



Kristine Y. Pegno

Of Counsel

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Kristine Pegno is a seasoned civil litigator who focuses on the defense of general liability claims, including premises and product liability matters, and commercial litigation. She represents clients throughout all phases of litigation, from inception through resolution, providing strategic, innovative counsel to help them make better-informed decisions, resolve complex legal challenges, and achieve specific business goals. Kristine was selected among 20 nominated finalists who successfully completed Wilson Elser's rigorous Mock Trial Invitational, through which the firm's most successful trial lawyers impart their knowledge to those destined to join their ranks.

Kristine began her legal career as a litigation associate at prominent law firms in Philadelphia and New York, handling all aspects of civil litigation, with a focus on defending product liability, complex toxic tort, pharmaceutical, and radiation-related claims.

Kristine then taught law for nearly a decade, creating and delivering an award-winning law program at a public school district in Westchester County, New York. Subsequently, she returned to her legal practice focusing on employment law issues, representing public school districts, charter schools, and other public employers in New Jersey.

General Liability

Kristine maintains a robust general civil litigation practice, with particular depth in defending premises liability, product liability, negligent maintenance, and other personal injury claims. She regularly represents property owners, commercial landlords, management companies, and service providers in matters involving alleged defects, hazardous conditions, and failures in maintenance or operations.

Services

- Complex Tort & General Casualty
- Insurance & Reinsurance Defense
- Commercial Litigation
- General Liability

Kristine's work frequently involves complex issues of duty, control, and risk allocation, including disputes arising from triple-net leases, contractual maintenance obligations, indemnification provisions, and additional insured requirements. She is experienced in tendering claims to responsible parties and pursuing or defending cross-claims for defense and indemnity, often securing favorable outcomes through carefully crafted legal strategy.

Drawing on her background in product liability and toxic tort matters, Kristine collaborates with engineering, medical, and other technical experts to analyze causation, evaluate damages, and develop targeted defenses. She excels in dispositive motion practice – particularly summary judgment – where her precise analysis of factual records, strategic use of discovery tools, and well-developed legal arguments have resulted in numerous full dismissals for her clients.

From early case assessment through trial preparation, Kristine brings a pragmatic, detail-oriented approach focused on reducing exposure, identifying leverage points, and achieving efficient, cost-effective resolutions.

Commercial Litigation

Kristine employs a pragmatic, cost-effective approach to complex commercial litigation, centered around an upfront analysis and identification of the critical issues in a case, with the goal of achieving early resolution. Her clients range from small businesses and individuals to large corporations, and she draws on Wilson Elser's deep resources and national footprint to handle complex, multijurisdictional cases. Kristine's experience includes handling litigation involving breach of contract and business tort claims..

Education

- Villanova University School of Law (J.D., 1988)
 - magna cum laude; Order of the Coif; Managing Editor, Law Review
- Gettysburg College (B.A., 1981)
 - magna cum laude; Phi Beta Kappa

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of New Jersey
- Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Client Wins

Krauss & Pegno Awarded Summary Judgment in Premises Liability Matter Dismissed with Prejudice

Kurt Krauss (Partner-Madison, NJ) and Kristine Pegno (Of Counsel-Madison, NJ) defended a property owner in a case involving a claim for injury resulting from a fall on premises owned by the client, who had leased the property under the terms of a triple net lease to the tenant, including a provision that all maintenance and repairs were the responsibility of the tenant. The plaintiff was working on the subject premises as a truck driver at the time of his accident and had already brought a workers' compensation claim against his employer when he separately sued our client. The initial summary judgment motion was denied based on what the judge found to be an issue of fact regarding whether there was one or more lessees under the master lease agreement. Following additional discovery and several other related motions, the motion for summary judgment was refiled. Based on the fully developed record, Union County Superior Court found that the terms of the lease placed all responsibility for maintenance and repair on the tenant and that, under such circumstances, the property owner owed no duty to the plaintiff as a matter of law. The court separately granted Summary Judgment as to Count II of the Complaint, which was a negligent construction claim, finding that the plaintiff's admissions in discovery about the location of his fall rendered the claim legally untenable. As such, this was a terrific win for our client!

O'Toole and Pegno Obtain Summary Judgment on Cross-Claims for Defense and Indemnity

John O'Toole (Partner-Madison, NJ) and Kristine Pegno (Associate-Madison, NJ) obtained summary judgment on cross-claims against a codefendant for defense and indemnification. In this premises liability suit, Wilson Elser represented the property owner and management company in a case involving an alleged fall by a plaintiff on black ice on the subject premises. The matter was tendered to the client's snow removal contractor based on indemnification and additional insured provisions of the contract. When the contractor failed to respond to the tender, John and Kristine filed a motion for summary judgment on the cross-claims against the contractor for defense and indemnification.

Following oral argument, the NJ Superior Court, Law Division, Bergen County granted the motion for summary judgment and issued a 13-page decision in support of the order, adopting in large part our legal arguments. In addition to ordering the co-defendant to defend and indemnify our client, the court awarded attorneys' fees. This was a big win for the client and resulted in a beneficial written opinion that will be useful in future defense and indemnity cases.

O'Toole and Pegno Win Summary Judgment With Carefully Crafted Requests For Admissions

John O'Toole (Partner-Madison, NJ) and Kristine Pegno (Associate-Madison, NJ) obtained summary judgment in the Superior Court of New Jersey – Camden County for Wilson Elser's client, a national property management company. The plaintiff alleged injuries resulting from a fall on our client's property. The complaint identified the client's apartment complex as the location of the fall. Still, the answers to interrogatories were ambiguous and suggested a site that was not a part of the subject premises.

This uncertainty prompted John and Kristine to carefully craft requests for admissions, a little-used but valuable discovery tool, forcing the plaintiff to admit that the address where the injury occurred was not on our client's property. Based upon the plaintiff's admissions, John and Kristine filed a motion for summary judgment, arguing that Wilson Elser's client owed no duty of care to the plaintiff as a matter of law. The court agreed and dismissed the complaint in its entirety.