



William D. Zabel
Partner

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Founding partner of Schulte Roth & Zabel and head of the Individual Client Services Group. Practices in the areas of estate planning, wills, trusts, charitable foundations, income- and gift-tax planning, estate administration and family law.

Bill represents many of the wealthiest individuals in the country on tax planning; succession planning; charitable giving (through the use of private foundations, public charities, split-interest trusts and direct giving); estates and trusts, including representation of individuals and institutions acting as fiduciaries with respect to both general administrative matters and litigated or contested ones; and family law matters, including prenuptial, postnuptial and cohabitation agreements, and the negotiation or mediation of substantial divorce matters. Negotiated a \$7.2 billion settlement with the federal government in the Madoff case in one of the largest civil forfeiture cases in US history.

Bill is a member of the American Law Institute and the Council on Foreign Relations, a Fellow of Brandeis University, the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel and the American Bar Foundation, and an Academician of the International Academy of Estate and Trust Law.

For more than 50 years, Bill has been an advocate for social justice in the United States and abroad. His civic and philanthropic activities have included, among many others:

- Authoring the lead brief on behalf of the ACLU in *Loving v. Virginia*, which legalized interracial marriage
- Investigating the cases of those who disappeared in Chile during General Augusto Pinochet's "Dirty War"

He has served as:

- Chair of Human Rights First for over 20 years
- Chair of Immigrant Justice Corps
- Trustee or director of New York University, The New School, Mailman School of Public Health, The JPB Foundation (vice chairman), The Lymphoma Foundation
- Chair of the Princeton University Planned Giving Committee, Sakharov Archives, Lincoln Center Theater and The Academy of American Poets

In 2006, Bill received a Lifetime Achievement Award from *The American Lawyer*, and has also been honored with the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Human Rights Award, Brandeis University Distinguished Community Service Award, Distinguished Service Award (conferred by The New School), the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights Extraordinary Leader Award, the Champion for Change Award from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention and the inaugural Robert F. Kennedy Justice Prize from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

In 2016, Bill established the William D. Zabel '61 Professorship in Human Rights at Harvard Law School to further his commitment to protecting the rights of others and to inspire future generations in the cause of human rights. In 2023, he established the William D. Zabel '58 Professorship in Human Rights at Princeton University.

Practices

CHARITABLE GIVING AND PLANNING

ESTATE PLANNING

ESTATE AND TRUST ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL PERSONAL REPRESENTATION

INDIVIDUAL CLIENT SERVICES

MATRIMONIAL REPRESENTATION

NONPROFIT

REPRESENTATION OF FIDUCIARIES

Bar Admissions

New York

Florida

Court Admissions

US Supreme Court

Education

Harvard Law School, J.D.

- *cum laude*

Princeton University, B.A.

- *summa cum laude*

- Phi Beta Kappa

Publications

- *The Rich Die Richer and You Can Too* (John Wiley & Sons Inc.) 1995

Speaking Engagements

- Keynote Speaker, "Fifty Years of *Loving v. Virginia* and the Continued Pursuit of Racial Equality," *Fordham Law Review* Symposium, New York, November 2017

Memberships

Professional

- American Bar Association
- New York State Bar Association
- New York City Bar Association
- Florida Bar Association

Civic and Philanthropic

- Director, The Academy of American Poets
- Director, American Friends of the Israel Museum
- Director, amfAR, 1998-2008
- Director, Doctors of the World, 1997-2004
- President, Harmonie Club, 1989-1992
- Trustee, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust
- Chairman Emeritus, Human Rights First
- Chairman, Immigrant Justice Corps
- Vice Chairman, The JPB Foundation
- Director, Lincoln Center Theater
- Former Director, The Lymphoma Foundation
- Trustee, New York University
- Trustee, The New School
- Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
- Chairman Emeritus, Princeton University Planned Giving Committee
- Advisory Board, Project on Death in America, 1994-1999

- Sakharov Archives
- Soros Foundations: legal adviser to Open Society Institute and to Soros Foundations Network

Distinctions

- Lifetime Achievement Award, *The American Lawyer* (2006)
- Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Award (2005)
- Brandeis University Distinguished Community Service Award
- Distinguished Service Award, The New School
- Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 2003 Extraordinary Leader Award
- Member, American Law Institute
- Fellow, Brandeis University
- Fellow, American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC)
- Academician, International Academy of Estate and Trust Law
- Fellow, American Bar Foundation
- Member, Council on Foreign Relations
- New York City Litigation – Trusts & Estates Lawyer of the Year, Best Lawyers’ 2012 Lawyers of the Year
- New York State Bar Association Empire State Counsel Honoree
- Champion for Change Award, Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention
- Robert F. Kennedy Justice Prize, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- 2016 “Attorneys Who Matter” List, The Ethisphere Institute
- Recognized as a leading individual client services lawyer by many publications, including:
 - *Chambers High Net Worth*
 - *Chambers USA*

- *The Best Lawyers in America*
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV Preeminent
- *New York Super Lawyers*