

JOSEPH E. RICHOTTE

SHAREHOLDER

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Repeatedly honored by *DBusiness* as a top appellate lawyer in Detroit, Mr. Richotte focuses on complex civil appeals, criminal appeals, and appeals involving the press. Mr. Richotte has also been repeatedly recognized as a “rising star” within the white-collar defense bar by *Michigan SuperLawyers*. He counsels corporations, executives, and other professionals who are under investigation or prosecuted for serious frauds, business crimes, and regulatory offenses.

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Mr. Richotte defends print and digital media companies and journalists, too. He represents them in libel and privacy lawsuits, conducts prepublication content review, and advises on subpoenas, FOIA requests, open government, and First Amendment issues. He serves as Deputy General Counsel to the Michigan Press Association.

Notable Appellate Matters:

- *The Detroit News v. Independent Citizens Redistricting Comm’n*, No. 163823 (Mich. 2021), through an original action in the Michigan Supreme Court, successfully challenged the inaugural commission’s closed meeting and secured the release of memoranda withheld from the public.

Primary Practice Areas

[Appellate Specialty Team](#)
[Media Law](#)
[White Collar Criminal Defense](#)

All Related Practice Areas

Appellate Law
Appellate Specialty Team
Media Law
Access, Freedom of Information Act & Open Meetings Act
Media Litigation
Content Review and Pre-Publication Vetting
Media, Entertainment, and Digital Content Law Specialty Team
Government & Internal Investigations
White Collar Criminal Defense
Advertising, Marketing and Promotions
Antitrust Investigations
Entertainment Law
Grand Jury Investigations
Internal Investigations
Public Corruption
Securities Fraud

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- *In re OSHA Covid Rule*, No. 21-7000 (CA6 2021), coauthored amicus brief for the Small Business Association of Michigan in opposing OSHA's emergency temporary standard for mandatory vaccination.
- *Bisio v. City of Clarkston*, No. 158240 (Mich. 2020), authored amicus brief for members of the press on the application of FOIA to local municipal officers.
- *Henry v. Dow Chemical Co.*, No. 156128 (Mich. 2018), authored amicus brief for the Michigan Defense Trial Counsel on the statute of limitations and Michigan's claim-accrual statute in an environmental case involving the contamination of the Tittabawassee River.
- *People v. Brown*, No. 153505 (Mich. 2017), on special appointment by the Michigan Supreme Court, secured a new appeal of right for a prisoner on a claim of ineffective assistance of appellate counsel.
- *Bitterman v. Bolf*, No. 151520 (Mich. 2016), authored amicus brief for members of the press favoring broad application of Michigan's Open Meetings Act to delegates performing statutory functions for public bodies.
- *Polytorx, LLC v. University of Mich.*, Nos. 318151, 320989 (Mich. App. 2015), secured an interlocutory reversal in a trade-secrets case that resulted in a pre-discovery judgment in favor of the University.
- *Kurns v. Railroad Friction Prods. Corp.*, No. 10-879 (U.S. 2012), authored amicus brief favoring federal preemption of all state common-law claims for injuries caused by locomotive equipment.

Trade Secrets Theft
White Collar Crime &
Investigation

Notable Criminal Matters:

- Represented former Ford employee charged with stealing \$50 million in trade secrets.
- Secured probation for a physician accused of a \$9 million healthcare fraud.
- Investigated allegations of sexual abuse by a physician for a healthcare institution that provided medical care to juveniles held in custody.
- Investigated allegations of clerical misconduct and defended a religious order against claims of vicarious liability.

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- Settled a government enforcement action against a nonprofit without a fine when the government intended to shut down the nonprofit for alleged fraud.
- Settled an SEC administrative action against a company and its principal over alleged registration, custody rule, and recordkeeping violations.
- Quashed a search warrant directed toward a financial institution.
- Secured the dismissal of a felony embezzlement charge at the preliminary exam for lack of probable cause.
- Resolved a civil forfeiture action tied to the Black Market Peso Exchange.
- Defended multiple businesses accused of government contracting fraud by the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Defended multiple businesses accused of violating state and federal environmental laws and regulations.
- Defended numerous L-1 nonimmigrant work visa holders accused of criminal offenses, successfully resolving several actions in ways that avoided negative impact to visas.

Notable First Amendment Matters:

- *U.S. v. Fox*, No. 20-183 (WD Mich. 2021), secured the partial release of pretrial detention exhibits for *BuzzFeed* and *The New York Times* in a case against one of the men accused of conspiring to kidnap the governor of Michigan.
- *Kolodin v. William Beaumont Hosp.*, No. 343445 (Mich. App. 2019), successfully defended a dismissal of a defamation action premised upon a mandatory report under the Child Protection Law.
- *Levitt v. Digital First Media*, No. 330946 (Mich. App. 2017), secured interlocutory reversal and dismissal of case after a trial ruling that allowed a lawyer to proceed with a defamation claim against a newspaper.
- *Montcalm County v. Greenville Daily News*, No. 16-K21647-CZ (Mich. Cir. Ct. 2016), secured dismissal of lawsuit filed by a county against a newspaper over its FOIA request.
- *People v. Leist*, No. 14-49-FY (Mich. Dist. Ct. 2014), secured dismissal of criminal charges against a photographer over photographs of an airplane crash site.

Credentials

EDUCATION

Wayne State University 2004, B.S. Criminal Justice Honors

Wayne State University Law School 2007, J.D.

ADMISSIONS

JOSEPH E. RICHOTTE

Michigan

Supreme Court of the United States

United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

United States District Court for the District of Colorado

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan

MEMBERSHIPS

State Bar of Michigan

Chair Elect, Appellate Practice Section Council

FBA Eastern District of Michigan, Appellate Section, Criminal Section

ABA Communications Law Forum

Media Law Resource Center

Awards & Recognitions

Michigan Super Lawyers, Rising Star - White Collar Criminal Defense, 2013-2021

DBusiness Top Lawyers in Metro Detroit, Appellate Law, 2013, 2018-2022; White Collar Criminal Defense, 2016-2018, 2021 & 2022; Antitrust Law, 2021

Michigan Defense Trial Counsel: 2013 Golden Gavel Recipient for Professionalism and Pro Bono Service