

VINCENT F. RAGOSTA, JR.

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Vincent F. Ragosta, Jr. received a Bachelor of Arts degree, *magna cum laude*, from Boston College in 1976 and his Juris Doctor degree in 1979 from Gonzaga University School of Law in Spokane, Washington. For decades, Mr. Ragosta has been AV rated with Martindale Hubbell, the highest obtainable rating of legal ability and ethics by the preeminent national rating agency of attorneys in America. He has been engaged in the private practice of law since October of 1979, with emphasis on labor and employment litigation and arbitration. His practice is concentrated in representing employers, including municipalities, school committees, government agencies and quasi-public corporations.¹ He is seasoned in all phases of collective bargaining, grievance and interest arbitration, employment litigation and other varieties of civil litigation. Throughout his career he has advised private sector companies in union avoidance strategies and represented many companies in defeating union organizing campaigns and proceedings before the NLRB. In 1988 he represented the City of Providence in enjoining a wildcat strike by its fire fighters, and in 1989 he served as lead counsel to Providence in one of the state's longest interest arbitrations, prevailing by avoiding nearly \$40 million of union-proposed staffing and pension changes. In 1996 he negotiated Rhode Island's first municipal labor agreement which eliminated longevity salary supplements for all employees, reduced sick leave accruals, allowed unrestricted layoffs, permitted privatization, and required unprecedented employee cost sharing for health coverage. In 1997 he defended the City of Cranston in litigation and arbitration upholding the layoffs of over ten percent of its workforce, and in 2005 he won a Superior Court ruling permitting the layoffs of the Cranston Crossing Guards. In 2008 he represented the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District in Superior Court, overturning an arbitration award restricting that district's policy decision to merge its art and music

¹Representative public sector clients have included: State of Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay Commission, Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, Wyatt Detention Facility, City of Central Falls, City of Cranston, City of Pawtucket, City of Providence, City of East Providence, City of Warwick, City of Woonsocket, Town of Barrington, Town of Bristol, Town of Coventry, Town of Cumberland, Town of Exeter, Town of Hopkinton, Town of Lincoln, Town of Middletown, Town of Narragansett, Town of North Providence, Town of North Smithfield, Town of Scituate, Town of Smithfield, Town of South Kingstown, Union Fire District of South Kingstown, Town of West Warwick, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District, Warwick School Committee, Scituate School Committee, William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School, Rhode Island School for the Deaf, Cranston Public Library, East Greenwich Free Library, George Hail Free Library and the Rhode Island State Police.

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departments into a singular fine arts department. In 2009 he successfully defended the Town of North Providence in litigation brought by the International Association of Fire Fighters seeking to enjoin the closure of a fire station. In 2010 he prevailed in declaratory relief litigation for North Providence in which its police department's total staffing, mandated in one of its collective bargaining agreements, was rendered unenforceable. And in 2012, he persuaded the Superior Court to vacate an arbitrator's award that had rigidly compelled Providence to over-staff public safety dispatchers. In 2013 and 2015, he convinced the Rhode Island Superior and Supreme Courts to overturn an arbitration award imposing a "round-up" rule, giving Cranston police officers pension service credit for a full year after working only six months and a day. In 2019 he prevailed in Sullivan v. Coventry Municipal Employees Retirement Plan, et al., Supreme Court of Rhode Island No. 2015-58-M.P.; No. 2016-73-Appeal (KC 12-1126), upholding the Town of Coventry's denial of benefits to a retiree, which spared the town's pension plan from insolvency. In 2022, he argued Town of North Providence v. Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 12, Rhode Island Supreme Court No. 2021-58, reversing the Superior Court's confirmation of an errant arbitration award which had forced North Providence to automatically fill vacancies as they occur, without regard to any operational or fiscal considerations. In 2023, he successfully argued Angelo Riccitelli v. Town of North Providence, Rhode Island Supreme Court No. 2022-348, culminating in a reversal of the Superior Court's grant of summary judgment to a retired firefighter's claim for an enhanced pension supplement. In 2024, he convinced the Rhode Island Supreme Court in Rhode Island Troopers Association et al. v. State of Rhode Island, Division of the State Police, et al., No. 2023-113, to disallow a disability pension to a state trooper who had claimed his mental illness was causally connected to the performance of duty, when in fact it was traceable to the legal fallout of being criminally charged with assaulting an arrestee.

Mr. Ragosta has prosecuted nearly all of Rhode Island's high-profile police misconduct cases under the *Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights*, including the Providence Police Department's promotional tests cheating scandal, the Cranston Police Department's sex-on-duty and Ticket Gate scandals, and scores of others for municipal police agencies and the Rhode Island State Police. He represented the Providence Retirement Board in pension divestiture proceedings stemming from corruption uncovered in the Department of Justice's Plunder Dome investigation.

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He served as Assistant City Solicitor for Providence from 1984 to 1991. He is a member of the Rhode Island Bar Association's Labor Law & Employment Committee. He chaired the Rhode Island Bar Association's Superior Court Bench/Bar Committee and was a member of the committee which developed *Rules for Court Annexed Arbitration for the Rhode Island Superior Court* and has served actively as a court annexed arbitrator since the inception of that program in 1989. As a mediator appointed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, he's resolved many protracted labor disputes and impasses. Among the original cadre of mediators for the Superior Court's annual Settlement Week, and by direct appointment, he's mediated hundreds of civil cases of diverse varieties, including general negligence, products liability, medical and legal malpractice, employment discrimination, shareholder disputes, construction, defamation, and eminent domain. Public and private employers often engage him to conduct independent investigations of allegations of student abuse, employment discrimination, workplace bullying and mobbing, and related workplace climate issues.

Mr. Ragosta frequently presents at labor and employment law seminars conducted by the American Arbitration Association, the International Personnel Management Association-Rhode Island Chapter, the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association, the University of Rhode Island's Schmidt Labor Research Center, the Rhode Island Bar Association, and the Council on Education in Management. He joins some of the country's most prominent arbitrators and advocates on the American Arbitration Association's National Labor/Management Council, which addresses trends and improvements in labor arbitration in the United States. In 2021 Mr. Ragosta was inducted into the *Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly*, Excellence in the Law, Hall of Fame. Also, in 2021, upon recommendation of the Rhode Island Bar Association, Governor Daniel McKee appointed Mr. Ragosta to the Rhode Island Judiciary's Commission on Judicial Tenure and Discipline.