

Director
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Education
University of Hawaii, William S. Richardson School of Law
J.D. (1995)

Stanford University
B.A., English (1988)

Areas of Practice:
Commercial Litigation, Administrative/Regulatory Law, Government Relations, Appellate Practice

Senior Management Experience:
Hawaii Lieutenant Governor

Hawaii Attorney General

Executive Committee, National Association of Attorneys General

Honolulu Managing Director

Honolulu First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Chair, Honolulu Police Commission

Professional Activities:
Licensed in Hawaii
President, American Judicature Society
Director, Leadership Center for Attorney General Studies
ABA, National Association of Attorneys General Representative

Presentation/ Articles:
"Getting Front and Center to Confront Prejudice", Expert Forum, Law and Policy Analysis, May 26, 2022

DOUGLAS S. CHIN

Honolulu litigation lawyer has Douglas S. Chin has extensive experience in state and federal courts, from Hawaii to the United States Supreme Court, and experience in managing state and local government agencies at the highest levels.

Mr. Chin focuses his practice in commercial litigation, administrative law, government relations and appellate practice.

Mr. Chin is rated ***AV Preeminent®*** *by* ***Martindale-Hubbell®***; the highest rating possible, for his skill and integrity.

Mr. Chin has been named to ***The Best Lawyers in America®*** list in the practice areas of Appellate Practice, Commercial Litigation, Government Relations Practice, Administrative/Regulatory Law and Civil Rights Law. Mr. Chin has been named the ***"Lawyer of the Year"*** in Honolulu by ***The Best Lawyers in America®***, in the practice areas of ***Civil Rights Law (2023, 2026), Appellate Practice (2027)*** and ***Administrative/Regulatory Law (2025).***

Mr. Chin has been selected to the **Hawaii *Super Lawyers®*** list since 2024, in the practice area of *Business Litigation*.

Mr. Chin has been recognized as a "Litigation Star" by *Benchmark Litigation*.

Mr. Chin is recognized by ***Chambers and Partners USA Leading Lawyers for Business*** in the practice area General: Commercial Litigation.

Litigation Highlights

In 2024, Mr. Chin argued before the Hawaii Supreme Court representing the State Land Use Commission in a case examining the use of agricultural lands or farm dwellings for short-term vacation rentals. The Hawaii Supreme Court unanimously upheld Rosehill v. State of Hawai'i Land Use Commission, and ordered that farm dwellings in agricultural districts could not to be used as short-term vacation rentals.

Three Buckets for Evaluation of Land Use: Watch Mr. Chin's argument at 13:15.

In 2020, Mr. Chin, on behalf of a major international auto distributor, obtained a unanimous jury verdict in a federal trial reducing the damages sought by plaintiffs from $42 million to one dollar ($1), in addition to being awarded substantial counterclaim damages.

As a state and Honolulu County prosecutor for more than 15 years, Mr. Chin tried approximately 50 jury cases to verdict.

Mr. Chin was recognized with a “Top Gun” award for winning the most trials in a calendar year out of 100 Honolulu prosecutors.

Prior Government Experience

Mr. Chin served in state government as the Hawaii Lieutenant Governor in 2018 and as the Hawaii Attorney General from 2015-2018. For his efforts, Mr. Chin in 2017 was recognized by the Hawaii State Bar Association as its “Champion for Social Justice”, and by the Council on American Islamic Relations as a “Defender of Liberty”.

Mr. Chin also served in city government as the Managing Director for the City & County of Honolulu from 2010 to 2013, as Acting City Prosecutor in 2010, and as First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney from 2006 to 2010.

Community

Mr. Chin currently serves or has served on multiple boards outside of work, including the Leadership Center for Attorney General Studies, the Honolulu Police Commission, the American Judicature Society, and the local Easter Seals, YMCA and American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) chapters.

What People Say About Mr. Chin:

"Doug has been an amazing partner. He is responsive and knowledgeable, and, importantly, has established relationships that allow us to efficiently get critical tasks done right. We look forward to engaging even more as we embark on contracts with new verticals and customers. With Doug, we are able to navigate our local environment with efficiency and care."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Been an extreme pleasure working with Doug Chin and Lauren Kagawa. They respond in a timely fashion, keep things simple and easy to understand, and both are so very positive when we needed to deal Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Doug Chin at Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher is very familiar with our particular regulatory agency here in Hawaii. He is an excellent and effective communicator with not only us, but with government agencies as well, he presents our organization to them in such a positive light. Doug's hardworking and persevering qualities, in addition to his patience and responsiveness, has made an impactful and smoother transition for our leadership team when working with Government agencies. Mahalo to Doug for his expertise and

assistance!"
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Doug Chin and Sara Strona of Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher have provided valuable service to a mutual client in a complex matter. They have communicated well and wisely. Their work has been of high quality and their approach to problem solving has been practical and actionable."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"We have had an exceptional experience with Doug Chin at Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher. His knowledge of administrative and regulatory law is of the highest quality. He explains his findings and approach to the situation to us at our Hawaiian association in very simple terms and keeps things concise and on point! We highly recommend attorney Doug Chin to any organization needing assistance in these areas and are very thankful to him!"
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"As general counsel to a company with operations in multiple locations across the Hawai'ian Islands and throughout North America, having the support and sophisticated commercial litigation experience of Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher is an invaluable asset to me and my organization. More specifically, Doug Chin is highly attentive to my commercial litigation needs; has provided me with detailed insight into the state and federal courts of Hawai'i and has the knack for balancing legal strategy with business realities. Furthermore, his significant municipal law experience is a vital resource when seeking to resolve a dispute with a local, state or federal agency or other governmental body. If and when I need help in Hawai'i, I do not hesitate in contacting Doug Chin and Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher for the legal assistance that I need."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Tina and Doug make a great team at Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher. You can rely on them to work well with high-net-worth clients."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Doug Chin and Sara Tsukamoto Strona are primary contacts at Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher. Both are extremely good at what they do and exceptional at government relations and regulatory compliance."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Doug Chin, at Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher, has been a wonderful partner in our government relations efforts. He is a consummate professional and well respected in our community, so he is able to open many doors for us. We appreciate our partnership with Doug and with Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"I have never been more satisfied with the personal attention, straight forward answers, awareness of budget and attention to details and their understanding of working with County and State officials than what Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher has consistently delivered in our entitlement process for special permit in a complex situation."
Best Law Firms, Client Comment

"Doug Chin is noted for his wide-ranging disputes expertise, including commercial and municipal litigation. "Doug Chin is a sophisticated professional who understands the political climate and landscape, including individuals and organizations." "Doug is a smart and savvy litigator with an understated but firm presence in court that has earned him respect from judges and lawyers across the aisle." "Doug is extremely knowledgeable and keenly aware of the political environment, but understands the needs of business too."
Chambers USA Leading Lawyers for Business, Client Comments

"Douglas Chin is sought for his deep experience in administrative law and government relations, as well as commercial litigation. Former co-counsel has high regards for Chin's courtroom presence. "He has a humble demeanor," they note. "He's quick-witted and has a sharp legal mind."
Benchmark Litigation, Client Comments