MASLONLLP



JULIAN C. ZEBOT

Partner
Member of Firm Board of Directors
Chair of the Trust & Estate Litigation Group

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OVERVIEW

Julian Zebot focuses his legal practice on probate, fiduciary, and trust litigation as well as business and commercial litigation, and he chairs Maslon's Trust & Estate Litigation Group. He has counseled and represented individual and business clients in both federal and state courts as well as arbitration proceedings, and he has handled matters for clients at all stages of the litigation process, including mediation, trials, and appeals.

Julian's probate, fiduciary, and trust litigation practice has involved many different types of contested estate, trust, probate, and elder law matters, including will/trust contests (including claims of undue influence and diminished capacity), construction/interpretation disputes, accounting actions, breach of fiduciary duty claims, fiduciary removal actions, trust instruction proceedings, financial elder abuse claims, and creditor claims against estates. He has also developed a niche practice representing and counseling parties involved in complicated multijurisdictional trust litigation, often involving parallel lawsuits in different states, and has familiarity with associated trust situs, venue, and jurisdictional issues. Within his practice, Julian has represented both institutions and individuals in a variety of contexts, including corporate and individual trustees, personal representatives, attorneys-in-fact, beneficiaries, heirs, and creditors.

With respect to his business and commercial litigation practice, Julian has broad experience litigating and resolving claims of unfair business practices and competition, including breach of contract claims, business torts, breach of restrictive covenant claims, shareholder/ownership disputes ("business divorces"), litigation under the Minnesota Termination of Sales Representatives Act (MTSRA), Lanham Act claims, class actions, and other complex commercial litigation, including litigation involving financial service businesses, manufacturers, companies with sales forces, and family and other closely held companies.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Litigation
- Appeals
- Business Litigation
- Tort & Product Liability
- Trust & Estate Litigation

BAR ADMISSIONS

Minnesota

South Dakota

U.S. District Court
- Minnesota, 2003

U.S. Court of Appeals
- Eighth Circuit, 2013
- Fifth Circuit, 2021

EDUCATION

University of Minnesota Law School
J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2003
Honors: Order of the Coif, Dean's List

Grinnell College
B.A., *with honors*, 2000
History and Psychology
Honors: Dean's List, Phi Beta Kappa

Julian is a fellow in The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), and when not litigating and resolving disputes, he is a frequent author and speaker on topics relating to probate, fiduciary, and trust litigation, fiduciary risk management, and professional ethics. Among other board and bar committee responsibilities, he is chair of The Fund for Legal Aid Society board of directors and of the Litigation and Professional Responsibility Group of the ABA's Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section. Julian is ranked in *Chambers High Net Worth Guide* (2025-2026), has been recognized on the Minnesota Super Lawyers® list each year since 2018, and was listed on the Super Lawyers/Minnesota Rising Stars list from 2010 to 2017.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

- Currently represents a trustee in multi-state trust contest litigation that resulted in a six-day bench trial.
- Represented the trustees of a charitable trust in will and trust contest proceedings involving a $50 million estate and obtained a favorable judgment following a three-week bench trial.
- Represented the former special administrator of the estate of an iconic musician and successfully secured the client's full and complete discharge from liability.
- Represented majority ownership group of a commercial real estate brokerage firm in shareholder oppression litigation brought by minority shareholder and successfully negotiated a resolution to the litigation.
- Represented heirs and beneficiaries in trust contest proceeding and successfully negotiated a stipulation staying litigation in favor of a parallel lawsuit pending in a different jurisdiction.
- Represented individual client in litigation surrounding the proceeds of the client's father's estate and obtained a jury verdict in favor of the client.
- Represented a bank/corporate trustee in litigation involving multimillion-dollar claims relating to the investment of the trust's portfolio and successfully obtained the client's full and complete discharge from liability.
- Represented a bank/corporate trustee in litigation relating to a family trust's plan of distribution and obtained court approval of the plan by way of a negotiated settlement.
- Represented income beneficiaries in litigation relating to charitable remainder unitrusts and helped to obtain a favorable order deferring decision on the merits to pending litigation in a different jurisdiction.
- Represented appellants on appeal and obtained reversal of district court’s fee award in will contest litigation.
- Represented an individual partner in a lawsuit regarding a failed real estate development and helped to obtain voluntary dismissal of claims against the client.
- Represented, as part of a team of attorneys, a Fortune 500 manufacturer in a putative environmental liability/mass tort class action lawsuit and helped to obtain a defense jury verdict.
- Represented, as part of a team of attorneys, an officer and director of a wind energy development company in litigation regarding acquisition of the company and assisted in obtaining a favorable resolution for the client.
- Represented individual guarantors in litigation regarding defaulted loan obligation and helped to obtain a favorable resolution for the clients.
- Represented watch manufacturer in litigation regarding termination of its sales representative firm and obtained a favorable resolution for the client.
- Represented, as part of a team of attorneys, an LLC pursuing breach of fiduciary duty and negligence claims on behalf of investors in a futures hedge fund against the fund's former manager and helped to obtain a favorable resolution for the client.
- Represented a bank in litigation involving a mortgage repurchase agreement and helped to negotiate dismissal of claims against the client.
- Represented, as part of a team of attorneys, a bank in securities lending litigation and served as appellate counsel during trial.
- Represented a publicly traded manufacturer in arbitration stemming from its former sales representative firm's termination of the contract between the parties and helped to negotiate a favorable resolution.
- Represented a medical device manufacturer and its sales representative in unfair competition litigation involving a competitor.

