

## **George Cohen, Esq. Biographical Sketch**

George Cohen's impressive career as a labor lawyer spanned six decades (1960-2014). He initially got his "feet wet" at the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C. (1960-1966). First, as an attorney-advisor to member Gerald A. Brown, and then as an appellate court advocate in the Office of the General Counsel.

Thereafter, Mr. Cohen entered private practice with the Washington, D.C. firm that became known as Bredhoff & Kaiser. He was recognized as one of the nation's leading labor lawyers representing a wide array of private and public sector unions.

As a senior partner, Mr. Cohen developed three special fields of expertise (1) appellate court advocacy, (2) negotiating collective bargaining agreements, and (3) specific substantive subjects – the law of occupational safety and health and sports and entertainment law.

High spots of his accomplishments include arguing five landmark cases before the Supreme Court and nearly 100 circuit court of appeals cases (25 or so before our home circuit, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit).

Mr. Cohen's major clients were the United Steelworkers; the AFL-CIO; the American Federation of Musicians (General Counsel 1986-2005); the Major League Baseball Players Association; the National Basketball Players Association; and numerous public sector unions representing teachers, firefighters, and police.

After retiring from Bredhoff & Kaiser in 2005, Mr. Cohen commenced a career as a mediator. He began by serving in a pro bono capacity for the prestigious Mediation Panel of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. In recognition of his skill in performing that all-important function, President Barack Obama nominated him to be the Director of the Federal

Mediation and Conciliation Service, an independent agency established by Congress in 1947. He was confirmed by the Senate and served from 2009 to 2014. Throughout that period, he successfully mediated a number of high-profile disputes that posed a significant threat to the nation's economy – the International Longshoremen Association's dispute with the shipping industry; Verizon's major dispute with their major unions, the Major Soccer League dispute with the Players Association, and the threatened strike to shut down the BART system in San Francisco, to name a few.

Mr. Cohen's extracurricular activities are likewise notable. He served as adjunct professor at Georgetown Law School teaching a variety of subjects, and he served as the Union Co-chair in both the first ABA Committees on Safety and Health Law and Sports and Entertainment Law.

The number of awards he received parallel his career: A Legend of the D.C. Bar, the Sports Lawyers Association Award of Excellence, the Cornell Law School Exemplary Public Service Award, and the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award. He was also listed in the Best Lawyers in America for 25 consecutive years.

Mr. Cohen graduated from Long Beach High School, Cornell University (BA), Cornell Law School (LLB), and the Georgetown Law School (LLM).

Mr. Cohen's wife of 61 years, Phyllis (deceased in 2020), was a world-class color woodblock printmaker and civil libertarian. His son Bruce Cohen is a successful motion picture producer ("American Beauty," "Milk," "Silver Linings Playbook," and "Rustin." He was named by President Biden to co-chair the reestablished Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Bruce is married to Gabriel Catone, and they have one five-star daughter, Ilaria.

Daughter Julie is a highly-respected documentary film producer and director; her works include “RBG,” “Julia,” “My Name is Pauli Murray,” “Every Body,” “Gabby Gifford Won’t Back Down.” Julie is married to Paul Barrett.