

# Ilene S. Farkas

Partner

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Ilene Farkas is a member of the firm’s Executive Committee and co-chair of the Litigation Group and the Music Group; she is also a member of the Intellectual Property and Media + Entertainment Groups, and co-chair of the Copyright, M+E Litigation, and Music Litigation Practices.

Ilene’s practice is focused on intellectual property and contractual disputes involving the music, film, theater, media, and publishing industries. She is recognized as a leading copyright attorney who, for three decades, has represented clients such as EMI Music Publishing, Sony Music Publishing, Capitol Records, Warner Music Group, UMG Recordings and their rosters of artists, songwriters, and producers on issues including copyright ownership, co-authorship, infringement, publishing and royalty disputes, the applicability of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)’s safe harbor defense, and First Amendment issues.

Chart-topping musicians and performers including Ed Sheeran, Bruno Mars, Ariana Grande, Jay Z, Mark Ronson, Wiz Khalifa, Howard Stern, and many others have also relied on Ilene’s counsel, both within and outside the litigation context, to navigate employment, licensing, talent agency, and other disputes.

Ilene also regularly represents Netflix in disputes concerning a wide range of issues, including defamation and right of privacy claims, contractual and other disputes arising out of content streamed on the platform.

## **At the Intersection of Law + Entertainment**

Ilene has a long and proven record of achieving favorable outcomes for clients in various types of proceedings. Her notable representations include:

- Netflix in various disputes, including disputes relating to, “Messiah,” “The Hatchet Wielding Hitchhiker,” “The Watcher” and “Sean Combs: The Reckoning.”
- Ed Sheeran, Warner Music, and Sony Music Publishing in a landmark copyright jury trial victory, defeating the claim that Ed’s hit song “Thinking Out Loud” infringes the song “Let’s Get It On,” written by Ed Townsend and Marvin Gaye.
- Ed Sheeran, Johnny McDaid, and Sony/ATV in a successful copyright infringement lawsuit regarding the song “The Rest of Our Life,” recorded by Tim McGraw and Faith Hill.
- Ariana Grande, Warner, BMG, Kobalt, Concord Music, Universal, and others in a successful music copyright infringement claim pertaining to the song “7 Rings.”
- H.E.R., Sony, and others in a successful copyright infringement case relating to the song “Focus.”
- Benny Blanco, Ed Sheeran, Khalid, Halsey, Universal, and others in a music copyright infringement claim pertaining to the song “Eastside,” which was withdrawn.

- Jay Z in an infringement claim pertaining to “Black Effect” from *The Carters* album.
- Sony/ATV and its award-winning writer/producer Louis Bell in a music copyright infringement claim regarding the song “Youngblood,” recorded by the band 5 Seconds of Summer.
- Roc Nation, J. Cole, UMG, and others in a music copyright infringement claim pertaining to the song “Déjà vu.”
- Cardi B, City Girls, French Montana, Yo Gotti, Roc Nation, Quality Control, Sony/ATV, Epic, Universal, and others in an infringement claim relating to the licensed sample of “Choppa Style.”
- Bruno Mars, Mark Ronson, Phil Lawrence, and Jeff Bhasker, as well as the music publishers and record label for the smash hit “Uptown Funk.”
- Talent agency Don Buchwald & Associates and one of its agents in the second lawsuit brought by Hulk Hogan, based on *Gawker’s* 2012 release of video footage of Hogan’s extra-marital affair with his ex-best friend’s then-wife.
- Prestige Entertainment and Renaissance Ventures, one of the nation’s largest ticket brokers, in a suit brought by Ticketmaster alleging the companies violated copyright and cybersecurity laws by using bots to purchase large numbers of tickets for resale.
- Capitol Records, Screen Gems-EMI Music, Colgems-EMI Music, and Jones/Tintoretto Entertainment Company in a copyright infringement suit against the former manager of David Bowie, involving the Grammy-award winning music of Bowie, which resulted in a \$9.4 million judgment for her clients.

Ilene has spent her entire career at Pryor Cashman, starting as a summer associate in 1992.

## Services

- Copyright
- M+E Litigation
- Music
- Privacy, Publicity + Defamation
- Litigation
- Media + Entertainment
- Music Litigation

## Education

- Fordham University School of Law (J.D., *honors*, 1993)
- University of Pennsylvania (B.A., *cum laude*, 1990)

## Recognition

- Recognized in *Variety’s* Music Legal Elite Report (2024-25)
- Named to *Forbes* inaugural Best-In-State Lawyers 2025 List for New York in Entertainment Law
- Recognized as a "Leading Lawyer" in Copyright (2018-21, 2025) and Media + Entertainment: Litigation (2018-19, 2025) by *Legal 500*
- Recognized as a leading Media + Entertainment: Litigation attorney by *Chambers USA* (2022-26)
- Named a “Top Music Lawyer” by *Billboard* (2019-2025)
- Named an IP Star for Copyright by *Managing IP* (2025)
- Named a "Notable Litigator & Trial Attorney" by *Crain’s New York Business* (2025)
- Named a “Distinguished Leader” by the *NYLJ* Professional Excellence Awards (2024)
- Named “Copyright Lawyer of the Year” by the Women in Business Law Awards Americas (2024)
- Named one of *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Global Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers for IP, Litigation - Music, Film, Theater, Media (2025)
- Named one of *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Global IP Lawyers for IP Litigation – Music, Theater, Copyright (2025)
- Named one of *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Lawyers in America (2026)
- Named a “Legal Lion of the Week” by *Law360* (2023)
- Named a “Litigator of the Week” runner-up by *The Litigation Daily* (2023)
- Named a “General Litigation Trailblazer” by *The National Law Journal* (2023)

- Named to *Crain's New York Business*' "Notable Women in Law" list (2022)
- Recognized in *Variety's* Legal Impact Report (2021, 2023)
- Named to "Women in Music" list by *Billboard* (2023)
- Recognized as a top attorney in Entertainment Law: Music (2020-23, 2025-26), Copyright Law (2023-26), and Litigation: Intellectual Property (2023-26) by *Best Lawyers in America*
- Named to the *Super Lawyers – New York Metro* list in Intellectual Property Litigation (2013-2025)

## Admissions

- New York

## Professional Affiliations

- Member, The Copyright Society of the U.S.A.
- Member, Fordham University, Small to Midsize Law Firm Leaders Dean's Advisory Council

## Publications

May 1, 2024

**Farkas Q&A: How I Made Practice Group Chair**

*Law.com*

January 9, 2024

**Farkas and Finguerra-DuCharme Discuss Practice Co-Chair Promotions**

*Law360*

May 25, 2023

**Zakarin and Farkas Outline Sheeran Copyright Victory for Law360**

*Law360*

May 11, 2023

**Farkas and Zakarin Discuss Sheeran Trial in Litigation Daily Q+A**

*Am Law Litigation Daily*

May 5, 2023

**Farkas Discusses Sheeran Copyright Win in Variety Q+A**

*Variety*

April 27, 2012

**I See (Virtual) Dead People: Tupac Shakur and the Right of Publicity**