



## Michael R. Gray

Partner | [michael.gray@lathropgpm.com](mailto:michael.gray@lathropgpm.com)

### MINNEAPOLIS

80 South Eighth Street  
3100 IDS Center  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

T: 612.632.3078  
F: 612.632.4078

### Assistant

Lori Kleinschmidt  
612.632.3441  
Email

### PRACTICE AREAS

Franchise & Distribution

General Business & Complex  
Commercial Litigation

Franchise Litigation & Dispute  
Resolution

Neutral Alternative Dispute  
Resolution Services

Intellectual Property Litigation

Franchise & Dealership  
Terminations

Non-Compete, Non-Solicit,  
Trade Secrets & Other  
Restrictive Covenants

Vicarious Liability/Risk  
Management

Product Liability & Tort Litigation

Appellate Practice

### COURT MEMBERSHIPS

- Minnesota

Mike Gray represents companies and individuals in trial, arbitration, mediation, and other civil proceedings throughout the United States. As a member of the firm's Franchise and Distribution Practice Group, Mike is lead litigation counsel for several national franchise companies and has litigated, arbitrated, and mediated complex commercial cases in over 38 states involving all types of business disputes with a particular emphasis on franchise litigation and noncompete enforcement.

According to his clients, Mike is a "very solutions-oriented, insightful strategist." He is experienced in successfully guiding clients through the dispute resolution process, whether through trial, appeal, arbitration, mediation, or negotiation. For individuals and business clients, Mike provides counsel on a wide range of issues, including contract disputes, protection and exploitation of intellectual property, trademark and copyright protection, trade secret protection, licensing and distributorship disputes and relations. As a certified Neutral by the Early Dispute Resolution Institute, Mike brings his 35 plus years of complex commercial litigation experience to the table to help others resolve disputes before they become prolonged and expensive battles.

He has written and presented materials on franchise, litigation, and intellectual property topics for the American Bar Association, the International Franchise Association, St. Thomas University, the Minnesota Institute of Legal Education, the Business Law Institute, the Practicing Law Institute, and the American Intellectual Property Law Association. In recognition of his industry-leading insight in franchise law, Mike was elected to the Governing Committee of the American Bar Association's Forum on Franchising, where he also served as Finance

- Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court District of Colorado
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court Western District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court District of Minnesota
- U.S. District Court Western District of Tennessee
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit

## EDUCATION

Hamline University School of Law, J.D.

University of Wisconsin - Madison, B.B.A.

Officer and Co-Chair of the October 2018 ABA Forum Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. When not practicing law, you will find Mike at his cabin in Wisconsin, in his garage tinkering with one of his old cars or engaged in some type of home renovation.

## Representative Experience

- *American Arbitration Association (May 2022) Obtained defense decision on behalf of franchisor on breach of contract, fraud and misuse of advertising fund claims brought by franchisee.*
- *First Light Home Care v. Caresmartz, Inc (W.D.N.Y 2021) Obtained a Temporary restraining order against software supplier preventing it from terminating access to enterprise software.*
- *AmeriSpec, L.L.C. v. Sutko Real Estate Servs., Inc., No. 2:20-CV-02365-TLP, 2020 WL 3913584 (W.D. Tenn. July 10, 2020) (Obtained TRO and Preliminary Injunction enforcing post termination noncompete agreement against former franchisee and his non-signatory son and new corporate entity)*
- *AmeriSpec, L.L.C. v. Omni Enterprises, Inc., No. 2:18-cv-02247-TLP-dkv, WL 2248459 (W.D. Tenn. 2018) (Obtained an injunction enforcing post-expiration noncompete agreement against former franchisees two years after expiration of the franchise agreement)*
- *ServiceMaster of Fairfax, Inc. v. ServiceMaster Residential/Commercial Servs., L.P., No. CV PX 16-02589, 2017 WL 3023342 (D. Md. July 17, 2017) (Enforced franchisor's forum selection and choice of law provisions enforced notwithstanding Maryland franchise statute; case transferred to franchisor's home state)*
- *Outdoor Lighting Perspectives Franchising, Inc. v. Perlmutter, et al, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 53583 (W.D.N.C. 2012) (Obtained an injunction enforcing post-expiration noncompete agreement against former franchisees)*
- *Outdoor Lighting Perspectives Franchising, Inc. v. Home Amenities, Inc., et al, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 5406 (W.D.N.C. 2012) (Obtained an injunction enforcing post-expiration noncompete agreement against former franchisees)*
- *Holtan Holdings, Inc. v. American Pie Pizza and Salads, Inc., 2010 U.S. Dist. Lexis 112353 (D. Minn. 2010) (franchisor's motion to dismiss complaint granted)*
- *Cleveland v. AmeriSpec, Bus. Franchise Guide (CCH) 14,267 (Fla. Cir. Ct. 2009) (Obtained summary judgment dismissing franchisee claims)*

