



## → J.D. Rees

**Special Counsel**  
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John (“J.D.”) Rees is Special Counsel in the Business Trial Practice Group of Sheppard Mullin’s Century City office. He is also a member of the firm’s Private Wealth & Fiduciary Litigation team.

### Areas of Practice

J.D.’s practice focuses primarily on trusts and estates litigation and administration. He litigates all manner of probate-court disputes, including trust and will contests, heirship disputes, fiduciary-removal and surcharge actions, elder-abuse actions, contested conservatorships and guardianships, creditor claims and actions, and more. J.D. also appears regularly in civil court, both on probate and on general commercial matters. In addition to litigating matters through mediation and trial, J.D. advises his individual, institutional, and nonprofit clients on adverse administrations of trusts and estates with assets that span the globe. J.D. also helps clients with drafting and revising estate plans (including wills and trusts).

J.D. is an active member of the Los Angeles legal community. He is the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) Trusts & Estates Section. He also dedicates significant time annually towards pro bono matters, including pro bono representations of unaccompanied minors in Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases and of victims of financial elder abuse in partnership with various nonprofit legal-aid organizations.

In his spare time, J.D. writes articles and presents to clients and various prominent professional groups about cutting-edge issues, including issues relating to digital assets and cryptocurrencies, modern standards for mental capacity of testators and would-be conservatees, and ethical use of artificial intelligence in the practice of law. Before having his first daughter in 2022, J.D. also enjoyed spending free time working as one of the alumni coaches and tournament directors for the award-winning UCLA School of Law Mock Trial Program, which he proudly did since his graduation from UCLA Law in 2014.

Through his work and various professional involvements, J.D. has built a reputation as a tenacious but fair advocate for his clients with a relentless urge to solve problems and, above all, as someone who is a dependable, honest broker.

### Honors

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, *Best Lawyers*, 2023-2026

## Articles

- 5 Critical Steps for Administering Trusts and Estates with Cryptocurrency Holdings  
*Daily Journal*, 08.21.2025
- Ethica Ex Machina Or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love ChatGPT | Ethical Considerations For Trusts And Estates Attorneys Using Generative AI  
*Trust & Estates Quarterly*, Winter 2024 Issue
- Trust and Estate Considerations with the Corporate Transparency Act  
01.11.2024
- Cryptocurrencies and Trustees' Duty to Invest Prudently: Navigating Fiduciary Duties in The Age of Decentralization  
*Trust and Estates Quarterly – Volume 24, Issue 3*, 2018
- Bitcoin Taxation: IRS Notice 2014-21 Is Just the Beginning  
*Los Angeles Lawyer Magazine*, 04.2018
- Land of Confusion: Attorney-Client Privilege and Duty of Confidentiality in Guardianships and Conservatorships  
*California Trusts and Estates Quarterly – Volume 23, Issue 4*, 2017

## Speaking Engagements

"The Files Are \*In\* The Computer? Administering, Litigating, and Planning For Digital Assets Under RUFADAA," Woodland Hills Tax and Estate Planning Council, December 4, 2025

"Managing Digital Assets as Fiduciaries: Navigating Modern Asset Management Challenges", Arizona Fiduciaries Association (AFA) and National Association of Elder Law Attorneys, Arizona Chapter (AZNAELA) Annual Fall Joint Conference, September 26, 2025

"In Bitcoin, We Trust: Avoiding Administrative Pitfalls in Trusts and Estates with Large Concentrations of Crypto and Other Digital Assets," Continuing Education of the Bar (CEB) Webinar, August 20, 2025

"In Bitcoin, We Trust: Avoiding Administrative Pitfalls in Trusts and Estates with Large Concentrations of Crypto and Other Digital Assets," Beverly Hills Bar Association, Trusts & Estates Law Section, July 15, 2025

"Managing Digital Assets as Fiduciaries: Navigating Modern Asset Management Challenges," Independent Trustee Alliance (ITA) Annual Conference, May 15, 2025

"Managing Digital Assets as Fiduciaries: Navigating Modern Asset Management Challenges," Professional Fiduciary Association of California (PFAC) Statewide Webinar, January 30, 2025

