

Cozen O'Connor Adds Up and Coming Litigator and International Arbitration Practitioner Michael A. Fernández to its Award-Winning Commercial Litigation Practice

Thursday, February 1, 2024

NEW YORK – February 1, 2024 — Cozen O'Connor announced Michael A. Fernández — a fast-rising international business litigator with a strong track record of successfully resolving high-value cross-border business disputes originating in Latin America and other regions — has joined its Commercial Litigation Group. Fernández, who comes to the firm from Rivero Mestre LLP, joins Cozen O'Connor as a member and will reside in its New York City office.

In his new role, Fernández will help to further expand Cozen O'Connor's international arbitration practice, as well as its ability to serve a growing number of clients conducting business in Latin America. Fluent in Spanish and proficient in Portuguese, he brings substantial experience handling complex cross-border litigation, frequently representing and advising clients in matters involving personal jurisdiction, choice of law, and other related issues. He regularly represents both international and domestic clients in state and federal courts, international arbitrations, and compliance matters before domestic/international regulatory bodies. He also brings to the firm substantial experience litigating high-profile disputes involving crypto assets.

"An ever-expanding range of business issues — from new, fast-growing technologies like crypto to inflation and interest rates — are driving an uptick in contractual and other commercial disputes," said James H. Heller, co-chair of the firm's Commercial Litigation Department. "Michael's experience, especially with domestic and international entities operating in Latin America, will greatly enhance our client service offerings. He's a tremendous addition to our commercial litigation team and I'm thrilled to welcome him to the firm."

"I am so happy to welcome a litigator and arbitrator of Michael's caliber to our group," said Kurt E. Lindquist II, a member of the firm's International Arbitration practice. "His experience in Latin America will be a tremendous asset to our current and future clients both doing business in Latin America or looking to expand their business into the area."

"Michael brings to us major, senior-level experience in the increasingly important international arbitration space," said Geoffrey D. Ferrer, co-office managing partner of the firm's New York office. "He regularly represents parties to international commercial and investment treaty arbitrations conducted in Spanish and English under a range of major international rules; and he serves as an arbitrator in cases administered by the American Arbitration Association and the International Center for Dispute Resolution. He's a big-time add to the New York office and I'm happy to welcome him aboard."

An adjunct professor at Fordham Law School teaching courses on transnational legal disputes, Fernández frequently represents and advises clients in cross-border disputes that raise complex questions of personal jurisdiction, choice of law and cross-border discovery. His background includes successfully arguing a precedent-setting appeal before the New York State Appellate Division — involving a Brazilian national domiciled in Uruguay and a Uruguayan corporation — that resulted in the dismissal of a breach of contract action on jurisdictional grounds.

He has also worked on major, cutting-edge disputes involving crypto assets, most recently serving on the trial team that successfully defended Dr. Craig Wright in a headline generating Bitcoin lawsuit

Related Practice Areas

- Commercial Litigation
- International Arbitration

involving over a half-trillion dollars in potential damages. As a leading authority on the topic, he frequently speaks before U.S. and international audiences about the novel issues associated with crypto-asset disputes.

Well regarded throughout the international legal community, Fernández has been named a Super Lawyers “Rising Star” in the area of Civil Litigation: Defense, 2018-2023; recognized by the Hispanic National Bar Association as a “Top Lawyer under 40,” 2022; listed in the Legal Media Group’s (LMG) Expert Guide as a “Rising Star” in the area of Commercial Arbitration, 2022; and named by Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch for Alternative Dispute Resolution and Commercial Litigation, 2021-2022.

“I joined Cozen O’Connor because it’s a national firm with a strong presence throughout the country — particularly in cities critical to Latin American clients, like New York, Miami, Houston, and Washington D.C.,” Fernández said. “The firm, with so many legal assets, will allow me to offer a significant value proposition to Latin American clients who want to work with a large, full-service firm.”

Fernández earned his J.D. at Columbia Law School; an M.A. in law and diplomacy at Tufts University’s Fletcher School; and a B.A. in political science and Spanish from Yale University.

About Cozen O’Connor

Established in 1970, Cozen O’Connor has over 925 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and middle market companies, Cozen O’Connor serves its clients’ needs through 33 offices across two continents.

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