- *ServiceMaster v. Hooker*, et al, Bus. Franchise Guide (CCH) 13,457 (W.D. Tenn. 2006) (Obtained an injunction enforcing post-termination noncompete agreement against former franchisee and other nonsignatories after two-day court trial)
- *Merry Maids v. WWJD Enterprises, Inc.*, Bus. Franchise Guide (CCH) 13, 383 (D. Neb. 2006) (Obtained an injunction enforcing post-expiration noncompete agreement against former franchisee and other nonsignatories after two-day court trial)
- *Ross v. Culver Franchising System, Inc.*, 2004 WL 1898235 (N.D. Ill., Aug. 16, 2004) (Obtained summary judgment dismissing franchisee claims)
- *BTX Enterprises, Inc. v. The Terminix International Co., L.P.* Case No. 2:02-CV-860 (S.D. Ohio 2004) (Obtained unanimous verdict in favor of franchisor after two week jury trial).

## Events

- Minimizing Joint Employer Risk Using the “Deliverables” Methodology Webinar  
November 8, 2023

## Presentations

- "Ethics of Joint Representation: Representing Franchisors, Franchisees, and their Officers, Employees, and Affiliates in Litigation," American Bar Association 43rd annual Forum on Franchising, October, 2021
- "Franchising in the Time of COVID-19: Managing Coronavirus-driven Disruption in Contracts, Supply Chains and More" American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, March 22, 2020
- "Impact of California's Assembly Bill 5 on Franchisors" Gray Plant Mooty Webinar, October 3, 2019
- "Noncomplete Enforcement Today: Slam Dunk or Red Zone Problem?" American Bar Association 42nd Annual Forum on Franchising, Denver, Colorado, October 2019
- "Plowing New Ground - Litigating Selected Disclosure Issues Beyond Item 19," American Bar Association 39th Annual Forum on Franchising, Miami, Florida, November 1, 2016
- "Who Owns the Goodwill in a Franchise," American Bar Association 38th Annual Forum on Franchising, New Orleans, Louisiana, October 14, 2015

- "Franchise Joint Employer and Vicarious Liability Threats: Practical Steps to Minimize Risk," co-panelist, GPM Franchise & Distribution Practice Group Webinar, March 18, 2015
- "Annual Franchise and Distribution Law Developments 2013", American Bar Association 36th Annual Forum on Franchising, Orlando, Florida, October 1, 2013
- "Extraterritorial Reach of the Lanham Act," American Intellectual Property Law Association Annual Meeting, Washington DC, October 26, 2012
- "Distressing Transfers in Troubled Times: Thorny Issues in Transferring Financially Troubled Franchisees," IFA'S 51st Annual Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 15, 2011
- "Frequent Arising Issues in Litigation," 43rd Annual IFA Legal Symposium, Washington, DC, May 10, 2010
- "Non-Competes: Should We Use One?," International Franchise Association 41st Annual Legal Symposium, Washington, DC, May 1, 2008

