



Sydney Sgambato Johnson

Lawyer

WASHINGTON DC

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Sydney S. Johnson is an experienced white-collar litigator and trial lawyer who serves as counsel in high-stakes complex litigation as well as in government enforcement defense matters against the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission. In particular, Ms. Johnson has extensive experience representing clients in the cryptocurrency industry, including individuals being investigated by the DOJ and CFTC on allegations of fraud, market manipulation, and money laundering, and proprietary trading firms subject to SEC enforcement actions.

In addition to her significant trial experience, Ms. Johnson has conducted numerous internal investigations on behalf of major financial institutions and their boards of directors.

Ms. Johnson began her practice at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. Prior to that, she clerked for the Honorable Robert B. Kugler of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey.

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia

Education

- American University Washington College of Law, JD, *summa cum laude* (*American University Law Review*, Executive Editor)
- Salisbury University, BA

Clerkships

- Honorable Robert B. Kugler, U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey (2015-2016)

Accolades

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® (2024 - 2025) - Criminal Defense: White-Collar

Select Engagements

KOBRE & KIM

- Trial counsel for a John Pacilio, U.S.-based options trader in defending against criminal charges brought by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois for substantive counts of wire fraud, commodities fraud and spoofing in the precious metals futures market traded on Commodity Exchange Inc. (COMEX). As a result of motion practice led by Kobre & Kim, the Court dismissed the DOJ's spoofing scheme theory against Mr. Pacilio, resulting in a first-of-its-kind challenge to the DOJ's spoofing scheme charge.
- Representation of employees of major blockchain software development company in government investigation related to a drop in the value of the company's cryptocurrency.
- Representation of a proprietary crypto trading firm in an investigation by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.
- Representation of a proprietary trading firm in responding to a former competitor's claims that it had engaged in securities fraud and market manipulation.
- Representation of a former executive of a fintech startup in an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) over alleged misrepresentations in the company's acquisition by a major U.S. financial institution.
- Representation of Major League Baseball in appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to confirm award of monetary sanctions against adversary. When the litigant failed to pay those sanctions, the team successfully moved to hold the litigant in contempt of court and to impose sanctions on litigant's counsel.

Professional & Community Involvement

- Member, Women's White Collar Defense Association

Publications & Presentations

- Co-Author, "The SEC's Retreat From Crypto Enforcement May Invite More Private Lawsuits" (*CoinDesk*, March 2025)
- Co-author, "Defense Considerations for Remote Interview Requests" (*Law360*, June 2020)
- Co-author, "The Responsible Corporate Officer Doctrine: Protections Are Needed Despite DOJ's Cautious Approach" (*Food and Drug Law Institute*, November 2019)