Terry Mutchler

PARTNER

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LOCATED IN
Philadelphia, PA

MEET TERRY

> *"I created the nation's first Transparency law practice, a niche expertise that provides access to public records and protects confidential data and documents from public disclosure."*
>
> **— Terry L. Mutchler**

Terry is the Chair of Obermayer's Transparency and Public Data Practice. She represents pharmaceutical companies, hedge funds, defense contractors, life sciences companies, and medical marijuana companies. A key portion of her practice is devoted to helping journalists obtaining public records in real time.

Terry uses open government laws to competitive advantage for corporations and media companies alike. She assists multinational corporations that do business with or are regulated by federal, state, and local government to both protect their information from competitors, but also to access records. She designs individualized work to help agencies and corporations comply with the complex field of transparency law.

It is Terry's priority to help clients meet their government access goals. She loves educating clients as to how they can derive value from these laws, as many clients are unaware of how to navigate these complex laws to add value in commercial and media contexts.

In her Government Relations practice, Terry, leveraging her extensive experience and well-established relationships across the political spectrum, guides clients in effectively navigating the corridors of power at the federal, state, and local levels of government.

In her free time, Terry likes to travel, golf, chalk pastels, antique, and read.

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EXPERIENCE

Before working for a major media law firm in Chicago, Terry clerked for both the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois and the Executive Office of the President of the United States during the Clinton Administration focusing on privacy issues. She served as Illinois' first Public Access Counselor, senior advisor, and speechwriter for the Illinois Attorney General, and ran a successful political campaign for the Illinois Senate Minority Whip.

Before entering the field of law, Terry was an investigative reporter for The Associated Press, becoming the first woman to be appointed AP Statehouse Bureau Chief in Springfield, Illinois. She also served as AP Correspondent in Atlantic City, New Jersey, covering Donald Trump; and Juneau, Alaska, covering politics and the environment. She also was a reporter in Pennsylvania, covering the Pennsylvania Senate. She was the recipient of several Keystone Awards, Pennsylvania's top honor for reporting, during her tenure at The Morning Call of Allentown.

Terry's most notable cases and accomplishments include:

- Founding Executive Director of the Office of Open Records, appointed by Gov. Ed Rendell in 2008. She created an agency to enforce the state's Right-to-Know Law, writing the policies and procedures that govern records access for more than 10,000 units of state and local government. Many of these policies are in use today.
- Appointed Illinois first Public Access Counselor enforcing sunshine laws.
- Conducted more than 2,000 trainings and speeches on how to use open government laws, such as the Freedom of Information Act and the Right-to-Know Law, to competitive advantage.
- Successfully obtained more than 5,000 records for a venture capitalist that wanted to invest in gaming in Malta. She used international FOIA laws to obtain the data, allowing the company to make investment decisions based on the information obtained.
- Helped a multinational corporation, which won a $750 million dollar state contract, protect their confidential and proprietary records and data from being released to a competitor by winning a case in the Commonwealth Court.
- Won a Commonwealth Court decision ordering release of state liquor auctions information on behalf of a state Representative.
- Trained Governor Tom Wolf and his Cabinet on transparency law issues.
- Helped a world-class scientist and university professor protect records submitted to the National Institutes of Health from being scooped up by major pharmaceuticals companies.
- Successfully obtained public records sought by the real estate giant, Zillow Group.
- Successfully obtained records for a Fox Sports affiliate seeking public records.
- Successfully obtained public records for The New York Times reporter.
- Successfully obtained public records for WHYY, an NPR affiliate.

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- Provided training, guidance, and best practices to local townships being inundated with hundreds of Right-to-Know Law requests.
- Represented The Philadelphia Inquirer in its quest to obtain public records related to the pornographic ring infiltrating state government.
- Designed working protocols to help agencies and corporations comply with the complex field of transparency law.

