

***SUPER LAWYERS* RECOGNIZES 25 O'NEIL CANNON ATTORNEYS**

Each year, *Super Lawyers* surveys the State of Wisconsin's 15,000 attorneys and judges, seeking the State's top attorneys. Recently, *Super Lawyers* published its lists for 2022, which include the Top 10 Attorneys in Wisconsin, Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin, Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee, Super Lawyers (consisting of the top 5% of attorneys in Wisconsin), and Rising Stars (consisting of attorneys who are 40 years old or younger or who have been in practice for 10 years or less).

Twenty-five of our attorneys were recognized by *Super Lawyers*, which has referred to the firm as "the Milwaukee mid-sized powerhouse." Those attorneys are the following:

- Nicholas G. Chmurski:
 - Rising Stars
- Douglas P. Dehler:
 - Super Lawyer
- James G. DeJong:
 - Super Lawyer
- Seth E. Dizard:
 - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
 - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
 - Super Lawyer
- Peter J. Faust:
 - Super Lawyer
- John G. Gehringer:
 - Super Lawyer
- Joseph E. Gumina:
 - Super Lawyer
- Jessica K. Haskell:
 - Rising Stars
- Grant C. Killoran:
 - Super Lawyer
- Dean P. Laing:
 - Top 10 Attorneys in Wisconsin
 - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
 - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
 - Super Lawyer

- Trevor C. Lippman:
 - Rising Stars
- Gregory W. Lyons:
 - Super Lawyer
- Patrick G. McBride:
 - Super Lawyer
- Britany E. Morrison:
 - Rising Stars
- Joseph D. Newbold:
 - Super Lawyer
- Erica N. Reib:
 - Rising Stars
- Chad J. Richter:
 - Super Lawyer
- John R. Schreiber:
 - Super Lawyer
- Jason R. Scoby:
 - Super Lawyer
- Steven J. Slawinski:
 - Super Lawyer
- Kelly M. Spott:
 - Rising Stars
- Christa D. Wittenberg:
 - Rising Stars

Super Lawyers is a national rating service that rates attorneys in all 50 states. The selection process utilized by *Super Lawyers* is multi-phased and includes independent research, peer nominations, and peer evaluations. One court recently had this to say about *Super Lawyers*:

“[T]he selection procedures employed by [*Super Lawyers*] are very sophisticated, comprehensive and complex. It is abundantly clear . . . that [*Super Lawyers* does] not permit a lawyer to buy one’s way onto the list, nor is there any requirement for the purchase of any product for inclusion in the lists or any quid pro quo of any kind or nature associated with the evaluation and listing of an attorney or in the subsequent advertising of one’s inclusion in the lists.”

We are proud to be one of the few firms in Wisconsin that had more than 50% of its attorneys receive recognition by *Super Lawyers*.

19 OCHDL LAWYERS SELECTED AS 2023 BEST LAWYERS®; ANOTHER 4 NAMED BEST LAWYERS: ONES TO WATCH

We are pleased to announce 19 of our lawyers have been included in the 2023 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, and an additional four have been selected as 2023 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*.

The following are the O'Neil, Cannon, Hollman, DeJong and Laing lawyers named to the 2023 lists:

Best Lawyers in America

- Douglas P. Dehler - Litigation - Insurance
- James G. DeJong - Corporate Law, Mergers and Acquisitions Law, and Securities / Capital Markets Law
- Seth E. Dizard - Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation - Bankruptcy
- Peter J. Faust - Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law
- John G. Gehringer - Commercial Litigation, Construction Law, Corporate Law, and Real Estate Law
- Joseph E. Gumina - Employment Law - Management and Litigation - Labor and Employment
- Dennis W. Hollman - Corporate Law and Trusts and Estates
- Grant C. Killoran - Commercial Litigation and Litigation - Health Care
- JB Koenings - Corporate Law
- Dean P. Laing - Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs, and Product Liability Litigation - Defendants
- Gregory W. Lyons - Commercial Litigation and Litigation - Insurance
- Patrick G. McBride - Commercial Litigation
- Joseph D. Newbold - Commercial Litigation
- Chad J. Richter - Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships) and Corporate Law

- John R. Schreiber – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Jason R. Scoby – Corporate Law
- Steven J. Slawinski – Construction Law

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch

- Trevor C. Lippman – Litigation – Trusts and Estates
- Erica N. Reib – Labor and Employment Law – Management and Litigation – Labor and Employment
- Kelly M. Spott – Trusts and Estates
- Christa D. Wittenberg – Commercial Litigation

About Best Lawyers

Best Lawyers has published their list for over three decades, earning the respect of the profession, the media, and the public as the most reliable, unbiased source of legal referrals.

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch recognizes associates and other lawyers who are earlier in their careers for their outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States.

Lawyers on *The Best Lawyers in America* and *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* lists are divided by geographic region and practice areas. They are reviewed by their peers on the basis of professional expertise, and they undergo an authentication process to make sure they are in current practice and in good standing.