- Represented a manufacturer in a natural resources damages lawsuit brought by the State of Minnesota.
- Represented a multinational marketing company in a breach of contract and tortious interference with contract dispute with a former vendor and a former employee; case settled after successful negotiation.
- Represented the officers and directors of an online brokerage service in a putative securities class action lawsuit and won dismissal of all the claims.
- Represented, as part of a team of attorneys, a non-controlling shareholder in a closely held medical device company in squeeze-out litigation and helped to obtain a favorable resolution for the client.

Representative Decisions:

- *In re Estate of Zych*, No. A19-1596, 2020 WL 5507813 (Minn. Ct. App. Sept. 14, 2020).
- *Thulin v. Thulin*, 2018 WL 256735 (Minn. Ct. App. Jan. 2, 2018).
- *Larkin v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 2014 Minn. App. Unpub. LEXIS 1077 (Minn. Ct. App. Oct. 6, 2014).
- *Larkin v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 2012 Minn. App. Unpub. LEXIS 927 (Minn. Ct. App. Sept. 17, 2012).
- *Paulson et al. v. 3M Company*, C2-04-6309 (Washington County District Court, Minnesota). Defeated motion seeking class certification of a 67,000 member putative class claiming chemical exposure via drinking water contamination (2007) and obtained a defense verdict on the merits after a seven-week jury trial (2009).
- *Cargill, Inc. v. JWH Special Circumstance LLC*, 959 A.2d 1096 (Del. Ch. 2008).
- *Lietz v. Northern States Power Co.*, 718 N.W.2d 865 (Minn. 2006).
- *Vohs v. Miller, et. al.*, 2004 WL 1490177 (D. Minn. July 1, 2004).

Pro Bono:

- *Ex parte Armstrong* (Tex. Crim. App. 2017). Member of team of Maslon lawyers serving as pro bono counsel for Douglas Tyrone Armstrong, a Texas death row inmate convicted of capital murder in 2006. The team successfully secured the vacation of Armstrong's death sentence by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY

- Maslon LLP: Board of Directors 2023-Present; Pro Bono Committee, Chair 2014-2022; General Counsel 2015-Present
- American Bar Association: Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section, Trust and Estate Litigation and Professional Responsibility Group, Chair 2025-Present, Vice Chair 2023-2025; Ethics and Malpractice Committee, Co-Chair 2022-2023, Vice Chair 2017-2021; Probate and Fiduciary Litigation Committee, Vice Chair 2017-2021
- American College of Trust and Estate Counsel: Fellow 2020-Present; Fiduciary Litigation Committee, Member 2023-Present; Professional Responsibility Committee, Member 2023-Present; Fiduciary Administration Task Force, Member 2023
- The Fund for Legal Aid Society: Board of Directors; Executive Committee, Chair 2024-Present; Vice Chair 2023-2024; Treasurer 2022-2023; Individual Giving Committee, Co-Chair 2022-Present; Law Day Dinner Committee, Chair 2020-2024; Associates' Campaign, past Campaign Co-Chair
- Volunteer Lawyers Network: Board of Directors 2013-Present; President and Board Chair 2017-2018; Vice President/Treasurer 2016-2017; Secretary 2015-2016; Executive Committee 2015-Present; Benefactors Board 2014-Present
- Arrowhead Estate Planning Council: Member 2026-Present
- Boreal Waters Community Foundation: Formerly Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. Board of Directors 2024-Present; Investments Committee, Member 2024-Present
- National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys–Minnesota Chapter: President and Co-Chair of Litigation Committee 2023; President-Elect 2022; Vice President 2021; Board of Directors 2018
- Minnesota Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board: 2020-2023
- Federal Bar Association – Minnesota Chapter