"Who Wants to Live Forever? Identifying and Working Through Capacity Issues in The Age of De-Aging," Woodland Hills Tax and Estate Planning Council, December 17, 2024

"Digital Assets and Fiduciaries: Navigating Fiduciary Duties in the Age of Cryptocurrencies, NFTs, and ChatGPT" San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA), Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law Section, October 1, 2024

"Managing Digital Assets as Fiduciaries: Navigating Modern Asset Management Challenges," Professional Fiduciary Association of California (PFAC) Northern California Education Day, September 19, 2024

"*Ethica Ex Machina*: AI Ethics for T&E Attorneys and their Clients", California Lawyers Association (CLA), Trusts & Estates Executive Committee (TEXCOM), April 17, 2024

"Virtual Integrity: Ethics for California Attorneys and Legal Professionals During The Epoch of Generative AI," San Joaquin College of Law Alumni Association, January 13, 2024

"*Ethica Ex Machina*: AI Ethics for T&E Attorneys and their Clients," USC Trusts & Estates Conference, November 17, 2023

"Professional Responsibility in the Age of ChatGPT – Legal Ethics for T&E Practitioners and AI," Woodland Hills Estate Planning Council, November 9, 2023

"The Crypto Craze: Decoding Digital Assets For Estate Planners, Litigators, And Fiduciary Clients In Trusts And Estates," California Fellows Meeting for the American College of Trusts and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), August 2023

"Communicating With and Assisting Clients With Neurocognitive Disorders: Signs, Tools, and Tips for Court-Appointed Counsel and Fiduciaries," Aviva K. Bobb Advanced Court-Appointed Counsel Training, Trusts & Estates Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, March 2023

"A Practical Guide to Crypto Assets for Estate Planners, Trustees, And Estate Administrators," Probate Attorneys of San Diego, August 2022

"Tales from the Crypt(o): Planning, Administration, and Litigation Considerations for Cryptocurrencies and Digital Assets," LACBA T&E Symposium, September 20, 2021

"Administering Trusts and Estates in the Age of Cryptocurrencies," Fiduciary Roundtable of the San Gabriel Valley, November 2019

"Crypto and Blockchain 101 for California Estate Planners, Fiduciaries, and Fiduciary-Litigation Counsel," Professional Fiduciary Association of California, Inland Empire Chapter, July 2019

"Crypto and Blockchain 101 for California Estate Planners, Fiduciaries, and Fiduciary-Litigation Counsel," San Francisco Estate Planning Council, May 2019

## Events

Ethica Ex Machina: AI Ethics for T&E Attorneys and their Clients  
Webinar, 04.17.2024

## Memberships

### Current:

- Chair, Executive Committee of LACBA Trusts & Estates Section (2025–26)

- Member, Association of Business Trial Lawyers (2014–present)

## Former:

- Vice Chair, Executive Committee of LACBA Trusts & Estates Section (2024–25)
- Member, Sheppard Mullin Pro Bono Committee (2019–2023)
- Attorney Coach and Tournament Coordinator, UCLA School of Law Mock Trial Program (2014–23)
- Secretary/Treasurer, LACBA Trusts & Estates Section Executive Committee (2023–24)
- Member At Large, LACBA Trusts & Estates Section Executive Committee
- Assistant Vice President of Special Events, LACBA Barristers/Young Attorneys Section Executive Committee (2020–21)
- Secretary, LACBA Barristers/Young Attorneys Section Executive Committee (2018–19)
- Member At Large, LACBA Barristers/Young Attorneys Section Executive Committee (2016–18)
- Member At Large, LACBA LA Lawyer Magazine Editorial Committee (2016–18)

## Practices

Litigation

Private Wealth and Fiduciary Litigation

Private Wealth and Fiduciary Litigation

## Industries

Artificial Intelligence

Blockchain

Blockchain and Fintech

Fintech

## Education

J.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

B.A., University of San Diego, 2010, *cum laude*

## Admissions

California

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Central District of California

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California

## Languages

Spanish