GREG LYONS IS HONORED AS ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR BY THE TOP 100 REGISTRY

Attorney [Greg Lyons](#) is being honored as 2022 Attorney of the Year in the State of Wisconsin and is being featured by the Top 100 Registry in its Top 100 Lawyers magazine. The award distinguishes the highest level of competence and dedication in the field of law according to the Top 100 Registry. The Attorney of the Year is determined by the Top 100 Registry's board of esteemed legal advocates. This is the second "Lawyer of the Year" award recently for Greg. He was also recognized by Best Lawyers® in the practice area of Litigation-Insurance for 2022. Both recognitions are significant, as only one lawyer is honored in his or her location and practice area.

“I am honored to be chosen by my colleagues and experts in the legal field for these awards,” Greg said. “My goal has always been to obtain the best results for my clients in a cost efficient manner.”

Greg represents clients in the prosecution and defense of complex commercial litigation. His extensive experience in commercial litigation has prepared him to successfully represent large corporations as well as small businesses and individuals. He also devotes a large portion of his practice to individuals in inheritance litigation. Greg has successfully litigated many will contests and trust disputes throughout Wisconsin. He has accomplished tremendous results on behalf of trustees, personal representatives, and power of attorneys in large complicated disputes. Greg has appeared in state and federal courts in numerous jurisdictions. He is a member of the Wisconsin state and federal courts, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court. Greg also serves as the chairperson of the firm’s Ethics Committee.

FOUR OCHDL ATTORNEYS NAMED 2022 “LAWYER OF THE YEAR” IN THE MILWAUKEE AREA BY BEST LAWYERS®

Attorneys Seth Dizard (Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization), Pete Faust (Mergers and Acquisitions), Greg Lyons (Litigation - Insurance), and Steve Slawinski (Construction) have been named by Best Lawyers® as the 2022 “Lawyer of the Year” in Milwaukee for their area of practice.

Only one lawyer in each practice area and designated metropolitan area is honored as the “Lawyer of the Year.” Lawyers are selected based on the assessments of other leading lawyers in the same category.

This designation reflects the high level of respect lawyers have earned for their abilities, professionalism, and integrity.

19 OCHDL LAWYERS SELECTED AS 2022 BEST

LAWYERS®; ANOTHER 5 NAMED BEST LAWYERS: ONES TO WATCH

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ATTORNEY GREG LYONS NAMED FELLOW WITH THE AMERICAN BAR FOUNDATION

Attorney [Greg Lyons](#) was recently named a Fellow with the American Bar Foundation, a membership that is limited to one-third of one percent of the lawyers in America.

The Fellows of the American Bar Foundation is a global honorary society of attorneys, judges, law faculty, and legal scholars whose public and private careers have demonstrated outstanding dedication to the highest principles of the legal profession and the welfare of their communities. Established in 1955, the Fellows support the research of the American Bar Foundation and currently has a membership totaling over 14,000 individuals across the globe. Membership in the Fellows is limited to one percent of lawyers licensed to practice in each jurisdiction.

The American Bar Foundation is among the world's leading research institutes for the

empirical and interdisciplinary study of law. An independent, nonprofit organization for more than 65 years, it seeks to advance the understanding and improvement of law through research projects on the most pressing issues facing the legal system in the United States and around the world today. It seeks to expand knowledge and advance justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. Its research findings are published in a wide range of forums, including leading academic journals, law reviews, and academic and commercial presses.

For more information on the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation and the American Bar Foundation, [click here](#).

WANT TO CHALLENGE A WILL? HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

If you are upset or disagree with the provisions of a will, you may be wondering if you should challenge it. In this article, we discuss a few grounds for challenging a will and what may happen if your challenge is successful.

A will may be challenged for several reasons. However, being upset or disagreeing with the provisions of a will is not enough. Instead, here are a few grounds for challenging a will:

- **Lack of Formalities:** The will wasn't executed pursuant to the formalities required under Wisconsin law. For example, the will was not signed by the testator (the person making the will) or witnessed by two non-relative and disinterested witnesses.
- **Lack of Capacity:** The testator lacked the requisite level of mental capacity to execute the will. For example, the testator suffered from dementia or a mental illness that prevented the testator from fully understanding his or her assets and the effect of the document.
- **Undue Influence:** The testator was unduly influenced by a relative, friend, care giver, or other third party to execute the will. Undue influence includes fraud, force, and coercion. To read more about undue influence, [click here](#).

Upon a successful challenge, the will may be reformed or set aside completely depending on the circumstances.

Sometimes a will may contain a "no contest" provision that prescribes a penalty against an interested person for contesting the will. In these circumstances, a court may find that the no contest provision is unenforceable if the court determines that the interested person had probable cause for instituting the proceedings. See Wis. Stat. § 854.19.

The attorneys in the inheritance litigation team at O'Neil Cannon have extensive experience with will contests and other disputes relating to inheritance litigation. Because the rules for will contests are complex, we encourage you to reach out to the authors of this article or any other attorney in our inheritance litigation team with any questions or concerns you may have related to a will contest.

