



## Todd B. Benoff

Partner

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### *Related Services*

Litigation ■ Products Liability ■ Business Litigation ■ Mass Torts & Toxic Torts ■ Connected & Autonomous Vehicles

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*Companies facing high-risk cases rely on Todd to figure out how to develop an effective defense when no playbook exists. Todd's recent focus has been on the liability and cybersecurity issues unique to autonomous vehicles. He also defends a wide variety of products liability cases, consumer class actions, mass torts, and investment disputes.*

Todd Benoff focuses his trial practice on high-exposure cases in the areas of products liability, toxic torts/mass torts, and business litigation, including complex False Claims Act matters and consumer class actions. He also focuses on cybersecurity issues presented by connected and autonomous vehicles, and co-leads the firm's Connected and Autonomous Vehicles Team.

In his products liability and toxic tort work, Todd has defended manufacturers of cars, trucks and trailers, as well as electrical distribution products, specialty chemicals and water distribution systems and components. Todd handles a wide array of business litigation matters, including consumer class actions, unfair business practice claims, contract disputes, shareholder derivative actions, and disputes involving real estate purchases and investments. Todd also practices at the appellate level.

Todd has been recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*® (2023–2025) and was selected to the “Rising Stars” list by *Southern California Super Lawyers* (2007–2012). He received both his B.A. and J.D. from the University of Virginia in 1994 and 1997, respectively.

### *Representative Experience*

- Counseled a manufacturer of electric and autonomous vehicles on ways to avoid the risks of litigation related to future generations of vehicles.
- Lead trial counsel for a fire truck manufacturer that sued its competitors for patent infringement. The jury found the competitors willfully infringed our client's patent, rejected arguments that the patent was invalid, and awarded the client seven figures in damages.
- Lead trial counsel for a manufacturer of trucks and trailers in “fatal and serious” products liability litigation.
- Lead trial counsel for a mining company in a toxic tort action alleging cosmetic talcum powder was contaminated with asbestos and caused cancer. After a two-month trial, the jury returned a complete defense verdict.
- Science counsel for an international automobile manufacturer in a large-scale automotive products liability and consumer class action MDL and state court consolidated proceedings involving over 200 nationwide class actions.

- Trial counsel for a manufacturer of control valves in a bellwether products liability matter involving pressure vessel failures. After a two-week trial, a verdict exonerating the client led to the dismissal of all remaining actions and indemnification from the pressure vessel manufacturer against all future claims.
- Trial counsel for a manufacturer of plumbing components in a nationwide class action. After deposing the plaintiffs' experts and establishing grounds to preclude each of them from testifying, the class action settled for a fraction of the plaintiffs' demand
- Lead trial counsel for real estate investors in litigation stemming from a series of foreclosures. Obtained an arbitration award exonerating the clients.
- Trial counsel for the manufacturer of a high-voltage electrical distribution panel in a products liability action involving severe burn injuries sustained during an explosion and fire. The jury returned a unanimous defense verdict for the manufacturer in less than two hours.
- Trial counsel for the manufacturer of water distribution components in false claims act litigation where more than 160 municipal entities alleged lead contamination in their drinking water and damages exceeding \$1 billion. This litigation included the defense of a companion common-law action brought by more than 40 municipalities and a verdict on summary judgment against a related unfair competition action brought on behalf of every consumer of drinking water in California.
- Trial counsel for a minority shareholder in a dispute over the operation of a closely held corporation that owned and operated several nursing homes. After several weeks of trial, obtained a multimillion-dollar verdict for a minority shareholder even though the majority shareholder's actions resulted in increased profits for the corporation. Also obtained an award of more than 100 percent of the attorneys' fees requested.
- Trial counsel for a major automotive and truck component manufacturer's asbestos litigation. Obtained dismissals for the manufacturer before the conclusion of every trial that this team handled.
- Won summary judgment as counsel for a manufacturer of automotive components in wrongful death asbestos litigation involving allegations of mesothelioma.
- Counsel for the manufacturer of an electrical panel in a wrongful death products liability action brought by the widow and minor children of a 33-year-old electrician. Obtained a dismissal for the manufacturer in exchange for a waiver of costs.
- Counsel for the manufacturer of cruise control components in related wrongful death products liability actions brought by the widows and minor children of motorists in a multivehicle collision caused by a tractor trailer. Obtained dismissal for the manufacturer before trial.
- Counsel for the manufacturer of circuit breakers in several products liability actions involving severe burn injuries. Each case was dismissed before trial in exchange for a waiver of costs.
- Counsel for a chemical manufacturer in a products liability action alleging severe pulmonary injuries from exposure to super-heated refrigerants. Rather than oppose the manufacturer's motion for summary judgment, the plaintiff filed a dismissal in exchange for a waiver of costs.
- Counsel for the manufacturer of a stove in a wrongful death action brought by the widow and minor children of a 45-year-old man who suffered full-thickness third-degree burns over 95 percent of his body. After deposing the plaintiffs' cause and origin expert witness, the case settled for a few thousand dollars.

- Counsel for chemical manufacturers in a number of toxic tort cases involving plaintiffs who alleged a variety of pulmonary injuries from exposure during their work in plating facilities. Each case was dismissed before trial in exchange for a waiver of costs or a nominal settlement.

## ***Publications & Presentations***

### ***Publications***

- “Why We Must Teach Self-Driving Cars How to Crash,” *Law360*, June 27, 2017.
- “Putting the Brakes on Hackers,” *Corporate Counsel*, November 28, 2016.
- “NHTSA Autonomous Vehicle Rules Take an Unexpected Turn,” *Law 360*, July 13, 2016.

### ***Presentations***

- “Autonomous Vehicle Cyber Security Strategies,” Future Mobility North America 2023, webinar, December 8, 2023.

## ***Education***

- University of Virginia (J.D., 1997)
- University of Virginia (B.A., 1994)

## ***Admitted to Practice***

- California