



## Kathleen D. Wilkinson

Senior Counsel

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Kathleen Wilkinson built her practice and earned her stellar reputation defending complex cases in employment and labor. She also has extensive experience with complex cases involving toxic tort, asbestos, products, construction, premises, professional liability, and medical devices and pharmaceuticals.

A litigator with decades of experience, Kathleen is entrusted regularly by clients with their most difficult cases, frequently involving death and severe injury in high-exposure cases. Her clients include a major insurance brokerage firm, construction companies and major products manufacturers. Well versed in the substance and subtleties of insurance policies, she also handles coverage and served as a technical writer of insurance policies. In dealing with laws relating to the internet, Kathleen's practice includes cyber work such as drafting insurance policy cyber provisions, analyzing social engineering issues, handling losses involving cyber breaches and more.

Kathleen has tried many cases to verdict, occasionally arguing before the Pennsylvania Superior Court and the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. She works closely with her clients to help ensure an appropriate and effective resolution to liability actions. Kathleen also serves as a judge pro tem and discovery master in state and federal courts, earning the respect of the bench and bar. While Kathleen practices principally in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, she regularly collaborates with local counsel in other geographic areas when it helps to advance her clients' objectives.

### Employment & Labor

Kathleen has defended employment practices matters and counseled clients on a variety of employment liability matters for more than 20 years. She defends clients before federal, state and local agencies, including the EEOC, Pennsylvania Commission on Human Relations, Philadelphia Human Relations Commission, and state and federal courts. In addition to her litigation practice, Kathleen regularly counsels employers on employment-

### Services

- Employment & Labor
- Aviation & Aerospace
- e-Discovery
- Hospitality
- Insurance Agents & Brokers
- Insurance & Reinsurance Coverage
- Product Liability, Prevention & Government Compliance
- Professional Liability & Services
- Toxic Tort
- Contractual/Extra-Contractual Liability Litigation
- Medical Malpractice & Health Care
- National Trial Team
- Life Sciences
- Asbestos & Talc

related issues and policies, including equal employment opportunity (EEO), performance management, terminations and separations, reductions in force, affirmative action and civil rights programs, employee handbooks and policies, and workplace investigations.

### **Professional Liability, D&O & Insurance**

Kathleen has been involved in representing various professionals in liability actions, malpractice, errors and omissions, directors and officers, and subpoena matters. The practice includes assisting insurance agents and brokers in the preparation of insurance policies, defending them in direct litigation and guiding them in responding to subpoenas. Kathleen handles coverage matters and writes insurance policies for insurers and self-insured entities.

Kathleen is experienced with medical malpractice actions, including improper diagnosis, failure to warn, incorrect prescriptions and failure to heed warnings, some with pharmacies as co-defendants. In addition, Kathleen has defended physicians in failed licensing issues and allegations of assault and sexual exploitation.

### **Product Liability**

Kathleen has defended numerous product liability cases for manufacturers and providers of products or product information, involving pharmaceuticals, medical devices, industrial and construction equipment, recreational and marine products, consumer products and household appliances. She also has handled medical device claims, including catheters, clips, clamps, sprays, Hoyer lifts and other devices. Notably, Kathleen has handled more than 300 Reglan (Metoclopramide) cases in a mass tort action, and currently handles some 100 medical device claims pending in Pennsylvania.

### **General Liability & Construction Experience**

Kathleen handles construction, general, dram shop and premises liability, ranging from minor matters, such as slip-and-fall accidents, to major, high-exposure incidents at construction sites. Whether an injury stems from an accident or a crime, Kathleen is able to advise clients on how best to handle the ensuing legal challenges.

### **Toxic Tort**

Kathleen has a substantial practice litigating toxic tort cases, including large mass torts where she oversees, monitors, litigates and successfully defends actions with the potential to bring down a company. Her comprehensive and organized approach in these matters ensures an aggressive and cost-effective defense that is focused on extricating clients from their current cases while positioning them to limit or avoid future cases.

### **A Rare Blend of Professional Competence and Strategic Leadership**

Well known throughout Pennsylvania's legal community for her consummate legal skills and uncompromising dedication, Kathleen was elected to serve as Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association in 2013. Only the sixth woman to lead this 13,000-member organization, Kathleen's standing as a former chancellor represents a particularly remarkable milestone in a distinguished career. Kathleen also was elected to serve as the President of the Pennsylvania Bar Association from 2021 to 2022, only the sixth woman to lead this 23,000-member association, again showing the respect Kathleen has received from the bar.

Beginning her term early in April 2021 due to a resignation, Kathleen assumed her official term as 2021–2022 president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, after serving as Vice President and President-Elect. Kathleen is a past recipient of the Anne X. Alpern Award from the PBA Women in the Profession Committee. This award is presented to a woman attorney who has had a significant professional impact in Pennsylvania, demonstrated leadership in her profession and community, participated in mentoring activities and engaged in significant activities on behalf of women in the profession. Kathleen also sat on the Board of the PBA as Zone One Governor, representing the lawyers of Philadelphia, as well as chaired the PBA Civil Litigation Section, co-chaired the Commission on Women in the Profession and vice-chaired the Quality of Life/Balance Committee.

Mindful of her responsibilities to the firm and commitment to diversity, Kathleen served on Wilson Elser’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee and *WAVE* (Women Attorneys Valued & Empowered) Subcommittee, as well as the Equity Partner and Associate Focus Committees.

### **Recognition and Work in the Community**

Kathleen was appointed in 2005 by then-Governor Edward G. Rendell to the newly launched Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness, a statewide commission charged with making recommendations to the three branches of government on eliminating racial, gender and ethnic bias, and served as a member for more than 10 years. In addition, Kathleen was appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to serve as a member of the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence Committee from 2006–2008.

