



LESLIE JOSÉ ZIGEL, J.D. '95

Partner, chair of entertainment, media, and technology group, and co-chair, cannabis practice groups, SMGQ Law

Leslie José Zigel is a partner at SMGQ Law, chair of its entertainment, media, and technology industry group, and co-chair of its cannabis practice group. Zigel focuses on both the creative and business sides of the entertainment industries in the music, television, film, and new technology sectors. His practice includes counseling clients in talent negotiations, record contracts, and music and book publishing; providing outside general counsel

services; and assisting companies with corporate structuring, financing, operations, sales and acquisitions, trademarks, copyrights, and employment issues. Zigel has also orchestrated brand partnerships and structured equity ownership deals for his clients.

Zigel graduated *cum laude* from the University of Rochester, with an interdisciplinary degree between its School of Arts and Sciences and Eastman School of Music. He began his career as a musical festival producer, producing the Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and Miller Maquina Musical, among others; and as a corporate entertainment executive, spearheading the launch of American Express Platinum Card's "By Invitation Only" program and serving as marketing director for American Express Gold Card Events. Following a decade in the music business, Zigel graduated *cum laude* from the University of Miami School of Law, where he served as editor-in-chief of the *Inter-American Law Review*. After graduating, he joined BMG U.S. Latin as director of business and legal affairs, later becoming vice president of business and legal affairs for the Latin American region. As the industry changed with the advent of digital media and online file sharing, Zigel stood at the forefront of the progression.

Since 2003, Zigel has been in private practice both with his own firm, ZIGLAW, and as a partner in the law firms of Greenberg Traurig and Greenspoon Marder. In addition, he has been active as an executive producer of several films and a partner in technology startups such as NFT company Walt Grace Digital. Zigel has received numerous professional accolades, including being named to the *National Law Journal's* 2020 list of Sports and Entertainment Trailblazers, and has made expert appearances on Univision and Telemundo. His current clients include international pop musicians and business clients such as Pitbull, The Wailers, and Endemol Shine Latino. Zigel serves on the board of directors for Young Musicians Unite,

a nonprofit organization that reinforces the importance of music education and offers a platform for young musicians in underserved Miami communities to unite.