



Melissa J. Tea

Practice Area Leader - Litigation

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OVERVIEW

Melissa Tea is a practice area leader for the firm's global litigation and dispute resolution practice. She maintains an active litigation and counseling practice representing public and private companies primarily in the manufacturing/technology and health care industries in a wide variety of complex commercial disputes, including business disputes, class action defense, mass tort, and insurance coverage matters. 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, 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 commercial contract disputes, business torts, insurance coverage, product liability, personal injury, construction, intellectual property, and 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.

Melissa is certified in Legal Project Management and Legal Lean Sigma. She also is a member of the K&L Gates Trial Academy.

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, Board of Directors (2017 - present), Vice Chair of the Board of Directors (2021), 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) and Women's Leadership Counsel (2012 - present)

- The Executive Women of Pittsburgh, Founding Member
- Pittsburgh CLO, Board of Directors (2014 - 2017)
- 2018 Most Powerful and Influential Women Award, National Diversity Council
- Firm Service
 - Practice Area Leader, Litigation (2019 - present)
 - Advisory Council (2019 - present)
 - Chair, Associate Development Committee (2017 - 2019)
 - Women in the Profession Committee (2013 - present)
 - 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

- 25 September 2020, A Snap Chat: Removal Jurisdiction (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 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 (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 4 June 2020, COVID-19: America's Return to Work: Liability and Risk Mitigation Outlook (*Webinar*)
- 30 April 2020, COVID-19: Defending Class Action Litigation in Pennsylvania (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 21 April 2020, COVID-19: Force Majeure Checklist for the GC's Office (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 30 July 2018, New Jersey Supreme Court Affirms Pro-Policyholder Rulings in Honeywell (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 18 November 2015, Emerging Issues in Health Care Litigation (*Presentations*)
- 2 June 2015, Pennsylvania Hospitals Successfully Challenge Sequestration Reductions (*Alerts/Updates*)

NEWS & EVENTS

- 19 August 2021, K&L Gates Welcomes Litigation and Dispute Resolution Partner in Wilmington (*Press Release, Practice & Regional News*)
- 24 June 2021, K&L Gates Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice Ranked Among Leaders by Legal 500 2021 United States Guide (*Rankings & Recognitions*)
- 21 May 2021, K&L Gates Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice, Lawyers Recognized in 2021 Chambers USA Guide (*Rankings & Recognitions*)
- 17 May 2021, K&L Gates Enhances Litigation Practice with Orange County Partner Addition (*Press Release, Practice & Regional News*)
- August 2020, K&L Gates Lawyers Provide Insights on Impact of COVID-19 Across Various Industries (*Media Mention*)

MEDIA MENTIONS

- Mentioned, "Judge Trims Investors' Claims In Revamped Grenfell Fire Suit," *Law360*, 23 June 2021

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Complex Commercial Litigation and Disputes
- Appellate Litigation
- Health Care Payor-Provider Disputes (U.S.)
- Insurance Recovery and Counseling

- K&L Gates Trial Academy
- Mass Tort

INDUSTRIES

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

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Advising an international logistics company in connection with supply chain disputes arising out of COVID-19 related transportation delays
- Representation of an aerospace braking system manufacturer in disputes arising under a long term supply agreement
- Representation of a chemical manufacturer against misrepresentation and breach of contract claims arising under an Asset Purchase Agreement
- 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
- 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
- Representation of large electric power holding company in obtaining insurance coverage for asbestos-related bodily injury liabilities
- On an issue of first impression, obtained judgment as a matter of law on behalf of a consortium of hospitals in litigation involving application of federal sequestration laws
- Representation of health care providers in disputes with insurers regarding reimbursement rates and other contractual issues