A founding member of Villanova University School of Law's J. Willard O'Brien Inn of Court, in June 2004, Kathleen became the first woman president of the Inn of Court. In 2013, she was honored by the Villanova Law Alumni Association with the Gerald Abraham Alumni Association Award for Service to Villanova Law School, as part of a program entitled “Our Future in Focus: Advance, Transform, Lead.” This award is presented each year to an alumna who has exhibited outstanding leadership qualities and made significant contributions toward assisting the law school in fulfilling its mission and goals.

Kathleen has served as chancellor, chancellor-elect, vice chancellor, secretary and assistant secretary of the Philadelphia Bar Association, as well as co-chair of the State Civil Litigation Section, co-chair of the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Essay Competition, co-chair of the Rules Committee and co-chair of the Women in the Profession Committee, among many other positions. She was elected to the Board of Governors and served from 2001–2003. Kathleen also served as a Cabinet Member from 2005–2013.

### **Professional Achievements**

National Judicial College: Member of Philadelphia Planning Committee, 2007, 2009, 2013  
National Association of Women Judges Conference: Member of Friends Committee planning conference, 2007  
Villanova Law J. Willard O'Brien Inn of Court: President, 2004–2006; Immediate Past President, 2007; Program Chair, June 2003–2004; founding member of Inn  
Pennsylvania Supreme Court Rules of Evidence Committee: appointed by a Justice of

Supreme Court to provide recommendations concerning the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence; Member 2006–2008

#### **Philadelphia Bar Association Additional Contributions**

Federal Courts Committee, Co-chair, 2019

Secretary, 2008–2012

Assistant Secretary, 2005–2007

Board of Governors Member, January 2001–December 2003

State Civil Litigation Section: Immediate Past Chair, 2019 Section Co-chair, 2006–2007;

Section Secretary, 2005

Task Force for Civil Litigation Section: Member of Interim Executive Committee to State Civil Litigation

Section and assisted in creating the Section, June 2004–2005

Executive Council of the State Civil Litigation Section; Member, 2005–2007

State Civil Rules Committee: Committee Co-chair, 2003–2004; Member since 1997

Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention, 2006–2007, 2011–present

Women in the Profession, Committee Co-chair, 1998–1999

#### **Pennsylvania Bar Association Additional Contributions**

Zone One Governor

Pennsylvania Bar Association, Civil Litigation Section: Executive Board, May 2004–2010, 2013–2018

Mid-year Meeting, Co-chair, 2007

Zone One Director of Political Action Committee of PBA, 2007–2010

Zone One Trustee of Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, 2014–2018, 2021–2022

Prepared and presented resolutions before Board of Governors and House of Delegates, which adopted PBA Diversity Policy; diversity representation on Nominating Committee, 2006

Women in the Profession, Committee Co-chair, 2004–2006; Member Executive Council, 2007–present

Quality of Life/Balance Committee, Vice Chair, 2016–2018

Helped develop and obtain PBA approval of part-time policies for lawyers, 2000

#### **Education**

- Villanova University School of Law (J.D., 1981)
  - *Villanova Law Review*
- Kean University (B.S., 1978)
  - *summa cum laude* and Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society

#### **Bar Admissions**

- Pennsylvania
- New Jersey

#### **Court Admissions**

- Supreme Court of the United States
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
- U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Pennsylvania

### **Professional Affiliations**

- Pennsylvania Bar Association, President, 2021–2022; President-Elect, 2020–2021; Vice President, 2019–2020; Voting Member, House of Delegates for Zone One, Philadelphia, 2003–present
- Philadelphia Bar Association, Chancellor, 2013; Cabinet Member, 2005–2013
- Philadelphia Association of Defense Lawyers, Member of Executive Council; past Secretary, past Vice President–Programs
- Historical Society of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- *Board Positions*: Philadelphia Bar Foundation
- *Past Board Positions*: Philly VIP, Philadelphia Defender Association, PILCOP, Friends of Farmworkers, Forum of Executive Women, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, Brehon Law Society

### **Awards & Honors**

- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2024-2026
- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® *Women in Law*, 2025
- 2022 Power Woman of the Main Line
- AV® Preeminent™ Rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- Rated “Superb” by Avvo
- Selected for inclusion in Pennsylvania Super Lawyers®, 2006–2007, 2009–2023
- Philadelphia Bar Association Sandra Day O’Connor Award, 2019
- Included in the Pennsylvania Top 50 Women List by Pennsylvania Super Lawyers, 2013, 2018
- Pennsylvania Bar Association C. Dale McClain Quality of Life/Balance Award, 2018
- William J. O’Brien Distinguished Service Award as “Defense Lawyer of the Year” by the Philadelphia Association of Defense Counsel, 2016
- Rated by American Lawyer and Martindale-Hubbell as a Top-Rated Lawyer in Labor & Employment, 2015
- National Diversity Council Legal Leaders Award, 2014

- Gilbert Nurick Award, Conference of County Bar Leaders of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, 2014
- Philadelphia's Top Rated Lawyers, Insurance
- Alumni of the Year, Kean University, 2010
- Woman of Distinction, Kean University, 2009
- Anne X. Alpern Award, Pennsylvania Bar Association, Women in the Profession Committee, 2008
- Woman of the Year, *Legal Intelligencer and Pennsylvania Law Weekly*, 2007–2008
- Pennsylvania Bar Association, Leadership Award, 2006
- Villanova Law School Inn of Court, President, 2004–2006