

Michael Droke

Partner

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Mike advises cooperatives, food companies, and agricultural businesses on the legal issues shaping their operations and growth, bringing a practical, outside general counsel perspective grounded in experience in both business management and law.

Mike worked in management before becoming a lawyer and then represented the company where he was employed. He founded LegalMine®, Dorsey's document review service. Mike's business experience continues to shape his client work. Mike understands that legal decisions never exist in isolation – instead, effective counsel must account for operational realities, financial considerations, business relationships, and long-term risk. His motto: "I've never had a client call with a legal question, instead they call with a business issue that involves the law."

Mike has particular depth in cooperative law and in the food and agriculture industries. His practice spans corporate governance and organizational structure, mergers and acquisitions, commercial contracting, labor and employment, and other issues that arise throughout the life of a business. Clients turn to him both for discrete legal matters and for ongoing guidance across multiple areas of their operations. He coaches inside counsel teams to build their legal-to-business acumen and effectiveness.

Mike's cooperative practice includes advising natural food grocery, consumer, purchasing, farm supply, agricultural, and investor-model cooperatives on formation, governance, financing, restructuring, strategic combinations, and commercial arrangements. His food and agriculture work similarly combines industry knowledge with a broad business-law perspective, allowing him to address legal issues in the context of how clients operate and compete.

Mike also advises employers on labor and employment matters affecting their workforces and businesses. His experience across corporate, commercial, and employment issues allows him to see connections among legal risks that may otherwise be addressed

Education

- Santa Clara University School of Law (J.D., 1992)
 - *summa cum laude*
 - Editor-In-Chief, Santa Clara Law Review
- University of California, Berkeley (A.B., 1986)

Bar Admissions

- Washington
- California

separately and to help clients develop a more coordinated approach.

He is a firm-wide co-chair of Dorsey's Food, Beverage & Agriculture industry group and the author of *Cooperative Business Law: A Practical Guide to the Special Laws Governing Cooperatives* (Fourth Edition).

Select Experience

- Serves as outside general counsel to National Co-op Grocers, a multi-billion-dollar purchasing cooperative, advising on governance, commercial contracts, and strategic matters.
- Represented Darigold in its strategic partnership with Actus Nutrition.
- Represented Northwest Grain Growers Cooperative in its merger with Mid Columbia Producers.

Professional Affiliations

- Trustee, Washington Athletic Club Board of Governors
- Speaker, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Legal, Tax / Accounting Committee
- Member, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives
- Founding Member and Past President, Association for Corporate Growth

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

Accolades

- *Chambers USA*, Labor & Employment, Washington, 2009-2026
- *Best Lawyers in America*®
 - Employment Law - Management, 2007-2027
 - Labor Law - Management, 2007-2027
 - Litigation - Labor and Employment, 2021-2027
- *Washington Super Lawyer*®, 2003, 2005-2026
- *Thomson Reuters*, "Stand-Out Lawyer", 2024-2025
- Contributed more than 50 Diversity hours, 2023
- Dorsey & Whitney – Scales of Justice Team Award (The World Ventilator Foundation), 2021
- *Best Lawyers in America Employment Law Issue*, 2021
- Rated AV Preeminent® (highest possible for legal skills and ethics) by Martindale-Hubbell®
- *Madison*, "Who's Who Among American Professionals", 2006-present

Languages

- German (conversational)
- Spanish (conversational)
- Italian (conversational)

Legal Writings

Cooperative Business Law: A Practical Guide to the Special Laws Governing Cooperatives



Select Presentations

- *Key issues in Employment Law*, NSAC Western Chapter Meeting (May 2026)
- *Working With Agricultural (and other) Cooperatives*, NCBA/CLUSA, University of Arkansas (March 2026)
- *Governance Traps for the Unwary*, NSAC Western Chapter Meeting (June 2024)
- *Corporate Governance Training*, Legal & Ethical Issues for Directors, TFACC, NSAC, NRECA (July 2023)

- *Surviving the Food Recall, Consumer Cooperative Management Association Tour* (June 2019)
 - *How to Survive a Food Recall, NSAC Western Chapter Meeting* (May 2019)
 - *Webinar Playback: Prop 65 Risks for Food & Beverage Industry* (January 2019)
 - *Risk Management and Ethics for In-House Counsel Seminar* (September 2017)
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Insights

September 24, 2026

Cooperative Business Law: A Practical Guide to the Special Laws Governing Cooperatives, Fourth Edition

March 31, 2026

Washington State Prohibits Non-Competes and Many Non-Solicitation Agreements

January 27, 2026

Trump Administration's Anti-DEI Effort Comes for Section 8(a) Program—Small Businesses and Alaska Native Corporations May be the Next Targets of Significant Federal Change and Scrutiny

December 3, 2025

Rising Class Actions in Washington State Over Employee Handbooks

September 8, 2025

Applicants Do Not Need to Be “Bona Fide” Under the Washington Equal Pay and Opportunities Act, but Washington Supreme Court Leaves Open Several Other Defenses

May 27, 2025

Striking Workers in Washington Will Be Eligible to Receive Unemployment Benefits

February 5, 2025

Washington Employers Must Be Careful about Which Employees are Required to Enter into Non-Compete Agreements

September 30, 2024

Yes, You Can Be Liable for Your Employee's Online Posts!

September 24, 2021

Washington's Travel Time Trap for Employers

June 26, 2021

Farm to Table Talk Podcast: Labor Supremes – Michael Droke

June 23, 2021

Dorsey Partner Mike Droke Discusses SCOTUS Ruling in Favor of Growers Property Rights

June 23, 2021

U.S. Supreme Court Decision Affects California Agricultural Growers

January 15, 2021

Nomads Working from Anywhere

November 9, 2020

Washington Dairy Workers Now Entitled to Overtime Pay

October 23, 2020

Dorsey Partner Mike Droke Comments on CA Uber, Lyft Drivers Now Employees