

Tara C. Sullivan

Special Projects Lawyer

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OVERVIEW

Tara Sullivan is a special projects lawyer and focuses her practice on complex commercial, product liability and toxic tort, real estate, and financial services litigation. In her commercial litigation practice, Tara has represented a diverse group of clients as plaintiffs and defendants in both state and federal courts. She assists clients with diverse business disputes and litigation matters, including claims for fraud, negligent misrepresentation, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, breach of warranty, tortious interference with contract, unfair and deceptive trade practices, and trade secret misappropriation. She also counsels business entities with respect to contractual rights, obligations, and disputes.

In addition, Tara has significant products liability experience and regularly defends a broad range of clients, including equipment manufacturers, premises owners, and retailers, in toxic tort and other personal injury claims. She oversees the defense of a mass number of repetitive cases filed against her clients in South Carolina courts and ensures a strong and coordinated defense for her clients.

In her real estate litigation practice, Tara has represented a diverse group of clients, including developers, commercial landlords, sellers, and purchasers, in a variety of disputes and litigation matters. Her experience includes eminent domain/condemnation defense, lease disputes, disputes regarding purchase and sales agreements, and construction defect defense.

She also has significant experience in financial services litigation and has represented various lenders in consumer and commercial collection and foreclosure litigation. She has routinely defended lenders against borrowers' claims for violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, RESPA, TILA, and various state consumer protection laws as well as claims for breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, unfair trade practices, negligent misrepresentation, unauthorized practice of law, fraud, and wrongful dispossession of personal property following foreclosure. She has also represented financial institutions in connection with licensing requirements and alleged securities fraud.

Tara has also represented motor vehicle manufacturers in the litigation arising from the manufacturer-dealer relationship, franchise law and disputes, and antitrust regulation.

Tara also has experience in appellate litigation, having argued a number of cases before both the South Carolina Court of Appeals and the South Carolina Supreme Court.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Prior to joining the firm, Tara was an associate at a national law firm based in South Carolina.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Commercial Litigation in Charleston, SC, 2025-2026
- Recognized by *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*® *in America* for Commercial Litigation in Charleston, 2021-2022
- Charleston Regional Business Journal, Forty Under 40, 2018

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- American Bar Association
- South Carolina Bar Association
- Charleston County Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association, South Carolina Chapter
- American Heart Association, Go Red for Women Executive Leadership Team, 2020-2022
- Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce Leadership Charleston Class of 2020
- Defense Research Institute
- South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys' Association
- Ellevate, Global Professional Women's Network
- National Association of Women Lawyers
- South Carolina Women Lawyers Association
- Pet Helpers, Volunteer
- Trident United Way, Women United and Young Philanthropists Society
- Past Involvement:
  - Richland County Bar Association, Public Service Committee
  - Palmetto Center for Women, Board of Directors
  - HELP Homeless Legal Clinic, Volunteer

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, “Regulatory Environment Affecting Banks,” Charlotte, NC, September 2016

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of South Carolina School of Law, 2010 *(magna cum laude; Order of the Wig and Robe; Order of the Coif; Research Editor, South Carolina Law Review; CALI Award for Civil Procedure I)*
- B.A., University of South Carolina, 2007 *(summa cum laude, with Honors from the South Carolina Honors College)*

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of South Carolina
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States District Court for the District of South Carolina

NEWS & EVENTS

- 18 August 2022, More Than 350 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2023 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 19 August 2021, Nearly 300 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2022 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 24 February 2020, K&L Gates Names 41 New Partners Across Global Platform

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Mass Tort
- Appellate Litigation
- Commercial Disputes
- Financial Institutions and Services Litigation
- Product Liability
- Real Estate Litigation

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Commercial Litigation and Disputes

- Successfully represented a national geotechnical engineering firm in case against former employees for breach of fiduciary duty in connection with their departure from the firm to a competitor.

