 and Beyond*, The Knowledge Group, 2016 (Faculty).

*How to Prevent Gift, Entertainment and Hospitality Trip Wires*, American Conference Institute's (ACI) 7th Houston FCPA Boot Camp, 2013 (Faculty).

*Doing Business in India*, Transparency International USA Corporate Forum, 2012 (Panelist).

*Understanding the Limits of Gift Giving, Hospitality and Entertainment*, ACI's 12th Annual FCPA Boot Camp, 2011 (Faculty).

*Conducting Corporate Investigations – The Use of Lawful and Ethical Strategies*, Association of Corporate Counsel Annual Meeting, 2009 (Faculty).

*HR-Related Initiatives Under the Obama Administration*, The HR Forum, New York, 2009 (Featured Speaker).

Professional Development Academy, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, 2007 (Faculty).

*Defeating Class Certification*, Class Action Summit, New York City, 2006 (Faculty).

*What Federal Judges Should Know About Sarbanes-Oxley*, Just the Beginning Foundation - Association of African American Federal Judges, 2006 (featured speaker).

*Responding to Government Investigations*, Faculty, National Bar Association, 2006.

## **Publications**

*4 Steps For Improving Board Diversity Per New Nasdaq Rule*, Law360, September 23, 2021 (with Bill Martucci and Adriana Paris).

*Data Must Drive Diversity to Make a Meaningful Impact*, ACC Colorado Quarterly Newsletter, July 2020 (with Buffy Mims).

*When a Favor Becomes a Bribe: A Commentary on FCPA Trends in 2016*, Corporate Compliance Insights, 2016 (with M. Cogen).

*Litigation Management*, Litigation Series (contributor, *Chapter 1 - Litigation from the In-House Corporate Defendant's Perspective*).

*Making the Connection: Successful Legal Departments Must Reflect the Diversification of the Nation*, Inside Counsel (guest columnist).

*Diversity People - In A Changing World, All Attorneys Need to Own the Issue of Legal Profession Inclusion*, Inside Counsel (guest columnist).

*Top 10 Ways to Champion Diversity in Your Law Department*, The In-House Litigator, ABA Litigation Section (with R. Bonds).

*Building Relationships Between Inside and Outside Counsel*, National Bar Association Commercial Law

Section (with S. Woodhouse).

## **Selected Bankruptcy Publications and Presentations**

*Diversity in Bankruptcy Law: How to Diversify the Bankruptcy Field*, Black Law Students Association, Washington and Lee University, March 9, 2021.

*Maximizing Recoveries in Bankruptcy*, COVID-19 Shook Client Primer, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, April 30, 2020 (with Mark Moedritzer and Todd Ruskamp).

*Distressed Dealers: Legal Issues and Strategies in the Age of COVID-19*, Webinar, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, April 16, 2020.

*Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights in the Age of COVID-19*, Webinar, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, April 8, 2020.

Faculty, National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges Annual Meeting, 2004.

*Updates in Bankruptcy Law for the Non-Bankruptcy Lawyer*, NBA Corporate Counsel Conference, 2004.

Presenter, Missouri Bar Annual Bankruptcy Institute, 1994-2000.

*Small Business Bankruptcies*, Wiley Law Publications, 1994 (contributing author).

## **Media Coverage**

*5th Circ. To Scope SEC Agenda In Nasdaq Diversity Rule Fight*, Law360, August 26, 2022

*Shook Hardy's Houston Office Starts 2022 With a New Office Leader*, Texas Lawyer, January 4, 2022.

*Shook Hardy Hires Former Coca-Cola Litigation Chief in Houston*, Texas Lawyer, January 28, 2019.

*Coke's Outside Counsel Get Diversity Directive*, Fulton Daily Report, April 2008.

*Lerach's Guilty Plea Gives Coke New Defense in Securities Fraud Case*, Fulton Daily Report, October 2007.

*Coke Discrimination Lawsuit Still Resonates for GCs*, Fulton Daily Report, October 2007.

*Plaintiff's Expert, Coke Cost Investors \$1.3 Billion Dollars*, Fulton Daily Report, July 2007.

*Alumni Newsmaker*, GWU Law School Magazine, 2006.

*Panel Narrows Field to Two for Bankruptcy Judgeship*, Kansas City Business Journal, October 1998.

*(KC) Chiefs Seats Go Up For Bids*, The Kansas City Star, November 16, 1996.

## **Multimedia**

*ESG Cultural Investigations Conversation*, E2-ESG & Mitigating Risks, June 25, 2022

## Bar Admissions

- Texas
- Georgia
- Kansas
- Missouri

## Education

- J.D., The George Washington University Law School
- B.A., with honors, Morehouse College (Economics)

## Awards

- *Houston Business Journal*, Outstanding Head of Diversity (2023)
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law (2023)
- *Lawdragon 500: Leading Litigators in America* (2022)
- *Savoy* magazine, Most Influential Black Lawyers (2021)
- Mosaic Diversity Leadership Award, Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP (2021)
- *Georgia Super Lawyers* (2018)
- Elbert P. Tuttle Jurisprudence Award, Anti-Defamation League
- Distinguished Alumni Award, The George Washington University Law School
- Impact Award, Black Alumni Association, The George Washington University Law School
- Cora T. Walker Legacy Award, National Bar Association Commercial Law Section
- A.T. Walden Outstanding Attorney, Gate City Bar Association
- Chairman's Award for Excellence in Supplier Diversity, The Coca-Cola Company
- Chairman's Recognition, Special Recognition (for role in resolving government investigations), The Coca-Cola Company
- Minority Corporate Counsel Employer of Choice Award
- National Bar Association Outstanding Section of the Year, Chair – Commercial Law Section (2001, 2002, 2003)
- Corporate Diversity Award (2012). Renamed the "John Lewis, Jr. Corporate Award."
- U.S. Department of Justice, Honors Program
- Rated AV Preeminent® by Martindale-Hubbell

## Memberships

- *Law360*, Diversity & Inclusion Editorial Advisory Board (2023, 2024)
- Logan E. Bleckley Inn of Court, Master
- American Bar Association
- American Bankruptcy Institute
- Atlanta Bar Association Bankruptcy Section
- National Bar Association Commercial Law Section (Past Chair, 2000-2003)
- National Association of Bankruptcy Trustees (DEI Committee)
- National Association of Federal Equity Receivers (Co-Chair, DEI Committee)
- Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation
- St. Thomas High School, Board of Directors

## Community Involvement

- Houston East End Chamber of Commerce, Board Member (2023-Present)

- The George Washington University Law School  
Dean's Advisory Council (2021-Present)  
Professorial Lecturer in Law (2024)
- Atlanta Botanical Garden, Trustee (2016-2022)
- Leadership Atlanta, Graduate (2012)
- National Black MBA Association, Advisory Board (2014-2018)
- Anti-Defamation League (Southeast Region), Director (2016-2022)