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LEADING COMMERCIAL LITIGATORS 2024



JOHN C. HUESTON

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Trials & Complex Civil
Litigation

John C. Hueston, a master of complex litigation, has found that huge recent wins have been rewarded by a fresh parade of clients to the firm he co-founded in 2015, Hueston Hennigan LLP, where he is trial practice chair.

Last year, Hueston secured a major settlement worth more than \$300 million for client Match Group LLC, an online dating service, in antitrust litigation against Google LLC over claims it illegally monopolized the mobile apps distribution market. In re: Google Play Store Antitrust Litigation, 3:21-md-02981 (N.D. Cal., filed Feb. 5, 2021).

The deal was struck shortly before trial, leaving only co-plaintiff Epic Games in the litigation. At that point, Epic's lawyers at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, requested that Hueston join their trial team.

"That was unique and gratifying," Hueston said. "Match was steaming toward trial when it got an offer it couldn't refuse. I thought it was time for me to exit, but then I got an invite from Epic. For me, it was the best of both worlds — the client got what it needed and I got to stay for the trial."

In December, the jury ruled for Epic Games, finding that Google acts like an illegal monopoly in its app distribution business. The four-week proceeding featured Hueston's cross-examination of a top Google executive that led to media accounts of Hueston "striking gold" with a "mic drop" Q&A.

"I elicited at least 40 to 50 points of impeachment" in the cross-examination, Hueston said. A January hearing on remedies is scheduled.

Along with his heavy commercial caseload, Hueston said he remains committed to pro bono work through the nonprofit he founded, the Social Justice Legal Foundation. He is also on the board of the Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. Institute, named for a fearless circuit judge in the Deep South during the civil rights era for whom Hueston clerked following his graduation from Yale Law School in 1991.

"He's my hero," Hueston said of Johnson. "Even as Gov. [George] Wallace whipped up the public against him, even as his mother's house was bombed by the Klan, Judge Johnson remained committed to justice. I took away from my clerkship the notion of courage to make sure justice is done."

Hueston said there's a direct connection between his admiration for Johnson and his creation, during the pandemic, of the Social Justice Legal Foundation. Over the past year, the outfit has developed a litigation agenda that includes a class action on behalf of detained immigrants and a challenge to policies in some California counties regarding prison inmate mail and digital information retention.

"When we launched this firm, we aspired to become an elite national trial boutique," Hueston said. "I am excited that we have reached that level."

— JOHN ROEMER