



→ J.D. Rees

Special Counsel

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John (“J.D.”) Rees is Special Counsel in the Business Trial Practice Group of Sheppard Mullin’s Century City office.

Areas of Practice

J.D.’s practice focuses primarily on trusts and estates litigation and administration. He litigates all manner of probate-court disputes, including trust and will contests, heirship disputes, fiduciary-removal and surcharge actions, elder-abuse actions, contested conservatorships and guardianships, and more. J.D. also practices in civil court regularly, both in probate and in general commercial matters. In addition to litigating matters through mediation and trial, J.D. advises his individual, institutional, and nonprofit clients on adverse administrations of trusts and estates with assets that span the globe. And for the past two years, J.D. has helped clients in drafting and revising their estate plans (including wills and trusts).

J.D. is an active member of the Los Angeles legal community, where he has served for more than three years as an Executive Committee Member of the Trusts & Estates Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. J.D. also dedicates significant time towards pro bono matters, including pro bono representations of unaccompanied minors in Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases and of victims of financial elder abuse in partnership with Bet Tzedek Legal Services. For the past four years, J.D. has served on Sheppard Mullin’s pro bono committee.

In his spare time, J.D. enjoys working as an alumni coach and tournament director for the award-winning UCLA School of Law Mock Trial Program. J.D. also sometimes writes articles and gives presentations to clients and professional groups about the digital-asset issues relating to trusts and estates in California.

Through his work and various professional involvements, J.D. has built a reputation as a tenacious but fair advocate for his clients, with a relentless urge to solve problems and, above all, an honest broker.

Honors

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, *Best Lawyers*, 2023-2024

Articles

- Trust and Estate Considerations with the Corporate Transparency Act
01.11.2024

- Cryptocurrencies and Trustees' Duty to Invest Prudently: Navigating Fiduciary Duties in The Age of Decentralization
Trust and Estates Quarterly – Volume 24, Issue 3, 2018
- Bitcoin Taxation: IRS Notice 2014-21 Is Just the Beginning
Los Angeles Lawyer Magazine, 04.2018
- Land of Confusion: Attorney-Client Privilege and Duty of Confidentiality in Guardianships and Conservatorships
California Trusts and Estates Quarterly – Volume 23, Issue 4, 2017

Speaking Engagements

"*Ethica Ex Machina: AI Ethics for T&E Attorneys and their Clients*", California Lawyers Association (CLA), Trusts & Estates Executive Committee (TEXCOM), April 17, 2024

"Virtual Integrity: Ethics for California Attorneys and Legal Professionals During The Epoch of Generative AI," San Joaquin College of Law Alumni Association, January 13, 2024

"*Ethica Ex Machina: AI Ethics for T&E Attorneys and their Clients*," USC Trusts & Estates Conference, November 17, 2023

"Professional Responsibility in the Age of ChatGPT – Legal Ethics for T&E Practitioners and AI," Woodland Hills Estate Planning Council, November 9, 2023

"The Crypto Craze: Decoding Digital Assets For Estate Planners, Litigators, And Fiduciary Clients In Trusts And Estates," California Fellows Meeting for the American College of Trusts and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), August 2023

"Communicating With and Assisting Clients With Neurocognitive Disorders: Signs, Tools, and Tips for Court-Appointed Counsel and Fiduciaries," Aviva K. Bobb Advanced Court-Appointed Counsel Training, Trusts & Estates Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, March 2023

"A Practical Guide to Crypto Assets for Estate Planners, Trustees, And Estate Administrators," Probate Attorneys of San Diego, August 2022

"Administering Trusts and Estates in the Age of Cryptocurrencies," Fiduciary Roundtable of the San Gabriel Valley, November 2019

"Crypto and Blockchain 101 for California Estate Planners, Fiduciaries, and Fiduciary-Litigation Counsel," Professional Fiduciary Association of California, Inland Empire Chapter, July 2019

"Crypto and Blockchain 101 for California Estate Planners, Fiduciaries, and Fiduciary-Litigation Counsel," San Francisco Estate Planning Council, May 2019

Events

Ethica Ex Machina: AI Ethics for T&E Attorneys and their Clients
Webinar, 04.17.2024

Memberships

Current:

Secretary/Treasurer, LACBA Trusts and Estates Section Executive Committee (2023–present)
Attorney Coach and Tournament Coordinator, UCLA School of Law Mock Trial Program (2014–present)
Member, Association of Business Trial Lawyers (2014–present)

Former:

Member At Large, LACBA Trusts & Estates Section Executive Committee
Assistant Vice President of Special Events, LACBA Barristers/Young Attorneys Section Executive Committee (2020–21)
Secretary, LACBA Barristers/Young Attorneys Section Executive Committee (2018–19)
Member At Large, LACBA Barristers/Young Attorneys Section Executive Committee (2016–18)
Member At Large, LACBA LA Lawyer Magazine Editorial Committee (2016–18)

Practices

Litigation
Private Wealth and Fiduciary Litigation

Industries

Artificial Intelligence
Blockchain
Blockchain and Fintech
Fintech

Education

J.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2014
B.A., University of San Diego, 2010, *cum laude*

Admissions

California
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Central District of California

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California

Languages

Spanish