

## Titan Of The Plaintiffs Bar: Labaton Keller's Michael Canty

By Allison Grande

*Law360 (June 1, 2026, 4:00 PM EDT)* -- When Labaton Keller Sucharow LLP partner and general counsel Michael Canty decided to pursue a legal career, he had no doubt about what type of lawyer he wanted to be.



"We have really no lawyers in my family, so when I went to law school, people would say, 'What kind of law are you going to go into?'" Canty recently told Law360. "And I would say, I want to try cases. I want to be in a courtroom, because that's what lawyers did."

One of his professors advised Canty the "premier job as a courtroom advocate would be an assistant U.S. attorney, but you can't do that right out of law school." And that conversation led Canty — one of the Law360 2026 Titans of the Plaintiffs Bar — back to his roots in New York's Long Island, where he took a job out of law school in 2004 as a prosecutor in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office.

After nearly six years in that role, Canty became an assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, handling an array of white collar, national security and counterterrorism matters that helped him build on the courtroom advocacy skills that would prove useful when he made the jump to Labaton Keller in 2016.

"When I was looking to go into the private sector, the traditional route is that you go to a big defense firm out of the U.S. attorney's office. And I always find that interesting, because the work I do as a securities and data privacy plaintiffs' lawyer is so much more similar to the work I did as a prosecutor," Canty said. "One of the unique things about being a prosecutor is that you're responsible for everything from start to finish, and it really hones your skills, and it gives you an attention to detail that has served me well."

During the past year, Canty has leveraged his prosecutorial experience to achieve significant gains for both investors and consumers, including a \$210 million deal to resolve investors' allegations that fintech Fidelity National Information Services mischaracterized the business prospects



**Michael Canty**  
Labaton Keller

**On his approach to litigating complex data privacy and securities disputes:**  
"Something that my parents really instilled in me at a young age was that having the ability to learn and be a critical thinker is important. And that's why I love being a lawyer, because you're learning something new everyday, and it's critical to be able to understand the technology and case theories at issue and, most importantly, be able to present that information in an understandable and coherent way to a jury. "

of its multibillion-dollar acquisition of payment processor Worldpay, as well as a landmark jury verdict finding Facebook parent company Meta Platforms Inc. liable for intentionally recording sensitive health information that users entered into the period tracking app Flo.

In addition to being on Labaton Keller's executive committee and being its general counsel, Canty is co-leader of the firm's consumer protection and data privacy litigation team, and also heads one of its securities litigation groups. Colleagues say they've been impressed by Canty's legal acumen, as well as his sound judgment and consistent demeanor.

"He has a calm, disciplined approach that earns the confidence of both clients and colleagues, particularly in high-stakes securities and privacy litigation where strategic decisions can shape the outcome of a case," Eric J. Belfi, chairman of Labaton Keller, told Law360. "Clients know they are working with someone who is meticulous in preparation, strategic in execution and relentlessly focused on achieving results."

Canty and his colleagues represented the Boston Retirement System as lead plaintiff in a securities class action against Uber Technologies Inc., accusing the rideshare company of misleading investors, a case that resulted in a \$200 million settlement finalized in 2024.

Canty also helped represent the pension fund in a class action against Alexion Pharmaceuticals Inc., which culminated in a \$125 million settlement in 2023 resolving claims the company made materially false and misleading statements about its flagship drug Soliris.

Timothy J. Smyth, executive officer of the Boston Retirement System, described his time working with Canty as "an exceptional experience."

"From the beginning, he stood out not only for his legal skill and strategic thinking, but also for the way he genuinely cares about the people he represents," Smyth told Law360. "Litigation can be stressful and overwhelming, and Michael has a rare ability to make clients feel informed, confident and supported throughout the process."

Canty largely attributes his success to the skills he developed with the help of mentors in Nassau County, New York, and the Eastern District of New York, who instilled in him the importance of "knowing the cases inside and out, understanding the case theories, and, most importantly, presenting those case theories in an understandable and coherent way to a jury."

The recent Meta privacy trial put this approach on full display.

While defendants Google, Flo Health Inc. and mobile app analytics firm Flurry Inc. reached deals to resolve the claims against them, Canty recalled that, shortly before trial, it became apparent Meta wasn't going to settle claims it violated the California Invasion of Privacy Act by using data analytics tools embedded in the Flo app to obtain users' sensitive menstrual and sexual health information.

