

Gallagher LLP

Joseph C. Dugan
Partner



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Joe Dugan is a commercial litigation attorney with extensive experience litigating complex motions and solving thorny legal problems. Joe's practice involves business tort litigation, class actions, employment disputes, and constitutional litigation. Joe has a particular interest in cases arising under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, and the First Amendment, and has litigated religious freedom cases in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, and state courts. Joe's recent matters have included a legal malpractice class action brought in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City against a prominent personal injury firm, which resulted in a \$57 million settlement for the class; a business tort action involving direct and derivative claims brought by a former member of an IT solutions company; and a federal case involving the interplay between emerging Title VII law and religious freedom principles. Joe also frequently appears before rabbinical tribunals, known as Bais Dins, to arbitrate claims on behalf of real estate investors who are members of the Jewish communities in Baltimore and Lakewood, New Jersey.

Joe is passionate about community service and maintains a pro bono practice with the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. Through that collaboration, Joe has assisted low-income Marylanders with federal and state income tax issues and expungement of criminal records. Joe

also has worked on pro bono immigration matters and has partnered with other Gallagher attorneys to represent incarcerated persons in civil rights cases.

Prior to joining Gallagher, Joe clerked for The Honorable James K. Bredar, of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, and for The Honorable David F. Hamilton of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Joe also served as a trial attorney with the Federal Programs Branch of the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Division, where he defended federal agencies and officials in cases that presented novel claims under the U.S. Constitution, the Administrative Procedure Act, and other federal statutes.

Joe graduated *summa cum laude* from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in 2015. While in law school, Joe served as Executive Editor of the *Indiana Law Journal* and was a tournament champion in the school-wide Sherman Minton Moot Court Competition. He was most recently ranked as an *Associate to Watch* in the *Chambers USA 2024 Guide* and has been named by *Super Lawyers*® as a *Maryland Rising Star 2024-2025*. Joe was recognized by *Baltimore Magazine* as a Top Lawyer for Commercial Litigation in 2026.

Articles and Presentations

- “Trade Secrets: Protecting the Crown Jewels of Your Client’s Business” Maryland State Bar Association Legal Summit, June 2025
- “Algorithms and Antitrust: When Does Software Use Implicate the Sherman Antitrust Act?” Maryland State Bar Association Legal Summit, June 2025

Civic and Charitable Service

- Franciscan Center in Baltimore, Board of Trustees (2021-present)
- St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, Board of Directors (2021-present), Vice Chair (2022-2024), Chairman (2024-present)

Beyond Gallagher

Joe enjoys hiking in Maryland’s beautiful state parks and is often joined by his young sons, Oliver and Finnian. Joe also enjoys cooking and is an amateur gardener with a habit for bringing home fruit bushes and flowering plants from the local nursery. Joe is running out of space in his yard and will soon transition to potted plants.



Background

Area(s) of Practice

- Appellate
- First Amendment Litigation
- Litigation

Court Admission

- Maryland State Courts
- Ohio State Courts
- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
- United States District Court for the District of Maryland
- United States Tax Court

Bar Admissions

- Maryland
- Ohio

Education

- Indiana University School of Law, JD, summa cum laude, Order of the Coif, 2015
- Cedarville University, BA, summa cum laude, 2007

Bar and Professional Memberships

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- American Bar Association
 - Maryland State Bar Association

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