

Avni P. Patel

PARTNER

212 335 2041
apatel@wmhwlaw.com



EDUCATION

Boston University School of Law, J.D. (2010); executive editor of communication, *Review of Banking and Financial Law*

Northwestern University, B.S. (2007); with honors

ADMISSIONS

New York

Avni Patel is a formidable litigator and trial attorney, nationally recognized for safeguarding individuals and corporate clients through their most complex, sensitive, and high-profile legal challenges. With a commanding presence in federal, state, and local courts, Avni specializes in government and internal investigations, white-collar criminal defense, and intricate civil litigation including complex commercial and employment matters.

Avni approaches each matter with a strategic blend of incisive legal acumen, meticulous preparation, and profound empathy, understanding that a strong client relationship is paramount to a successful defense, particularly when stakes are highest. She is a highly sought-after and meticulous investigator, leading critical reviews for government entities and corporations alike. Clients facing white-collar allegations benefit from Avni's extensive trial and investigative experience. In civil matters, Avni applies her litigation skills to both prosecuting and defending cases. She strategically navigates settlement negotiations and litigation, always prioritizing client objectives and constraints.

Prior to joining WMHW, Avni honed her trial advocacy as an Assistant District Attorney in the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, trying over a dozen felony and misdemeanor cases to verdict, including five jury verdicts. As the appointed Bias Assistant District Attorney, she partnered with the city's Hate Crime Task Force to prosecute hate crimes in Bronx County.

Avni is also a co-founder of WMHW's Women's Initiative, a platform dedicated to fostering gender equality and empowering rising women leaders within the legal, political, entertainment, and local communities.

Experience

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Investigations and White-Collar Matters

- Served on the team appointed as Special Counsel by New Jersey Governor Philip Murphy to investigate the state's \$11 billion corporate tax incentive programs.
- Appointed as Special Counsel by a state Department of Health Services to investigate fraud allegations related to the state's nursing home licensure process.
- Represented Russian whistleblower Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov in investigations conducted by U.S. law enforcement, the World Anti-Doping Agency, and international sports federations, including facilitating his pivotal testimony before the Court of Arbitration of Sport.
- Served on the independent monitor team appointed by the Department of Justice to oversee General Motors' compliance with its Deferred Prosecution Agreement.
- Conducted internal investigation for national sports league related to allegations of player sports betting.
- Conducted internal investigation for an academic institution related to allegations of sexual harassment and negligence by former board members.
- Conducted internal investigation for tech company related to allegations of False Claims Act violations.
- Conducted internal investigation for entertainment and hospitality group related to allegations of negligence and security breaches in their venues.
- Represented white collar client in a highly contested and publicized four-defendant public corruption trial in the Southern District of New York, securing the only acquittal.
- Represented former employees of international shipping company as pool counsel in connection with FCPA investigations by the Department of Justice.
- Represented former executive in a sentencing in the Eastern District of New York for FATCA violation charges, securing a time-served sentence.
- Represented former public servant in a sentencing in the Eastern District of New York for public corruption charges, securing a probationary sentence.

Civil and Employment Matters

- Represent and defend boards, companies, and individuals in highly sensitive investigations and workplace misconduct matters.
- Successfully represented public communications company in commercial dispute in the Southern District of New York, resolving matter after winning summary judgment.
- Successfully represented individuals and companies against defamation claims, often on successful motions to dismiss.
- Represented former employees of public media companies in sexual harassment claims against the company and supervisors.
- Represented music and entertainment company in several commercial disputes.
- Represented several individuals in connection with negotiating separations with employers, including resolving potential discrimination claims.
- Drafted privacy and compliance policies for private and public companies.

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Recognitions

500 Leading Global Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers, *Lawdragon*(2026)

Future Star, *Benchmark Litigation* (2023 – 2026)

USA 40 & Under, *Benchmark Litigation* (2025)

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, Criminal Defense: White-Collar, *Best Lawyers* (2025)

500 X – Next Generation, *Lawdragon* (2024, 2025)

NYC 40 Under 40, *City & State New York* (2024)

Rising Star, *New York Law Journal* (2022)

Sports, Gaming & Entertainment Trailblazer, *The National Law Journal*(2021)

Shortlist, Women in Business Law Americas Rising Star in Litigation, *Euromoney Legal Media Group* (2021, 2022)

Activities

Professional Affiliations

- WMHW Women's Initiative
- South Asian Bar Association
- New York Women's Bar Association
- New York City Bar Association