

MATTHEW R. BARNES

ASSOCIATE

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MATTHEW R. BARNES is an associate in the Litigation Practice Group and centers his practice on complex commercial and civil litigation. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Barnes worked as a commercial litigator for a leading international law firm.

Mr. Barnes has been a leader in advocating for online businesses, direct-to-consumer brands, and Ecommerce retailers, and he regularly represents companies throughout the country who face lawsuits about digital accessibility under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In *Murphy v. Spongelle LLC*, 716 F. Supp. 3d 358 (W.D. Pa. 2024), he became the first attorney to successfully argue in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania that online-only businesses cannot be sued for website accessibility under Title III of the ADA in federal courts located within the Third Circuit, encompassing Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Western District Court acknowledged the significance of the case, designating the case as precedential and noting that the argument was “one of those occasions when oral argument is actually very helpful to the Court.”

Beyond Ecommerce, Mr. Barnes’ practice covers a variety of commercial and civil litigation. His record includes the securing of a multimillion-dollar jury verdict and the securing of multimillion-dollar settlements for plaintiff clients. An experienced oral advocate, he has successfully obtained dismissals of his defendant clients from state and federal lawsuits.

Mr. Barnes’ commitment to effective advocacy is rooted in his legal training. A graduate of Georgetown University Law Center, Mr. Barnes was a member of the Georgetown Law Criminal Justice Clinic, where he represented clients in Washington D.C. Superior Court. For his work in the clinic, he received Georgetown’s Alan J. Goldstein Award, an honor given to the clinic member who best demonstrates “the use of intelligence, creativity, and resourcefulness in defending clients; the pursuit of excellence as a lawyer; and the ability to lead and inspire others to maximize their potential as lawyers.” Mr. Barnes was also a member of Georgetown’s Moot Court team and served as a judicial intern for Chief Justice Debra Todd of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Mr. Barnes is active in the Greater Pittsburgh community. He has been a featured speaker at local community organizations and serves on the board of the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, an organization devoted to the training of future civic and community leaders.

Representative Matters

Argued the first successful motion to dismiss an ADA Title III digital accessibility case brought against a direct-to-consumer Ecommerce company in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. The case changed the state of the law for online companies in the Western District, which had become a popular federal forum for website and digital accessibility litigation. The Court's opinion held that an online-only company – one that does not operate a brick and mortar store – is not subject to suit under Title III of the ADA.

Favorably resolved ADA Title III digital accessibility putative class action brought against a Midwest-based company in federal court in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Obtained dismissal of lawsuit brought against app that offers neutral online platform for dog owners and service providers to connect.

Successfully argued motion for summary judgment that resulted in dismissal of negligence-based legal malpractice claims against law firm.

Obtained dismissal of one of the world's largest ski resort owners and operators in case brought by plaintiff alleging injuries sustained at ski resort.

Member of trial team that secured a \$4.7 million jury verdict on behalf of a personal injury plaintiff, and successfully argued motion for delay damages, which molded the verdict to more than \$5.3 million.

Bar Admissions

Pennsylvania

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Pennsylvania

U.S. District Court - Middle District of Pennsylvania

U.S. District Court - Western District of Pennsylvania