



Who's Who at Hinckley Allen: John J. Bolton

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John's practice is focused on real estate matters representing a wide range of commercial real estate issues including acquisition, development, zoning and permitting matters, and leasing of commercial property.

How did you get involved in, or what led you to practicing, Real Estate law?

I didn't take the traditional route to law school. In fact, I earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in electrical engineering and worked as an engineer for six years before I decided to go to law school. As an attorney, my engineering background provides me with a unique perspective that differentiates me from others in my field. My engineering background also enables me to "speak the same language" as the engineers working on my projects, which is a valuable asset.

As I transitioned from engineering to law, my original intent was to work in patent law. However, after a summer working with a general practitioner who had a specialty in real estate, I discovered an interest in real estate law. I enjoy my real estate work because – just like engineering – it requires problem-solving and an ability to visualize outcomes, especially on projects with lengthy timelines. I also love the diversity of my work. It provides me with the opportunity to serve clients here in the Northeast and across the country. Recently, I've worked on leases in a variety of cities spanning from Springfield, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. to Reno, Nevada and San Diego, California.

Given the challenges working in the Real Estate industry, what makes it all worth it to you?

Many commercial real estate leasing transactions can take months to complete. One of the most satisfying parts of my job is seeing my clients finally get to build – and ultimately

open – their retail locations. Seeing a project through to completion takes a great deal of tenacity and patience. In fact, one of my projects – which involved leasing property for a CVS store in Kingston, Rhode Island – spanned seven years. Leases can be rather complex, and involve other issues besides the lease itself, including environmental considerations and competition with other retailers. In the end, when all of the negotiations are complete and a store is set up for success, I feel a great sense of pride.

Who was the biggest influence in your career (mentor/teacher/relative) and why?

The biggest influence in my life, and in my career, was my Dad. He worked three jobs to put me and my two brothers through college and provide opportunities for us. His commitment demonstrated the value of a strong work ethic.

What are some of the latest developments or top types of issues you are seeing in your sector?

The retail industry’s transformation has had a ripple effect on the commercial real estate sector. Changes in consumer behavior and competition from online retailers have forced shopping center owners and developers to be more creative to attract customers. As a result, property owners and developers are increasingly favoring mixed-use developments. These developments offer a “live, work, play” environment, mixing retail uses such as restaurants, entertainment, housing, and office space among traditional retailers. My client CVS, for example, offers MinuteClinic and other health care-related services in stores throughout the country, and continues to innovate and evolve in a challenging retail marketplace. Through this creative approach, CVS is able to enhance its ability to care for customers and maintain foot traffic at brick-and-mortar locations.

What’s the hardest (or best) lesson you’ve learned about practicing law?

The best lesson I learned about practicing law is to prioritize based on what will add the most value for my client. I strive to be a very bottom-line-oriented attorney. It takes true partnership, experience, deep client knowledge, and active listening to discern the most impactful parts of a project or a transaction, and how each piece fits into the overall picture.

Who’s Who at Hinckley Allen is an interview series that highlights each individual’s life experiences and skills, which make them valued business partners for clients as we strive to help them achieve their goals. Discover more interviews of our talented and dedicated

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