



Courtney L. Wood

Associate

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Courtney Wood focuses her practice on professional liability, specifically defending attorneys, accountants, insurance agents, real estate agents, technology and media professionals, consultants, brokers, architects and engineers. Additionally, Courtney handles issues involving directors and officers liability and insurance coverage. Courtney scrutinizes claims to create comprehensive and strategic litigation plans that produce favorable client outcomes. She further focuses on strengthening client relationships to effectuate conducive results.

Prior to joining Wilson Elser, Courtney represented defendant insurance carriers in matters involving personal injury claims, auto negligence, general negligence and first- and third-party insurance claims. She has litigated actions in Illinois and Michigan. While in law school, Courtney volunteered in several expungement clinics servicing more than 100 pro bono clients.

Education

- University of Detroit Mercy School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2021)
- Michigan State University (B.A., 2018)

Bar Admissions

- Illinois
- Michigan

Professional Affiliations

- Chicago Bar Association

Services

- Insurance Agents & Brokers
- Insurance & Reinsurance Coverage
- Professional Liability & Services

- Illinois State Bar Association
- Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

Client Wins

Blair, Merlo and Wood Win Legal Malpractice Defense Verdict

Kimberly Blair (Partner-Chicago, IL), Robert Merlo (Partner-Chicago, IL) and Courtney Wood (Associate-Chicago, IL) secured a defense verdict in a legal malpractice action brought in Cook County. Kim, Bob and Courtney represented personal injury attorneys who had previously represented the plaintiff in an underlying motor vehicle accident case.

The plaintiff alleged that our clients improperly recommended an \$845,000 settlement in the underlying action, which involved claims stemming from a motor vehicle collision, including a claim that a C5-C6 herniation was sustained as a result of the accident. Plaintiff contended that our clients failed to advise him of an excess insurance policy and asserted that, had he known of the additional coverage, he would not have agreed to settle underlying case for \$845,000 and instead would have proceeded to trial.

The Court bifurcated the trial of the malpractice action, and directed the parties to first try the underlying auto matter – the “case within a case” – with the understanding that a verdict below \$845,000 would result in the absence of causation and damages, thereby entitling the defendant attorneys to judgment in their favor.

After six days of the trial’s first phase (the case-within-a-case phase), plaintiff’s counsel asked the jury to award \$2,406,000 in damages. The jury returned a verdict of just \$50,232.04, eliminating any basis for damages on the legal malpractice claim and resulting in a complete defense victory for our clients.