

Theodore K. Cheng



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THEO CHENG

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Theo Cheng is an independent, full-time arbitrator and mediator, focusing on commercial, intellectual property (IP), technology, entertainment, and employment disputes, both domestically in the U.S. and internationally. Mr. Cheng has been appointed to the rosters of the American Arbitration Association (AAA), the International Centre for Dispute Resolution (ICDR), the International Institute for Conflict Prevention & Resolution (CPR Institute), Resolute Systems, the American Intellectual Property Law Association's (AIPLA) List of Arbitrators and Mediators, and the Silicon Valley Arbitration & Mediation Center's (SVAMC) List of the World's Leading Technology Neutrals. He is a member of the National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals and a Fellow of the College of Commercial Arbitrators. Mr. Cheng has served as Chair/President of a tribunal in over 15 proceedings and as a wing arbitrator in over 20 other proceedings. The court in *Bartz v. Anthropic PBC*, Case No. 3:24-cv-05417-WHA (N.D. Cal.) also recently appointed him the Special Master over all claimant disputes that may arise in connection with the historic \$1.5 billion class-wide copyright infringement settlement in that action. Mr. Cheng is also an Adjunct Professor at New York Law School where he teaches ADR-related courses and a Practitioner in Residence at the Intellectual Property Policy Institute at the University of Akron School of Law. He recently founded Sonata Academy to provide education and training in the ADR field, offering arbitration, mediation, and other related courses to both neutrals and advocates.

Mr. Cheng is a Past President of the Justice Marie L. Garibaldi American Inn of Court for ADR (Garibaldi Inn), a Past Chair of the New York State Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section, and currently serves as the President of the Copyright Society. He received the 2024 Richard K. Jeydel Award from the Garibaldi Inn (demonstrated civility, professionalism, ethics, and excellence in and service to ADR) and the 2020 James B. Boskey ADR Practitioner of the Year Award from the New Jersey State Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section. The *National Law Journal* named him a 2017 ADR Champion. In 2022-2025, Mr. Cheng was voted a Top Arbitrator in the *New York Law Journal*'s Best of Reader Rankings Survey; in 2021, Mr. Cheng was voted the Best Mediator/Arbitrator in the *New Jersey Law Journal*'s Best of Reader Rankings Survey. In 2007, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association named him one of the Best Lawyers Under 40.

Before becoming a full-time neutral, Mr. Cheng practiced for nearly 25 years as an IP and general commercial litigator covering all areas of intellectual property. He honed his litigation skills at several prominent national law firms where he counseled high net-worth individuals and small to middle-market business entities in a variety of industries (*e.g.*, high-tech, telecommunications, entertainment, consumer products) and represented them in a broad array of business disputes. Some of his most well-known matters involved representing certified classes of songwriters and music publishers, in conjunction with motion picture studios and record labels, in industry-sponsored litigations against various internet, peer-to-peer file-sharing companies such as Napster and Grokster.

Mr. Cheng received his A.B. *cum laude* in Chemistry and Physics from Harvard University and his J.D. from New York University School of Law, where he served as the editor-in-chief of the Moot Court Board. He is admitted to practice in New York and New Jersey. Mr. Cheng began his legal career serving as a law clerk to the Honorable Julio M. Fuentes of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and the Honorable Ronald L. Buckwalter of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Before law school, he completed a management training program at MetLife Insurance Company, eventually becoming a marketing consultant in its brokerage operations, where, among other things, he taught training programs on various insurance, annuity, and software topics and held Chartered Life Underwriter and Chartered Financial Consultant designations and a Series 7 General Securities Representative registration.