- Minnesota State Bar Association: Probate & Trust Law Section; Probate & Trust Litigation Committee; Access to Justice Committee, Co-Chair 2015-2018; Court Rules and Administration Committee; Pro Bono Council
- Hennepin County Bar Association: Board of Directors 2016-2017; Pro Bono Awards Committee 2015
- Civil Law Phone Services Clinic: Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer 2020-Present
- Legal Access Point Clinic: Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer 2005-2020
- Fourth Judicial District Ethics Committee: 2008-2014; 2015-January 2020
- ABA Death Penalty Representation Project: Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer
- Maslon UPLIFT: Legal Institute for Teens: Board Member; Volunteer Coach

SELECTED HONORS

- **Notable Practitioner in Minnesota for Private Wealth Law**, *Chambers High Net Worth (HNW)*, 2025-2026
- **Legal 250**, Family Law & Estate Attorneys, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2026
- **Attorney of the Year**, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2018
- **Recognized on Minnesota Super Lawyers® list**, 2018-2026 *(Minnesota Super Lawyers® is a designation given to only 5% of Minnesota attorneys each year, based on a selection process that includes the recommendation of peers in the legal profession.)*
- **Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*®**, 2021-2027, Lawyer of the Year for Trusts and Estates Litigation in Minneapolis, 2026
- **Recognized on Minnesota Rising Stars list as part of the Super Lawyers® selection process**, 2008, 2010-2017 (*Minnesota Rising Stars is a designation given to only 2.5% of Minnesota attorneys each year, based on a selection process that includes the recommendation of peers in the legal profession*.)
- **President's Award**, in recognition of the work performed as a member of the Access to Justice Committee, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2019
- **Light of Justice Award**, Texas Defender Service, 2018
- **Pro Bono All Star**, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2020 (*Pro Bono All Star is a designation that recognizes MSBA members who have been recognized as North Star Lawyers for seven or more years*.)
- **North Star Lawyer**, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2013-2021 (*North Star Lawyer is a designation that recognizes members who provide 50 hours or more of pro bono legal services in a calendar year.*)
- **Alumni Award**, honoring those who embody the college's mission of lifetime learning and service, Grinnell College, 2022
- **Recognized as a Top Lawyer**, *Minnesota Monthly*, 2022, 2024-2026 (The research for the Top Lawyers list, created by Professional Research Services, is based on an online peer-review survey sent to all attorneys in Minnesota.)
- **Pro Bono Award**, for commitment to pro bono service, Maslon LLP, 2014

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- "Emerging Ethical Issues & Hot Topics," 10th Annual Fall Forum, South Dakota Trust Association, 2026
- “Finding Resolution When at Loggerheads: Family Meetings, Mediation, and Litigation,” panelist, Third Annual Forum on Wealth Management and Litigation, Maslon LLP, 2026
- Covering Your Assets: Strategies for Future-Proof Fiduciary Decision-Making – Spring 2026
- "Predatory Marriages, Parts I and II," Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section National CLE Conference, American Bar Association, 2026
- "Invasion of the Granny Snatchers: Interstate Elder Moves, Contested Guardianships, and Predatory Misbehavior," The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC) Annual Meeting, 2026
- "Emerging Ethical Issues and Hot Topics," 2025 Delaware Trust Conference, Delaware Bankers Association and Delaware Financial Education Alliance, 2025
- Location, Location, Location: Strategies for Administering and Litigating Trusts Across State Lines