## Publications

- "Covenants Against Competition in Franchise Agreements," American Bar Association Forum on Franchising (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2022), Michael R Gray, Natalma M. McKnew and William W. Sentell, editors.
- Author, "Revisiting Franchise Agreements In Light of COVID-19", Law 360, April 2, 2020
- "Intellectual Property Issues in Franchising," Chapter 20, Intellectual Property Deskbook for the Business Lawyer: A Transactions-Based Guide to Intellectual Property, Fourth Edition, March 2019
- "Why Franchisors Should be Concerned With Massachusetts HB4045," Franchising World, May 19, 2014
- "Annual Franchise and Distribution Law Developments 2013," American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, January 2013
- "Intellectual Property Issues in Franchising," Intellectual Property Deskbook for the Business Lawyer, American Bar Association Business Law Section (3rd ed. 2013)
- "Advanced Trademark Annual Review 2012," Practising Law Institute, January 2012
- "Covenants Against Competition in Franchise Agreements," American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, Michael R. Gray

and Natalma M. McKnew, editors (3rd ed. 2012).

- "Franchise Desk Book," American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, W. Michael Garner ed, 2nd ed 2008
- Co-author, "Covenants Not To Compete And Nonsignatories: Enjoining Unfair Conspiracies," Franchise Law Journal, December 31, 2006

## Client Alerts And Blog Posts

- Federal Trade Commission Excludes Franchise Relationship From New Rule Prohibiting Non-compete Agreements  
April 24, 2024
- After Bench Trial, Texas Federal Court Finds No Breach of Noncompete for Selling Competing Product  
April 11, 2024
- Federal Court Vacates 2023 NLRB Joint Employment Rule and Reinstates 2020 Rule  
March 14, 2024
- Federal Court Vacates 2023 NLRB Joint Employment Rule And Reinstates 2020 Rule  
March 13, 2024
- Eleventh Circuit Affirms in Part, Reverses in Part, District Court Determination to Blue Pencil and Enforce Noncompete Agreement  
January 18, 2024
- Tennessee Federal Court Enforces Delegation Provision and Compels Dozens of Franchisees to Arbitration  
November 1, 2023
- Tenth Circuit Holds that Good Faith and Fair Dealing Claim Requires Expectation Created by Express Contract Terms  
September 7, 2023
- Oregon Federal Court Holds Nonsignatory Owners Are Not Subject to Arbitration Provision  
March 9, 2023
- Louisiana Appeals Court Affirms Dismissal of Vicarious Liability Claim  
January 11, 2023
- Michigan Federal Court Grants Partial Summary Judgment to Supplier Defending Claims Under Oral Contract  
December 8, 2022
- New York Federal Court Denies in Part Motion to Dismiss Fraud and Negligent Misrepresentation Claims Against Kickboxing Studio

Franchisor  
July 14, 2022

- Illinois Federal Court Dismisses Franchisee Employee's Hostile Work Environment Claims Against Franchisor  
May 5, 2022
- The Supreme Court's Unanimous Decision Narrows TCPA's Reach  
April 9, 2021
- Franchise Alert: Franchisor's Response to the Coronavirus Threat  
March 6, 2020
- Labor Board's Browning-Ferris Ruling has Franchises on Alert  
August 28, 2015

### In The News

- 1851 Franchise Quotes Partner Michael Gray on FTC's Non-Compete Ban, What it Means for Franchisors  
April 24, 2024
- Corporate Counsel Quotes Michael Gray on Avoiding Liability for Franchisees' Conduct  
October 25, 2021
- Law 360 Features Article by Michael Gray on Revisiting Franchise Agreements In Light Of COVID-19.  
April 2, 2020
- "As Noncompete Agreements Proliferate, So Do Lawsuits," The Joplin Globe  
March 17, 2018
- "Labor Board Ruling on Joint Employers Leaves Some Companies Scratching Their Heads," New York Times  
August 29, 2015
- "The Legal Issues That Could Change Franchising Forever," Entrepreneur  
January 2015
- "Legal shift could alter franchise model" StarTribune  
November 15, 2014
- "Competitive Clauses—'Don't Be Too Greedy' Is On Top When Drafting Non-Competes," Franchise Times  
February 1, 2013
- "What Have You Done For Me Lately? Why There's No Certainty For Non-Compete Decisions By Courts," Franchise Times  
February 2012

