



Michael A. Sweet

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A respected leader of the bankruptcy bar who is ranked among the top attorneys in California by Chambers & Partners, Michael has played a significant role in some of the nation's highest-profile corporate restructuring cases.

Over his nearly 30-year career, encompassing hundreds of bankruptcy cases and commercial disputes, Michael has earned a reputation as a seasoned negotiator with a hard-hitting, take-no-prisoners approach to dispute resolution and litigation. This depth of experience handling all aspects of major bankruptcy cases enables him to analyze a complex case, recognize and avoid potential pitfalls, and present efficient, practical solutions that achieve clients' business objectives.

Michael represents all parties, particularly debtors, unsecured creditors and creditors' committees, in court and alternative dispute resolution forums. He is known for finding creative ways to maximize recovery in bankruptcy cases where such prospects appear bleak. Business leaders trust his forward-thinking approach and big picture perspective.

A member of the firm's Executive Committee and Managing Partner of its San Francisco office, Michael has helped shape the firm's Financial Restructuring & Bankruptcy Department, which he chairs, into a highly respected national practice group. He is also an accomplished leader in his local bankruptcy bar, having served as president of the California Bankruptcy Forum and the Bay Area Bankruptcy Forum as well as co-chair of the Northern District of California's Bankruptcy Bench-Bar Advisory Committee. Outside of the bankruptcy community, Michael has spent more than a decade on the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. In 2023, Gov. Gavin Newsom appointed Michael the chair of the California Citizens' Compensation Commission.

Michael is an appointed Mediator on the California Northern District's ADR Panel as well as a Resolution Advocate on the Bankruptcy Dispute Resolution Panel for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California.

Michael is also among California's most experienced Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy attorneys. He has been quoted on the subject by national news outlets, including The New York Times, CNBC, The Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg News, among others.

Michael's diverse practice also includes advising companies on cross-border transactions and assisting American companies pursuing investments abroad.

Litigation

Michael is an accomplished litigator who represents plaintiffs and defendants in commercial and employment disputes, receivership cases, probate litigation, creditors' rights issues and class actions. He often handles high-stakes directors and officers litigation, as well as board member investigations for Chapter 11 post-confirmation trusts.

He has brought multiple jury trials to verdict. His clients include technology companies, trustees, receivers and other fiduciaries, financial institutions, small businesses, developers and companies in the hospitality industry.

Bankruptcy and Financial Restructuring

In the bankruptcy arena, Michael represents debtors, creditors, creditors' committees and trustees in bankruptcy disputes throughout the state of California and nationally. He takes a creative approach to dispute resolution with the goal of maximizing recovery for clients inside and outside the courtroom. Michael has extensive experience litigating preferences, fraudulent conveyances, claims objections and plan confirmation, and he frequently advises clients in financial distress on bankruptcy avoidance. He has secured multimillion-dollar recoveries for clients in preferential transfer and avoidance action proceedings.

Public Entities

Michael represents public entities, including local and state governments and agencies, in disputes in bankruptcy court as well other courts throughout California. He has assisted multiple government bodies and public agencies in Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy proceedings, and in restructuring their finances to avoid Chapter 9 proceedings. He has also represented a number of public entities in state court receivership matters as well as in the bankruptcy cases of the owners of blighted properties.

Services

- Financial Restructuring & Bankruptcy
- Municipal Insolvency
- Litigation
- Government Relations
- Public Finance
- Receiverships
- International
- Israel
- Cannabis Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

Before Fox Rothschild

Michael has practiced at various bankruptcy and litigation firms throughout California. Prior to his arrival at Fox, he served as chair of the municipal debt restructuring and bankruptcy practice group at a California law firm.

He is a former judicial extern for The Hon. Lisa Hill Fenning of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California.

Beyond Fox Rothschild

Michael has spoken and written extensively on bankruptcy topics, particularly in the arena of government issues related to potential Chapter 9 bankruptcy filings.

Specifically, Michael was approached by national publications to provide commentary following the ruling that declared the City of Stockton, California, eligible for Chapter 9 bankruptcy, as well as following Detroit's bankruptcy filing. He appeared in a variety of news outlets including:

- ["Braced to Remake Itself, Detroit First Awaits Challenges to Bankruptcy Eligibility," - The New York Times](#)
- ["Detroit Files for Bankruptcy," - CNBC](#)

- ["Judge Orders Detroit to Withdraw Bankruptcy Filing ,"](#) and ["Detroit Files for Bankruptcy ,"](#) *CNN Money*
- ["Pension Funds Wary as Bankrupt City Goes to Trial "](#) - *The New York Times*
- ["In Bankruptcy, Stockton Must Decide Pension Issue "](#) - *NPR's Morning Edition*
- ["Judge to Rule on Whether Stockton, CA Can Enter Bankruptcy Protection "](#) - *Fox News*
- ["As Reality of Bankruptcy Hits, Stockton Grapples with Hard Decisions "](#) - *Which Way, LA? KCRW Radio*

Bar Admissions

- California
- New York
- District of Columbia

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. District Court, Central District of California
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of California

Education

- University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law (J.D., 1996)
- Brandeis University (B.A., *cum laude*, 1991)

Memberships

- Bar Association of San Francisco
- California Political Attorneys' Association
- California State Democratic Central Committee

Board of Directors

- California Citizens Compensation Commission (Chair)
- Commissioner, San Francisco Human Rights Commission (Chair 2011-2014; Vice Chair 2009-2011 and 2016-2020)
- Bay Area Bankruptcy Forum (President, 2019-2020)
- California Bankruptcy Forum (Immediate Past President)
- The College Preparatory School, Trustee (Oakland, CA)
- Northern District of California Bankruptcy Bench-Bar Advisory Committee (Chair 2021-2022)

Honors & Awards

- Listed as a "Recognized Practitioner" (2021) and "Notable Practitioner" (2020, 2022-2024) in the Legally Israel 100 by *Israel Desks*
- Recognized in the *Chambers USA* Guide for Bankruptcy/Restructuring in California (2022 - 2024)
- Named a "Small Turnaround of the Year" honoree by TMA Chicago/Midwest Chapter (2022)
- Named to the list of "Top 100 Restructuring Professionals: Distinction in Dealmaking" by the *Global M&A Network* (2022)
- Named a Trailblazer in the West by *The American Lawyer* (2022)
- Selected to a list of the Top 100 Restructuring Professionals by *Global M&A Network*. (2022)