"There was kind of a calm, and I remember thinking to myself, 'I've done this before,'" said Canty, who, along with fellow Labaton Keller partner Carol Villegas, were lead trial counsel for the plaintiffs. "Having the experience in trying cases in front of jurors, it wasn't something that we would threaten and say, 'Well, we're not going to do it.' We understood that, we have prepared for trial, we have the experience in doing it, and we're going to do it."

Belfi called the Flo case "a remarkable demonstration of Mike's courtroom abilities," noting that Canty's background as a federal prosecutor was evident throughout the trial, particularly in his examination of senior Meta executives.

"He was extraordinarily prepared and methodical, and his cross-examinations were highly effective because they combined technical command of the evidence with a disciplined courtroom presence that resonated with the jury," Belfi said.

Canty's courtroom expertise played a major role in the law firm's decision to hire him nearly a decade ago, Belfi added.

"We brought Mike in because of his extensive trial experience as a federal prosecutor, and we wanted to bring in a real trial threat," said Belfi, also a former federal prosecutor. "But even more than that, as evidenced by the Flo case that he tried and won last summer, what we wanted to create was more than just a threat. We wanted to show the other side that we're not only willing to go to trial, but also are able to win."

Canty credits the law firm's strong support for the ability that he and his colleagues have to "take cases deep" and for the successes they've been able to achieve in the courtroom.

"It's easy for a law firm to say, 'No, you should settle the case,'" the New York-based partner said. "But at our firm, with matters like the Flo case, they said, 'We believe in you, and we believe in the case.'"

While the Flo suit highlighted the willingness of Canty and his colleagues to go the distance in the courtroom, it also demonstrated Canty's knack for dealmaking, with Labaton Keller and the two other plaintiffs' firms that were co-lead counsel recovering \$59.5 million in settlements with Google, Flo and Flurry.

Canty is no stranger to settlement negotiations. In the past year alone, he's been an integral part of teams that have reached major resolutions in the securities space, including the \$210 million Fidelity National settlement, a \$100 million deal settling claims that California utility Pacific Gas & Electric Co. misled investors about its safety practices ahead of deadly wildfires, and a \$210 million settlement resolving investors' allegations that Estée Lauder and its top brass announced unrealistic expectations for growth amid the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the company's business.

Additionally, Canty and his team secured final approval in January of a \$39 million settlement between real estate firm Opendoor Technologies Inc. and its shareholders to resolve claims the company overhyped its pricing algorithm software. The attorneys also got preliminary approval in November of a \$26.8 million deal ending claims the payment processing company StoneCo Ltd. misled investors about its role in the failure of a merchant-lending program it once offered in Brazil.

"I can't remember professionally, since I've been at Labaton, where I've had so many settlements within a 12-month period," Canty said.

Canty said he is "always interested in and open to having an open and honest dialogue with defense counsel" in a dispute, an approach he attributes to what he learned as a prosecutor, where "you're constantly talking about whether a case can get resolved."

"There's a kind of thinking that if you reach out to your opposing counsel about the possibility of a

resolution, somehow you're signaling weakness in your case or some issue with your case," Canty said. "But I've never espoused that tradition. I let the facts speak for themselves."

Jeffrey M. Gill, general counsel at Indiana Public Retirement System, told Law360 he has witnessed and been impressed by this mindset through Canty's work over the years in representing the pension fund as a plaintiff in major federal securities class actions against companies such as Opendoor Technologies and StoneCo.

"He is very good at understanding and ascertaining the value of a case," said Gill, who is also a former federal prosecutor and who agreed that Canty's similar experience in that field has prepared him well for his current role. "He has a very common-sense approach to negotiation and conflict resolution. He is passionate about his cases and believes completely in the causes of our cases."

Gill recalled Canty's impressive negotiation skills being showcased during one particular mediation in which the two participated, where the other side was questioning their valuation of the dispute.

"Mike thoroughly articulated the facts of the case, passionately arguing the significance and importance of our case and why we were not willing to budge on a point of negotiation," Gill said. "This level of passionate representation stood out to me. Overall, I like Mike very much and trust him completely."

Canty said he relishes the opportunity to distill the complex issues that arise in the class actions he handles for institutional investors and consumers, attributing his drive to become a subject-matter expert not only to his prosecutorial experience, but also to the love of learning and the importance of critical thinking instilled in him by his parents.

Canty's colleagues predict his methods will continue to yield strong results.

"Mike is one of the most respected leaders at our firm because he brings exceptional judgment and consistency to very complex matters," Belfi said. "He's also a truly nice person to work with, although no one should underestimate how effective he is. He's a dominant litigator, and you should expect to continue to see his name on some of the biggest cases in our field moving forward."

--Editing by Melissa Treolo.