## News Releases

- Ten Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized as Franchise Legal Eagles  
April 1, 2024
- 11 Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized in the International Who's Who Legal Franchise 2023 List  
November 27, 2023
- Eight Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named Lawyer of the Year, 89 Ranked as The Best Lawyers in America®  
August 17, 2023
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named 2023 Minnesota Super Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 18, 2023
- 14 Lathrop GPM LLP Practice Groups and 35 Attorneys Ranked in Chambers USA 2023  
June 1, 2023
- Franchise Group at Lathrop GPM LLP Submits Comments to FTC on Proposed Noncompete Rule  
April 21, 2023
- Nine Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized as Franchise Legal Eagles  
April 3, 2023
- 10 Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized in the International Who's Who Legal Franchise 2022 List  
September 28, 2022
- Six Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named Lawyer of the Year, 95 Ranked as The Best Lawyers in America®  
August 18, 2022
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named 2022 Minnesota Super Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 18, 2022
- Chambers USA 2022 Names Lathrop GPM a Top Law Firm, Franchise Group Ranked Nationwide  
June 1, 2022
- Eight Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized as Franchise Legal Eagles  
April 1, 2022
- 11 Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized in the International Who's Who Legal Franchise 2021 List  
October 12, 2021

- Seven Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named Lawyer of the Year, 100 Ranked as The Best Lawyers in America©  
August 19, 2021
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named 2021 Minnesota Super Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 22, 2021
- Chambers USA 2021 Names Lathrop GPM a Top Law Firm, Franchise Group Ranked Nationwide  
May 20, 2021
- 8 Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized as Franchise Legal Eagles  
April 1, 2021
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized in Who's Who Legal Franchise 2020 List  
September 30, 2020
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named to The Best Lawyers in America©, Lawyer of the Year, and Ones to Watch for 2021  
August 20, 2020
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named 2020 Minnesota Super Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 21, 2020
- Chambers USA 2020 Names Lathrop GPM a Top Law Firm, Insurance Recovery Team Earns New Recognition, Franchise Group Ranked Nationwide  
April 23, 2020
- 16 Lathrop GPM Attorneys Recognized as Franchise "Legal Eagles"  
April 1, 2020
- Lathrop GPM Develops COVID-19 Client Response Team  
March 18, 2020
- Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in the International Who's Who Legal: Franchise for 2019  
December 10, 2019
- Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Named The Best Lawyers in America© 2020  
August 15, 2019
- Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Named 2019 Minnesota Super Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 5, 2019
- Gray Plant Mooty Recognized as Leader in Chambers USA 2019  
April 26, 2019



- 17 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized as 2019 “Legal Eagles”  
April 1, 2019
- 15 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in the International  
Who’s Who Legal: Franchise for 2018  
October 29, 2018
- Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in  
America© 2019  
August 15, 2018
- Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Named 2018 Minnesota Super Lawyers  
and Rising Stars  
July 5, 2018
- Gray Plant Mooty Recognized as Leader in Chambers USA 2018  
May 3, 2018
- 15 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized as 2018 “Legal Eagles”  
April 3, 2018
- 17 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in the International  
Who’s Who Legal: Franchise for 2017  
October 2, 2017
- Mike Gray Recognized as 2017 BTI Client Service All-Star  
August 23, 2017
- 37 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in  
America 2018  
August 15, 2017
- 43 Gray Plant Mooty Lawyers Named 2017 Minnesota Super  
Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 5, 2017
- 4 Gray Plant Mooty Practices, 12 Attorneys Recognized in  
Chambers USA 2017  
May 26, 2017
- 15 Gray Plant Mooty Franchise Attorneys Recognized As 2017  
“Legal Eagles”  
April 3, 2017
- 35 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in  
America 2017  
August 15, 2016
- 40 Gray Plant Mooty Lawyers Named 2016 Minnesota Super  
Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 5, 2016
- 5 Gray Plant Mooty Practices, 12 Attorneys Recognized in  
Chambers USA 2016

