



Christopher J. Lee

Associate

✉ clee@birdmarella.com

☎ 310.201.2100

Practices:

Securities Fraud and Insider Trading, Internal Investigations, Securities Litigation, Complex Business Litigation, Class Actions

Sought out by clients from both the United States and his native South Korea, Christopher Jumin Lee is a trial lawyer who specializes in courtroom advocacy for complex international disputes.

Chris was named a Southern California Rising Star by *Super Lawyers Magazine* in both 2022 and 2023. Chris is one of exceedingly few South Korean nationals with the courtroom experience and oral advocacy skills necessary to litigate high-stakes disputes in the U.S. Due to his unique background, Chris offers the best of both worlds to Korean clients: a native Korean-speaker deeply familiar with Korean business culture, who is also a powerhouse litigator in his own right.

Chris also specializes in cross-border disputes connected to the cryptocurrency industry. Chris has brought multiple lawsuits on behalf of clients looking to recover cryptocurrency assets lost to fraudulent ICOs, investment schemes, rug-pull schemes, and security exploits. Chris has also represented the founder of a major cryptocurrency firm in U.S. regulatory proceedings.

Chris's clients are primarily Fortune 500 companies and major conglomerates in Asia and South America – from industries including alcoholic beverages, apparel, defense, sports, entertainment, healthcare, and finance. Some recent representations include Samsung Electronics, Kakao Entertainment, NHN, MBC, TV Chosun, T.J. Media, Keum Young, Coway, and Huobi.

Chris has an active pro bono practice and is an outspoken advocate for a variety of causes, both in the U.S. and in his native Korea. Notable pro bono representations include securing release on bail for a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and human rights activist facing extradition to Spain in connection with an alleged attempt to rescue defectors from the North Korean embassy in Madrid, and obtaining emergency relief for a class of incarcerated persons in the midst of a massive COVID-19 outbreak in California's federal prisons. In 2021, Chris received the ACLU's Humanitarian Award. Chris has also published a widely-read book on anti-discrimination legislation in South Korea, which has been cited by the author of the comprehensive anti-discrimination bill pending in South Korea's National Assembly.

Before practicing the law, Chris was an intelligence officer in the Republic of Korea Air Force, and served on the staff at the Ministry of National Defense, where he received a commendation for meritorious service. Chris earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School and was a judicial intern for the Hon. James E. Boasberg in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Prior to joining Bird Marella, Chris was an associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP.

Education & Admissions

- Harvard Law School, J.D., cum laude, 2016
 - Harvard University, B.A., cum laude, 2009
-

- California, 2018
- New York, 2018

Notable Matters

Won copyright-infringement lawsuit in favor of a joint defense group comprised of some of South Korea's largest media companies – Kakao Entertainment, Genie Music, NHN Bugs, TJ Media, Keum Young, MBC, and TV Chosun – concerning the works of South Korean composer Jae-Ho Lee. Successfully prevailed on successive motions to dismiss, securing a dismissal with prejudice.

Achieved a significant and favorable outcome on behalf of apparel company owner who faced criminal charges of underpayment of tax and duty by \$35 million and money laundering over \$80 million. Convinced Judge to decrease sentence to twelve months and one day in custody, rather than the five years recommended by the Sentencing Guidelines and demanded by the government.

Obtained preliminary injunction in a pro bono class action lawsuit against federal prison over the inefficient measures taken by prison officials to prevent the spread of COVID-19, in violation of the Eighth Amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. Successfully convinced the court to require prison officials to consider all medically vulnerable, non-violent prisoners and those over the age of 50 for home confinement.

Associations

- Member, Korean American Bar Association