21 FIRM ATTORNEYS RECOGNIZED BY SUPER LAWYERS

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- John R. Schreiber:
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- Jason R. Scoby:
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- Steven J. Slawinski:
 - Super Lawyer
- JB Koenings:
 - Rising Stars
- Trevor C. Lippman:
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- Erica N. Reib:
 - Rising Stars
- Christa D. Wittenberg:
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20 OCHDL LAWYERS SELECTED AS 2021 BEST LAWYERS®; ANOTHER 5 NAMED BEST LAWYERS: ONES TO WATCH

We are pleased to announce 20 of our lawyers have been included in the 2021 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, and an additional five have been selected as 2021 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*.

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- JB Koenings - Corporate Law
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- Gregory W. Lyons - Commercial Litigation and Litigation - Insurance
- Patrick G. McBride - Commercial Litigation
- Thomas A. Merkle - Family Law
- Joseph D. Newbold - Commercial Litigation
- Chad J. Richter - Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships) and

Corporate Law

- John R. Schreiber – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Jason R. Scoby – Corporate Law
- Steven J. Slawinski – Construction Law

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch

- Kelly M. Spott – Trusts and Estates
- Trevor C. Lippman – Litigation – Trusts and Estates
- Erica N. Reib – Labor and Employment Law – Management and Litigation – Labor and Employment
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WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BUSINESS CAN'T PERFORM ITS CONTRACT DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS?

Many businesses are experiencing interruptions in their operations due to the coronavirus outbreak. These interruptions can be caused by business closures, quarantines, and restrictions on travel and large gatherings. In response to these interruptions, businesses may find themselves unable to perform their contractual obligations or have a vendor or customer that is no longer fulfilling its contractual obligations. Either way, it is important to

determine whether nonperformance is excusable given the global pandemic.

Businesses concerned about meeting their contractual obligations due to the coronavirus should review their contracts to determine their options. For instance, many contracts contain a *force majeure* or “Act of God” clause, which may excuse a party’s nonperformance when extraordinary events outside of the party’s control prevent a party from fulfilling its contractual obligations. Each situation is unique and such a clause may apply for some businesses and not for others. It is important to note that the occurrence of an extraordinary event alone does not excuse performance. Rather, a party seeking to invoke a *force majeure* clause must also show its mitigation efforts and that the event made performance truly impossible. Because the coronavirus pandemic is an uncontrollable and extraordinary event that may prevent a party from performing under a contract, the coronavirus could be considered a *force majeure* event.

A party seeking to excuse its nonperformance based on the coronavirus should review the relevant contract’s *force majeure* clause. After all, whether an event qualifies as a *force majeure* event depends on the specific language included in the *force majeure* clause itself. Many contracts will specifically define what constitutes a *force majeure* event. If the parties have defined a *force majeure* event as any event outside the parties’ control, then courts may be more inclined to find that the clause encompasses the coronavirus pandemic. Further, courts may apply a *force majeure* clause that specifically lists “acts of government,” “pandemics,” or “quarantines.”

It is important to note that a drop in a customer base alone may not result in the application of a *force majeure* clause. For example, in 2018, one federal district court concluded an egg buyer was not relieved of its obligation to purchase eggs because of a drop in demand under Iowa law, but acknowledged a drop in supply due to an outbreak of avian flu might have constituted a *force majeure* event. *Rexing Quality Eggs v. Rembrandt Enterprises, Inc.*, 360 F. Supp. 3d 817 (S.D. Ind. 2018).

To reach this conclusion, the court applied the Restatement on Contracts, which is used by Wisconsin courts. Specifically, the court looked to the following guiding principal:

Where, after a contract is made, a party’s performance is made impracticable without his fault by the occurrence of an event the non-occurrence of which was a basic assumption on which the contract was made, his duty to render that performance is discharged, unless the language or the circumstances indicate the contrary.

Id. at 841 (quoting Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 261 (1979)). The court held that “a change in purchaser demand—even a substantial change—is a foreseeable part of doing business.” *Id.*

Given the size and changing impact of the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, it is hard to predict how courts will apply this fact-specific analysis to the present situation. Ultimately, whether a viral outbreak like the coronavirus qualifies as a *force majeure* event will depend on how the contract is drafted and the particular facts of the situation. A party seeking to invoke a *force majeure* clause to excuse its nonperformance must be prepared to show its mitigation efforts. Therefore, documenting efforts to overcome the impacts of the coronavirus is key.

Contracts with *force majeure* clauses usually provide what remedies are available to the parties when the clause is invoked. Often, contracts allow for either party to terminate the agreement when one party seeks to invoke the *force majeure* clause. However, contracts may instead permit a party to delay performance until the *force majeure* event is resolved.

Common law remedies may also be available to parties whose contracts lack a *force majeure* clause. Specifically, parties seeking to excuse nonperformance may find relief under the doctrines of impossibility, impracticability, and frustration of purpose. However, whether and under what circumstances these doctrines apply depends on the applicable law in the relevant jurisdiction and the specific facts and circumstances causing the nonperformance.

Overall, businesses impacted by the coronavirus should review their contracts to assess what rights and remedies are available to them in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The attorneys at O'Neil Cannon have experience in contract disputes and would be happy to discuss your options with you.