- Successfully defended a defense contracting firm in a defamation lawsuit brought by a former employee in connection with the denial of his state unemployment benefits. Our motion to dismiss the claim was promptly met with the concession of a voluntary dismissal by plaintiff's counsel.
- Successfully defended equipment manufacturer against tortious interference and indemnity claims brought by construction contractor.
- Negotiated favorable settlement in complex class action litigation involving allegations of improper charging of fees attendant to the provision of services.
- Represented manufacturer in evaluation of potential cessation of product line and impact on supplier and distributor agreements.
- Defended hospital system in putative class action alleging that hospital failed to submit medical bills to private insurance and instead billed directly to patient when patient identified as likely to receive a recovery from a third party for injuries.
- Represented manufacturer in commercial dispute regarding nonconforming parts.
- Successfully defended transportation company against third-party claims related to former employee's on-the-job accident resulting in personal injuries.
- Represented manufacturer in commercial dispute regarding late delivery of certain parts.
- Represented staffing company with termination of staffing arrangement and related transition for two large distribution centers in South Carolina.

Real Estate Litigation

- Successfully represented real estate developer in condemnation action by the State of South Carolina to contest the amount offered as compensation for the condemned property, resulting in a payment significantly higher than the State's original offer.
- Represented manufacturer in litigation over alleged construction defects.
- Successfully represented real estate developer against claims brought by seller of property for breach of contract, specific performance, and constructive trust related to dispute over developer's ongoing obligations to seller.
- Successfully represented commercial landlord in litigation with former tenant after tenant wrongfully vacated leased premises prior to lease expiration.
- Represented debtor in possession in adversary proceeding involving an anchor tenant's breach of commercial lease. The adversary was settled resulting in the resolution of all claims in bankruptcy and the attendant adversary proceedings, actually yielding a return to equity holders following satisfaction of all creditors.
- Successfully represented seller of real estate in a dispute over escrow funds after purchaser improperly refused to proceed with closing.

- Represented lenders in consumer and commercial foreclosure litigation as set forth in more detail in the Financial Services Litigation section below

Financial Services Litigation

- Successfully defended financial services company after writ of certiorari was granted in a contested foreclosure to review the trial court's dismissal of borrower's foreclosure defenses and counterclaim.
- Defended financial services companies in cases involving allegations regarding premature repossession of foreclosed property.
- Obtained summary judgment for financial services company in breach of contract action involving allegations of improper refusal to allow a short sale.
- Represented waste company with respect to customers defaulting in their payments pursuant to service agreement.
- Representation of finance corporation with respect to domestication of foreign judgments and collection efforts for same.
- Representation of various timeshare entities in foreclosure litigation against timeshare owners for non-payment.
- Successfully represented agricultural lender in complex foreclosure of multiple tracts of farmland.
- Represented company with analysis of South Carolina's supervised lending license requirements.
- Represented lenders in consumer and commercial collection and foreclosure litigation, including defending borrowers' claims such as Fair Credit Reporting Act, Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, RESPA, TILA, various state consumer protection laws, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, Unfair Trade Practices Act, negligent misrepresentation, unauthorized practice of law, and fraud.
- Successfully represented financial institution in securities fraud arbitration in connection with issuance of subordinated debt.

Products Liability Litigation

- Represent equipment manufacturers, retailers, and premises liability defendants in repetitive toxic and mass tort claims.
- Successfully defended equipment manufacturer against claims for personal injury caused by allegedly faulty equipment, obtaining an early dismissal of all claims for no payment.
- Successfully represented recreational boat manufacturer in case alleging design defect.

Automotive Litigation

- Successfully defended automotive manufacturer in action brought by former dealer based on price discrimination allegations related to alleged failure to equalize concessions among dealers.

- Successfully defended automotive manufacturer against claims based on alleged design and manufacturing defects in diesel engines.
- Represented motor vehicle manufacturers in disputes and litigation arising from the manufacturer-dealer relationship, including dealer add-point, relocation, and termination protests/litigation, as well as warranty fraud litigation.