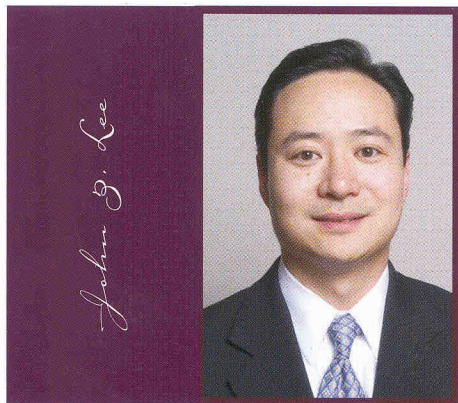


## John Z. Lee

Age: 36



**Specialty:** Commercial Litigation

**Law School:** Harvard Law School

John Lee is used to making his clients happy. He is after all, one of the state's most successful young commercial litigation attorneys, and has won many significant decisions for his clients.

Last year, though, Lee, an attorney with the Chicago law firm of Freeborn & Peters LLP, won a case that made not only his client happy, but countless children across the country.

Lee represented McDonald's Corporation in 2003 in a license dispute with a manufacturer of a popular line of toys, spending three months to secure a significant victory for the corporation. The result? McDonald's was able to go forward with its Happy Meal promotion.

Heather Smedstad, corporate counsel, for McDonald's, worked closely with Lee, and said that his ability, knowledge and professionalism impressed her greatly.

"During the three months that this litigation was pending, John led the Freeborn & Peters team in evaluating the facts, developing the legal theories, engaging in extensive fact and expert discovery, preparing submissions to the court and preparing for the preliminary injunction hearing," Smedstad said. "John led our efforts in interviewing witnesses, developing our litigation strategies and implementing the strategies that ultimately proved successful."

This success is just one of many for Lee. In 2002, for example, he helped mortgage company Taylor Bean & Whitaker Mortgage Corporation evaluate a potential legal malpractice claim. Impressed greatly by Lee's knowledge, officials at the mortgage firm have since called on him to represent the company in a wide variety of litigation and corporate matters. Recently, Taylor bean has retained Lee to manage and oversee all of its litigation throughout the country.

As an example of his work with this company, Lee recently negotiated a successful settlement with the City of Chicago on

## Freeborn & Peters LLP

311 S. Wacker Drive # 3000  
Chicago IL 60606  
Telephone: 312.360.6738  
E-mail: [jlee@freebornpeters.com](mailto:jlee@freebornpeters.com)

**"He has a tremendous ability to evaluate complex legal and factual issues, but never loses focus on the overall goals and needs of the client."**

two cases involving allegedly unsafe buildings in which Taylor Bean held mortgage interests. He also devised a strategy to successfully convince a Florida mortgage brokerage company that had defrauded Taylor Bean to repurchase a number of fraudulent loans totaling more than \$2 million. He did this without ever having to file a lawsuit.

"During his representation of Taylor Bean, John has demonstrated a very practical, common sense approach to legal issues and disputes," said Lee Farkas, Chairman of Taylor Bean & Whitaker Mortgage Corporation. "He has a tremendous ability to evaluate complex legal and factual issues, but never loses focus on the overall goals and needs of the client."

Lee is also willing to devote his legal skills to help the community. Officials at the HOPE Fair Housing Center know this well. In 1999 and 2000, Lee provided pro bono representation for the housing advocacy center and a local family in a federal Fair Housing Act lawsuit against a condominium association and property management company. The complaint alleged that the defendants had repeatedly harassed the family because of the son's disabilities, failed to stop other condominium residents from doing the same and failed to reasonably accommodate his disabilities.

In the end, Lee negotiated a very favorable settlement for his clients as well as obtaining significant legal rulings from the court interpreting the Fair Housing Act.

"John displayed a tremendous level of commitment and sensitivity when interacting with the clients, and a tenaciousness in dealings with opposing counsel," said Sharon Legenza, with the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. "John displayed an excellent ability to evaluate complex legal and factual issues and was always able to remain focused on the core issues in the case."