- "Predatory Marriages and Vulnerable Adults," panelist, American Bar Association Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section, 2025
- "Illicit Affairs: 21st Century Ethical Issues," presenter, Trusts & Estates Law Section 2025 Spring Meeting, New York State Bar Association, 2025
- "A Primer on the Types of Trust and Estate Disputes," co-presenter, Trust & Estate Litigation in Minnesota, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- "Duty to Inform and Report: Best Practices for Corporate Fiduciaries," panelist, Maslon LLP, 2024
- "Navigating the Ethics of Representing Non-English-Speaking Clients in Pro Bono Work," Maslon LLP, 2024
- Maslon's Inaugural Forum on Wealth Management and Litigation
- "Duty to Inform and Report: Best Practices for Corporate Fiduciaries," panelist, Maslon LLP, 2024
- "What to Do with a Bad Personal Representative or Trustee: Assessing the Tools in Your Legal Toolbox," co-presenter, 2024 Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- "Duty to Inform and Report: Best Practices for Corporate Fiduciaries," panelist, Maslon LLP, 2024
- "Think It's Privileged? Think Again: Managing the Scope of Privilege from Planning to Litigation," panelist, Real Property, Trust, and Estate National CLE Conference, American Bar Association, 2024
- "Estate Litigation and Appeals," co-presenter, Probate A to Z Webcast Series, Minnesota CLE, 2024.
- "Father Knows Best or Parent Trapped? An Affluent Young Adult with Diminished Capacity Faces Guardianship," panelist, American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), 2023
- "Do I Have to Make a Distribution to the Beneficiary Who's Suing Me? Trust and Estate Administration During Litigation," co-presenter, 2023 Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2023
- "Arbitration of Trust and Estate Disputes: Should It Be in Your Toolbox?" co-presenter, American Bar Association Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section National CLE Conference, 2023
- "A Brave New World, or Is It? Ethical Issues and Risk Management in the Virtual Work Environment," co-presenter, American College of Trust and Estate Counsel Great Lakes Regional Meeting, 2022
- "Professional Responsibility and Review of Recommended Orders, Post-Trial Motions, and Appeals in Estate Litigation," co-presenter, Estate Administration in Minnesota Seminar, Minnesota CLE, 2022
- "Navigating Unique Evidentiary Issues in Probate and Trust Litigation," co-presenter, Litigating Probate & Trusts Disputes in 2022 – Let's Get Technical, Minnesota CLE
- "Navigating Virtual Litigation in Probate Disputes," panel member, Probate & Trust Law Section Virtual Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2021
- "Undue Influence and Elder Abuse Allegations against Spouses, Family Members, and Caregivers," panel member, 33rd Annual Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Virtual National CLE Conference, American Bar Association, 2021
- "Ethics: Ethical Considerations in Drafting, Administration and Litigation," panel member, Litigation Probate and Trust Disputes in 2021 – A Brave New World, Minnesota CLE
- "Tips and Best Practices for Avoiding Family Controversy and Will Contests," Twin Cities Estate Planning Council, 2021
- "Statutory Changes to Minnesota Guardianship Law and Financial Exploitation and Abuse Reporting," MN National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys Chapter, 2020
- "The Use (and Abuse) of Injunctive Relief in Trust Litigation, The 46th Annual Probate & Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2020
- "Review of Recommended Orders, Post-Trial Motions, and Appeals in Estate Litigation," Probate A to Z Webcast Series, Minnesota CLE, 2019
- "Professional Responsibility," Probate A to Z Webcast Series, Minnesota CLE, 2019
- "Siblings Behaving Badly," Greed, Deceit, and Outright Villainy: Bad Behavior in Family Disputes, Robins Kaplan Wealth Planning, Administration, and Disputes Group Annual CLE, 2018
- "Professional Responsibility in Estate Administration," The 44th Annual Probate & Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2018

- Maslon Estate Planning Professionals to Present at the 2018 Probate & Trust Law Section Conference for Minnesota CLE
- "Review of Recommended Orders, Post-Trial Motions, and Appeals in Estate Litigation" Probate A to Z Webcast Series, Minnesota CLE, 2018
- "Professional Responsibility," Probate A to Z Webcast Series, Minnesota CLE, 2018
- "'Trip, trap, trip, trap' went the Trust Code. 'Who's that tripping over my code?' roared the Judge," panel member, Minnesota State Bar Association Probate and Trust Law Section, 2017
- "Managing Fiduciary Liability and Risk: The Trust Litigator's & Planner's Perspectives," Lurie, LLP, 2017
- "Avoiding the Ethical Danger Zones in Contested Matters: A Practical Guide to Professional Ethics for Non-Litigators," 2016 Probate & Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2016
- "Trust Construction," The Estate Planning, Probate & Trust Law 40, Minnesota CLE, 2016
- "Ethics," The Probate Process from Start to Finish, National Business Institute, 2015
- "Probate and Trust Litigation," The Probate Process from Start to Finish, National Business Institute, 2015
- "How to Avoid a Fight," What Matters Most in Trusts & Estates Practice, Minnesota CLE, 2015
- "Panel Scenario 4," panel member, What Matters Most in Trusts & Estates Practice, Minnesota CLE, 2015
- "Resolving Trust and Estate Disputes," webcast, National Business Institute, 2015
- "The Times They May be a-Changin': Minnesota's Proposed Uniform Trust Code," Corporate Fiduciaries of Minnesota, Oct 2014; Trust Point, Nov 2014; Securian Trust Company and U.S. Bank, N.A., Dec 2014; Wells Fargo/Abbott Downing, Feb 2015
- "Trust Construction," The Estate Planning, Probate and Trust Law 50, Minnesota CLE, 2014
- "Estate and Trust Fiduciary Litigation: Minimizing and Defending Breach of Duty Claims," panel member, webinar, Strafford Publications, 2014
- "Integrating Pro Bono," MSBA, 2013
- "Fiduciaries and Fighting Families: How to Pick Up the Pieces During and After Family Trust Litigation," 39th Annual MSBA Probate & Trust Law Section Conference, MSBA Probate & Trust Section, June 2013
- "The Life of a Case in the Trusts and Estates Area," MSBA Probate & Trust Section Fall Luncheon, MSBA Probate & Trust Section, December 2011
- "Introduction to Pro Bono," New Lawyer Experience, Minnesota CLE, January 2011