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Terry Mutchler Quoted in The Intercept on Public Records Lawsuit

October 07, 2026 by Terry Mutchler

Terry Mutchler Comments on Penn State "Gag Rule" for Trustees

September 01, 2026 by Terry Mutchler

Terry Mutchler Quoted in Broad + Liberty on Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law

August 13, 2026 by Terry Mutchler

OBERMAYER CLIENT ALERT: Commonwealth Court Win Protecting Corporate Records

July 17, 2026 by Corinna V. Wilson, Terry Mutchler

Terry Mutchler Provides Election Law Analysis Following President Trump's National Address on Transparency of Elections

July 17, 2026 by Terry Mutchler

Reveal Yourself: How One Overlooked Word Unlocked a Trade-Secret Win in Pennsylvania

July 15, 2026 by Corinna V. Wilson, Terry Mutchler, Melissa M. Blanco-Sandman, Mathieu J. Shapiro

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

Terry was the first woman to argue a legal case in Independence Hall. This argument occurred when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court reopened it to hear legal arguments and also to television coverage, for the first time in 270 years. She is on the national board of the Freedom of Information Coalition, having been inducted into their National Heroes Hall of Fame. Terry was awarded the Common Cause 2016 Bob Edgar Public Service Achievement Award for outstanding contribution to transparency in government and integrity for her "force of imagination, initiative and perseverance."

Terry has delivered more than 1,500 speeches and training sessions to government officials, businesses, members of the media and citizens on transparency issues. She writes a column, the Secrets of Transparency, for The Legal Intelligencer.

Terry is a published, award-winning author. Her first book, Under This Beautiful Dome, published in 2014, was a best-selling and award-winning memoir.

She has been interviewed by a number of national news outlets on Transparency law matters and for her book, including The Rachel Maddow Show, National Public Radio, CNN, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Thomson Reuters, the AP, Slate, Politico, The Washington Post, and

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Pa Spotlight.

Additionally, Terry was a recipient of the following awards and honors:

- Selected for inclusion in Pennsylvania's Super Lawyers® for Media/Advertising in 2026
- Named 2025 Advocate of the Year by Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
- Named an honoree in *The 2025 City & State Pennsylvania Above & Beyond*
- Recognized in The Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Hall of Fame
- Recognized in the Corporate Counsel's 2023 Women, Influence and Power in Law (WIPL) Awards in the "**Lifetime Achievement**" category.
- Named Attorney of the Year in The Legal Intelligencer's 2023 Pennsylvania Legal Awards
- Named to The American Lawyer's list of 2022 Northeast Trailblazers
- Named to *City & State Pennsylvania 2022 Pride Power 100*
- Recognized among The Legal Intelligencer's 2022 Professional Excellence Award Winners in the Law Firms Innovators category
- Named one of the 2020 Power Women of the Main Line.
- National Freedom of Information Coalition, Hall of Fame Award
- National Public Service Achievement Award, Common Cause
- Selected a Bohnett Summer Fellowship Recipient, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.
- Honoree of the City & State PA's inaugural "Above & Beyond: Honoring Women of Public and Civic Mind
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Commendation Award
- National Independent Book Publishers Award
- LAMBDA Literary Award, Memoir
- The Keystone Award recipient by the Pennsylvania Youth Congress for
- Juried Artist Exhibit, 3rd Street Gallery Philadelphia

Terry's professional memberships include:

- National Freedom of Information Coalition, Board Member
- Common Cause, Board of Directors
- Pennsylvania Freedom of Information Coalition, Board Member

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- The Chestnut Hill Local, Board Member
- Media Law Resource Center, Member

Awards Won*

*Click here for a description of the standard or methodology on which the awards and honors are based. No aspect of this advertisement is approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

EDUCATION

The John Marshall Law School – J.D.

Pennsylvania State University – B.A. Journalism

Harvard University, Certificate, Senior Executives in State and Local Government

ADMISSIONS

Illinois

Pennsylvania

Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS)

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

CAPABILITIES

Litigation

Appellate

Cyber Liability Defense

Transparency and Public Data

Industry Focus

Financial Services

Health Care

Individuals & Private Clients

International Businesses

Local Governments & Municipal Authorities

Nonprofit Organizations

Real Estate & Construction

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