



Melissa J. Tea

Lead Practice Area Leader - Litigation

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OVERVIEW

Melissa Tea is the lead practice area leader for the firm's global Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice area. She maintains an active litigation and counseling practice representing public and private companies primarily in the manufacturing and technology industries helping clients identify and manage risks that might impact their operations and business objectives. Melissa serves as a strategic adviser to her clients, developing creative solutions to complex legal issues that align with business priorities and efficiently resolving disputes through negotiated settlements, mediations, arbitrations, or trials. Melissa also has extensive experience serving as coordinating counsel for clients with regional and nationwide recurring litigation, with particular expertise in mass tort and product liability.

Melissa's experience in enterprise risk management extends to the industries of commercial and consumer products, technology hardware and software, metals manufacturing and fabrications, specialty chemicals, energy, and industrial and commercial coatings. She advises her clients on all facets of their external risk management and litigation needs, including contract disputes, supply chain issues, force majeure claims, ESG matters, business torts, insurance coverage, product liability, class action defense, and construction disputes, among other matters. In her role as coordinating counsel, Melissa has developed and implemented innovative, company-tailored defense strategies and cost-effective processes and approaches to manage the resolution of recurring claims.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognized by *Chambers USA* for Litigation: General Commercial, Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh & Surrounds, 2022-2023
- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* as a Recommended Lawyer for General Commercial Disputes, 2023
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions - Defendants in Pittsburgh, 2023-2024

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh
 - Board of Directors, 2017-present
 - Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, 2021-present
 - Executive Committee member, 2019-present
 - Governance Committee Chair, 2019-2021
- Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Government Relations & Advocacy Committee, 2016-present
- United Way of Allegheny County
 - Emerging Leaders Tocqueville Committee, 2018-2021
 - Women's Leadership Council, 2012-present
- The Executive Women of Pittsburgh, Founding Member, 2017-2020
- Pittsburgh CLO, Board of Directors, 2014-2017
- Most Powerful and Influential Women Award, National Diversity Council, 2018
- Firm Service
 - Practice Area Leader, Litigation, 2019-present
 - Advisory Council, 2019-present
 - Chair, Associate Development Committee, 2017-2019
 - Women in the Profession Committee, 2013-2022
 - Chair, K&L Gates Public Interest Fellowship Program, 2011-2016

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "Managing Risks from the Boardroom," Women on Boards 2020, October 2018
- "Sexual Harrassment in the Workplace," Healthcare Council of Western Pennsylvania, September 2018
- "Navigating a Return to Work: Surviving and Thriving Following Maternity (and Other) Leave," Allegheny County Bar Association's Women in the Law Division, October 2017
- "Emerging Issues in Health Care Litigation," Medicare Sequestration Webcast, 18November 2015
- "Putting Your Best Foot Forward: Exploring Traits of Successful Junior Lawyers," Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, April 2015

EDUCATION

- Juris Doctor, Duquesne University School of Law, 1997 (*Executive Editor, Duquesne Law Review*)
- Bachelor of Arts, Duquesne University, 1994 (*magna cum laude*)

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of Pennsylvania
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- United States District Court for the District of South Carolina
- United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP POWERED BY HUB

- February 2024, ESG and the Sustainable Economy Handbook
- 23 February 2023, Tooey Analysis Extended to Occupational Disease Act
- 28 June 2022, Litigation Minute: Has the Supreme Court Left ESG Class Actions a Leg to Stand On?
- 21 June 2022, Litigation Minute: The "G": Governance Issues Keep the Board From Getting Bored
- 14 June 2022, Litigation Minute: The "S": Suits Based on What a Company Says and Does
- 7 June 2022, Litigation Minute: The "E": Environmental Regulation and Ethos
- 19 May 2022, Vale's ESG Disclosures Lead to Regulatory and Shareholder Litigation
- 19 April 2022, ESG Insights: Impact on Operations
- 12 November 2021, Not-So-Free Shipping: Yeezy Brand to Pay US\$950,000 Over Late Shipping Under California Consumer Protection Laws
- 20 October 2021, No Supplies in the Chain
- 25 September 2020, A Snap Chat: Removal Jurisdiction
- 10 July 2020, Proposed Amendments to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(B)(6) Introduce a Meet-and-Confer Obligation in Advance of Corporate Depositions
- 4 June 2020, COVID-19: America's Return to Work: Liability and Risk Mitigation Outlook
- 30 April 2020, COVID-19: Defending Class Action Litigation in Pennsylvania