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- *Minnesota State District Court Civil Practice Deskbook*, co-editor, Minnesota CLE, 2026
- Quoted in "How a Bit of Empathy Would Help During the Signing of Legal Documents," *Next Avenue*, 2025
- "Make a will this August," featured guest, The Lift, WDIO-TV, 2025
- "Planning Ahead, Leaving A Legacy: A Conversation About Wills And Giving With Julian Zebot," Boreal Waters Community Foundation, 2025
- "Illicit Affairs: 21st Century Ethical Issues," Trusts & Estates Law Section Spring Meeting, New York State Bar Association, 2025
- *Minnesota State District Court Civil Practice Deskbook*, co-editor, Minnesota CLE, 2025
- "Primer on Trust and Estate Disputes," co-author, *Minnesota Trust and Estate Litigation Deskbook*, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- Profiled in "Donor spotlight: Julian Zebot," *Bench & Bar*, 2024
- "Professional Responsibility," and "Review of Recommended Orders, Post-Trial Motions, and Appeals in Estate Litigation," co-author, , 6th Edition, 2024 Update, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- Quoted in "Lost Legacy," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, 2024
- "What All Young Trust and Estate Litigators Should Know," co-author, *Probate & Property*, American Bar Association, 2023
- "Professional Responsibility," co-author, *Minnesota Estate Administration Deskbook, 6th Edition*, 2023

- "Review of Recommended Orders, Post-Trial Motions, and Appeals in Estate Litigation," co-author, *Minnesota Estate Administration Deskbook, 6th Edition*, 2023
- "Hindsight Is Always 20/20 in a Bear Market: Fiduciary Tools to Dull the Edge of Hindsight Bias in Trustee Investment Liability Lawsuits – Preparing for the COVID-19 Fallout," co-author, Real Property, Trust & Estate Law eReport, American Bar Association, 2020
- "Tilting the Litigation Playing Field Under the Uniform Trust Code: The Availability of Temporary Injunctive Relief in Trustee Removal of Actions," co-author, *Probate & Property*, Vol. 34, No. 3, American Bar Association, 2020
- **Featured in:** "Maslon gets inmate off Texas death row," *Minnesota Lawyer*, December 2017
- "Dual-Track Jurisdiction for Trust Litigation Proceedings under the new UTC," MSBA Probate & Trust Law Section E-Newsletter, Minnesota State Bar Association, November 2015
- "What You Need to Know about Minnesota's Uniform Trust Code Part II: Trust Administration Involving Co-Trustees," *Epilawg.com*, April 27, 2015
- "What You Need to Know about Minnesota's Uniform Trust Code Part I: Dual-Track Jurisdiction," *Epilawg.com*, April 2, 2015
- "Are Mandatory Arbitration Provisions in Estate Planning Instruments Enforceable in Minnesota?" Minnesota State Bar Association Probate & Trust Law Section eNewsletter, Fall 2014
- "Review of Recommended Orders, Post-Trial Motions, and Appeals in Estate Litigation," co-author, *Minnesota Estate Administration Deskbook*, Minnesota CLE, 2014
- "Seeking Review of a Probate Referee's Order," *Epilawg.com*, March 2014
- "Professional Responsibility," co-author, *Minnesota Estate Administration Deskbook*, Minnesota CLE, 2014
- "Mandatory Arbitration Provisions in Estate Planning," *Epilawg.com*, 2013
- "Professional Responsibility," co-author, *Minnesota Estate Administration Deskbook,* Minnesota CLE, 2013
- "FDIC Receivership and Bank Litigation: What Litigators and Their Clients Need to Know," 6 *Pratt's J. Bky. L.* 593 (2010)
- "Hostile Takeover: The Impact of FDIC Receivership on Bank Litigation," co-author, *ON Litigation*, Vol. 2, Fall 2009
- "Awakening A Sleeping Dog: An Examination of the Confusion in Ascertaining Purposeful Discrimination Against Interstate Commerce," 86 *Minn. L. Rev.* 1063 (2002)