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LEADERS IN LAW

# A Sophisticated Trial Practice Boutique at Home in NYC

SIMON ■ LESSER PC

A tenacious boutique litigation firm can find success in New York City as a viable alternative to the big, high-priced firms.

Case in point is Simon ■ Lesser PC, which has carved an impressive track record of trial and appellate successes in complex business disputes, as well as product liability and tort litigation on both the defense and plaintiff side.

Established in 1997, this small but mighty firm has built a roster of clients that includes *Fortune* 500 companies; private equity and venture capital firms; national and regional businesses; insurance and financial service companies; religious, educational and nonprofit entities; business executives and entrepreneurs.

*“Mr. Lesser is amongst the best litigators I have worked with in my entire career. I can recommend him without reservation to anyone seeking superb advice both outside and inside the courtroom.”*

—Bruce L. Lev, Managing Director  
Loeb Partners Corporation

Principals Len Lesser and Renée Simon Lesser, both repeatedly named New York Metro Super Lawyers, joined forces after having worked in large New York City firms. They met in law school, married several years later, and knew they ultimately wanted to try cases as a team in a small-firm setting in the city they love.

Len’s specialty is business litigation. He also tries product liability, personal injury and property damage cases. Renée’s specialty is trying cases for churches, schools and nonprofits, with a focus on defending clergy misconduct claims. She has also earned a reputation in pursuing the rights of victims of sexual assault and other misconduct.



Their vision has produced a boutique that is agile and sophisticated. Examples of recent reported successes include a series of multijurisdiction litigations representing one of the last privately held independent investment banking enterprises on Wall Street. The client was sued in Colorado for over \$16 million by its joint venture partner, a notoriously litigious oil and gas tycoon. The firm countered in New York and, after several appeals, compelled arbitration before a panel that included two former New York judges. The firm ultimately obtained a multimillion-dollar judgment against the tycoon, and, in 2012, successfully tried an alter-ego and fraudulent conveyance case in Colorado against the tycoon’s businesses, resulting in another multimillion-dollar judgment, affirmed in 2014. Also in 2014, the firm obtained a reported defense jury verdict for a *Fortune* 500 client’s subsidiary in a traumatic brain injury case.

Since 2010 the firm has racked up five appellate reversals and ten appellate affirmances, many with costs, and three with attorneys’ fees awarded.

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The Simon ■ Lesser track record shows that a small firm can aggressively handle a wide range of trial and appellate work. “We are not hampered by the conventional big-firm litigation model and billing rates,” Len says. “We fight smarter, and can do more for substantially less.” As an example, Len cites a series of complex litigations for a *Fortune* 500 client stemming from a subsidiary’s divestiture of several businesses, where the buyer’s post-closing remorse led to claims of fraud based rescission and multimillion-dollar damage claims. The firm defeated the rescission claim in federal court, and compelled arbitration of the damage claims before a forensic auditor. The arbitrator ultimately rejected the buyer’s claims and gave the firm’s client a multimillion-dollar award. Len notes the buyer, an investment banking firm, was represented by several large NYC law firms, with burn rates substantially higher than Simon ■ Lesser’s. In the end, the firm was able to absorb and defeat the buyer’s wasteful litigation maneuvers and won the case before the trier-of-fact.

*“Since we were founded 15+ years ago, we have worked with many attorneys, some of whom have hourly rates that are double Len’s rates, and we now use Len on the majority of the litigation matters that our portfolio companies encounter because Len is the best general litigator we have worked with.”*

—Jesse Liu, Managing Director  
Arlington Capital Partners

The firm has developed a craft of remaining lean and nimble, with a network of specialists available to assist as needed. Renée adds: “That is another way the firm has been able to stay the course in complex and lengthy litigations against big NYC firms without overhead growing out of control.”

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