May 27, 2016

- 15 Gray Plant Mooty Franchise Attorneys Recognized As “Legal Eagles”; Largest Number of All Firms  
April 6, 2016
- 36 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America 2016  
August 17, 2015
- 38 Gray Plant Mooty Lawyers Named 2015 Minnesota Super Lawyers and Rising Stars  
July 09, 2015
- Gray Plant Mooty Has 14 Franchise Attorneys Named “Legal Eagles”; Largest Number of All Firms  
April 8, 2015
- Fourteen Gray Plant Mooty Lawyers, Firm Recognized for Most U.S.-Based Lawyers Among Top Competitors  
October 10, 2014
- 33 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized as Best Lawyers  
August 19, 2014
- 40 Gray Plant Mooty Lawyers Named 2014 Minnesota "Super Lawyers" and "Rising Stars"  
July 7, 2014
- Gray Plant Mooty Lands Fourteen 2014 Franchise Times Legal Eagles, Most of Any Firm in the United States  
April 8, 2014
- GPM Attorneys John Brower, Michael Gray Named to the BTI Client Service All-Stars 2014  
February 6, 2014
- Thirteen Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The International Who's Who of Franchise Lawyers 2013  
July 24, 2013
- Twelve Gray Plant Mooty Franchise Attorneys Named Franchise Times Legal Eagles 2013  
April 1, 2013
- Three Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Earn Certified Franchise Executive Designation  
February 18, 2013
- The Third Edition of “Covenants Against Competition in Franchise Agreements” Is Edited by GPM Attorney  
December 20, 2012

- 27 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Named 2012 “Minnesota Super Lawyers”  
July 9, 2012
- Eight Gray Plant Mooty Franchise Attorneys Named “Legal Eagles”  
by Franchise Times Magazine  
February 10, 2012
- Ten Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The International  
Who’s Who of Franchise Lawyers 2011  
November 17, 2011
- 22 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys in 2012 Edition of “Best Lawyers in  
America”  
September 2, 2011
- 25 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Named 2011 “Minnesota Super  
Lawyers”  
July 12, 2011
- Ten Gray Plant Mooty Franchise Attorneys Named “Legal Eagles”  
by Franchise Times Magazine  
March 22, 2011
- Eight Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Recognized in The International  
Who’s Who of Franchise Lawyers 2010  
October 4, 2010
- 23 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys in 2011 Edition of “Best Lawyers in  
America”  
August 9, 2010
- 24 Gray Plant Mooty Attorneys Named 2010 “Super Lawyers”  
July 16, 2010
- Twelve Gray Plant Mooty Franchise Attorneys Named “Legal  
Eagles” by Franchise Times Magazine  
January 27, 2010

## Professional Affiliations

- American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, Governing  
Committee
- Federal Bar Association
- International Franchise Association, Legal/Legislative Committee
- Minnesota State Bar Association
- Certified Neutral, Early Dispute Resolution Institute

## Community Involvement

- Volunteer Lawyers Network, Pro Bono Volunteer
- Hennepin County Housing Court, Pro Bono Volunteer
- Hennepin County Small Claims Appellate Court, Pro Bono Volunteer
- Crab Lake Conservation Foundation, Vice President, Board of Directors

## Honors

- Selected among *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2010-2024
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, Nationwide Franchise, 2016-2023
- *Thomson Reuters*, "Minnesota Super Lawyer®," 2006-2023
- *Franchise Times*, "Legal Eagle," 2007-2024
  - *Franchise Times*, "Legal Eagles Hall of Fame," 2023
- *The International Who's Who of Franchise Lawyers*, 2010-2023
- "Minnesota's Top Lawyers," *Minnesota Monthly*, 2022
- AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated from Martindale-Hubbell
- BTI Client Service All-Star, 2014, 2016-2017