- 21 April 2020, COVID-19: Force Majeure Checklist for the GC's Office
- 30 July 2018, New Jersey Supreme Court Affirms Pro-Policyholder Rulings in Honeywell
- 18 November 2015, Emerging Issues in Health Care Litigation
- 2 June 2015, Pennsylvania Hospitals Successfully Challenge Sequestration Reductions

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "Exploring opportunities, trends and risks in the manufacturing industry: Q&A with women leaders at K&L Gates LLP," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, 1 August 2023

NEWS & EVENTS

- 10 January 2024, K&L Gates Adds Litigation and Dispute Resolution Lawyer to Chicago Office
- 8 August 2023, K&L Gates Welcomes Insurance Litigation Partner to Washington, D.C., Office
- 1 June 2023, K&L Gates Receives Firm, Individual Rankings in 2023 *Chambers USA* Guide
- May 2023, K&L Gates Partners Host Women in Manufacturing Event
- 16 May 2023, Women in Manufacturing: Navigating 2023 Disruptors
- 14 March 2023, K&L Gates Strengthens Consumer Products Industry Capabilities with Los Angeles Lawyer Additions
- 13 February 2023, K&L Gates Expands Litigation Practice with Addition of San Francisco Partner
- 3 November 2022, Annual "Best Law Firms" Report Names K&L Gates 2023 "Law Firm of the Year" in Commercial Litigation, One of 170 First-Tier Practice Rankings for Firm
- 18 August 2022, More Than 350 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2023 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 1 June 2022, K&L Gates Receives Firm, Individual Rankings in 2022 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 24 June 2021, K&L Gates Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice Ranked Among Leaders by Legal 500 2021 United States Guide
- 21 May 2021, K&L Gates Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice, Lawyers Recognized in 2021 Chambers USA Guide
- 17 May 2021, K&L Gates Enhances Litigation Practice with Orange County Partner Addition
- August 2020, K&L Gates Lawyers Provide Insights on Impact of COVID-19 Across Various Industries

MEDIA MENTIONS

- Quoted, "ESG: A lawyer's dream (or nightmare)," *Politico*, 30 January 2024
- Quoted, "How effective are liability waivers in the age of the novel coronavirus?," *Texans for Lawsuit Reform*, 2 July 2020
- Mentioned, "Judge Trims Investors' Claims In Revamped Grenfell Fire Suit," *Law360*, 23 June 2021

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Commercial Disputes
- Class Action Litigation Defense
- Insurance Recovery and Counseling
- Mass Tort
- Real Estate Litigation

INDUSTRIES

- Aerospace
- Automotive
- Manufacturing
- Metals Manufacturing and Fabrications
- Specialty Chemicals
- Transportation and Logistics

EMERGING ISSUES

- Environmental Social Governance (ESG)

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Represented an alumina refinery in connection with a demolition contract dispute, including TRO and preliminary injunction hearing.
- Advising a major technology company on global supply contract disputes and antitrust claims
- Representation of aluminum manufacturing company in a wide variety of breach of contract and business tort claims, including supply chain disputes and claims involving customers, vendors, and contractors

- Advising an international logistics company in connection with supply chain disputes arising out of COVID-19 related transportation delays
- Advising an aerospace braking system manufacturer in breach of contract and warranty claims arising under long term supply agreements
- Representation of a financial technology company against business tort claim arising in connection with Independent Verification and Validation contract
- Representation of a chemical manufacturer against misrepresentation and breach of contract claims arising under an Asset Purchase Agreement
- Representation of global manufacturer of fiber cement products in connection with breach of warranty, product liability, and personal injury claims
- Serves as national coordinating counsel for an integrated steel producer's toxic tort liabilities
- Serves as national coordinating counsel for a global paint, coatings, and specialty materials manufacturer's toxic tort liabilities
- Member of the national trial team for a global manufacturer of commercial and consumer products
- Representation of international rail and transportation services company in the defense of a federal court MDL putative antitrust class action involving the consolidation of 24 class actions alleging unlawful restraint of competition in the railroad services labor market
- Obtained nine figure trial judgment for global manufacturer of commercial and consumer products in insurance coverage litigation relating to its asbestos bodily injury claims arising from friction materials
- Representation of major aluminum manufacturer in catastrophic workplace personal injury actions in trial and appellate court proceedings
- Representation of a global chemical company in obtaining insurance coverage for environmental, product, and toxic tort liabilities