

Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien (Retired)



In his commercial litigation practice, Ambassador O'Brien handles class action, entertainment, intellectual property, environmental, business torts, and complex contractual matters in state and federal courts. Ambassador O'Brien is regularly appointed as a mediator, arbitrator, and discovery referee. He also served as the Special Master in several of the largest cases in the Central District of California, including *MGA v. Mattel (Barbie v. Bratz)*, *United States v. Standard & Poors* and *In re Allergan Securities Litigation*.

Prior to co-founding a firm in 2016, Ambassador O'Brien was the California managing partner of a national AmLaw 200 firm for nearly a decade and, earlier in his career, was an associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP.

In addition to his litigation and ADR practices, Ambassador O'Brien is one of the country's leading advisors on national security issues. While serving as the National Security Advisor, Ambassador O'Brien brought a renewed focus to defense and industrial base issues, orchestrated the historic Abraham Accords in the Middle East, brokered economic normalization between Serbia and Kosovo and achieved increased cooperation with America's allies across the Indo-Pacific. Previously, Ambassador O'Brien was the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA) and held the personal rank of Ambassador. As SPEHA, he coordinated the government's diplomatic engagements on overseas hostage-related matters and successfully negotiated the release of more than 25 hostages and wrongfully detained Americans.

Ambassador O'Brien was the U.S. Alternate Representative to the 60th session of the U.N. General Assembly and a member of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee. Ambassador O'Brien was the founding co-chairman of the State Department's Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan, serving under Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Ambassador O'Brien was a senior legal officer at the U.N. Security Council in Geneva, Switzerland, and a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve JAG Corps. He was a member of the International Republican Institute delegations that observed the presidential election in the Republic of Georgia in October 2013 and the parliamentary election in Ukraine in October 2014. Ambassador O'Brien was also a Pacific Council on International Policy observer of the 9/11 Military Commission pretrial proceedings in Guantanamo Bay.



Ambassador O’Brien is the recipient of the National Security Medal, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the National Defense Service Medal, the Legion d’honneur (chevalier), the Republic of China (Taiwan) Order of the Brilliant Star with Special Grand Cordon, and the Kosovo Presidential Medal of Merits. The National Museum of the Surface Navy named Ambassador. O’Brien the recipient of the 2021 Freedom of the Seas Award. Following the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020, a tree was planted on behalf of the State of Israel at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Forest in the Hills of Jerusalem in Ambassador O’Brien’s honor. In 2019, Ambassador O’Brien received the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson Award for the Defense of America and Israel.

Ambassador O’Brien is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Pepperdine School of Public Policy and a Carnegie Distinguished Fellow at the Columbia University Institute of Global Politics. He also serves as the Chairman of the Global Taiwan Institute (GTI) Task Force on US-Taiwan Relations, and he is a co-chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Commission on Hostage Taking and Wrongful Detention. In 2017, the *Los Angeles Business Journal* named Ambassador O’Brien one of the 500 “Most Influential People” in Los Angeles.

Areas of Expertise:

- APPELLATE LITIGATION
- COMPLEX CIVIL LITIGATION
- CLASS ACTION
- COMMERCIAL LITIGATION
- ENVIRONMENTAL, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND BASIC MATERIALS LITIGATION
- INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LITIGATION
- PATENT LITIGATION
- INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION
- MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION
- PARTNERSHIP DISPUTES
- SECURITIES LITIGATION

Education

Ambassador O’Brien received his B.A. from University of California, Los Angeles and his J.D. from University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

Admission

- California State Bar
- U.S. Supreme Court



- U.S. Court of International Trade
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S.D.C. Central District of California
- U.S.D.C Eastern District of California
- U.S.D.C Northern District of California
- U.S.D.C Southern District of California