



Melissa J. Tea

Lead Practice Area Leader - Litigation

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OVERVIEW

Melissa Tea is a partner, member of the firm's Management Committee, and the lead practice area leader of the global Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice at K&L Gates, as well as a highly regarded trial lawyer and strategic adviser to clients. She represents public and private companies across the manufacturing, technology, aerospace, specialty chemicals, and consumer products industries, helping clients identify, mitigate, and resolve complex business risks and disputes. Melissa counsels clients on enterprise-wide risk management and efficiently resolves disputes through negotiated settlements, mediations, arbitrations, and trials. She also serves as national coordinating counsel for clients facing recurring and nationwide litigation, with particular experience in mass tort, product liability, and class action defense.

Melissa has extensive experience guiding clients on contract disputes, supply chain issues, force majeure claims, ESG-related litigation, business torts, insurance coverage, and construction disputes. She has developed innovative, cost-effective defense strategies tailored to the needs of companies facing complex and recurring claims. A frequent speaker and author on topics such as ESG litigation, corporate governance, and emerging risks, she is recognized as both a skilled advocate in the courtroom and a trusted business partner to senior leadership teams.

ACHIEVEMENTS

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- Recognized by *Chambers USA* for Litigation: General Commercial in Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh & Surrounds, 2022-2025
- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* as a Recommended Lawyer for General Commercial Disputes, 2023-2025
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® in Pittsburgh, PA
 - Commercial Litigation, 2025
 - Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions - Defendants, 2023-2026

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh
 - Board of Directors, 2017-present
 - Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, 2021-2025
 - Executive Committee member, 2019-2025
 - Governance Committee Chair, 2019-2021
- Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Government Relations & Advocacy Committee, 2016-2024
- United Way of Allegheny County
 - Emerging Leaders Tocqueville Committee, 2018-2021
 - Women's Leadership Council, 2012-present
- The Executive Women of Pittsburgh, Founding Member, 2017-2020
- Pittsburgh CLO, Board of Directors, 2014-2017
- Pittsburgh Business Times C-Suite Award Winner, 2024
- Most Powerful and Influential Women Award, National Diversity Council, 2018
- Firm Service
 - Management Committee
 - Lead Practice Area Leader, Litigation, 2019-present
 - Advisory Council, 2019-2025
 - Chair, Associate Development Committee, 2017-2019
 - Women in the Profession Committee, 2013-2022
 - Chair, K&L Gates Public Interest Fellowship Program, 2011-2016

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "Managing Risks from the Boardroom," Women on Boards 2020, October 2018
- "Sexual Harassment 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, 18 November 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

- January 2026, January 2026 Accolades
- February 2026, ESG and the Sustainable Economy Handbook
- 23 February 2023, Tooey Analysis Extended to Occupational Disease Act
- 28 June 2022, Litigation Minute: Has the Supreme Court Left ESG Class Actions a Leg to Stand On?
- 21 June 2022, Litigation Minute: The "G": Governance Issues Keep the Board From Getting Bored
- 14 June 2022, Litigation Minute: The "S": Suits Based on What a Company Says and Does
- 7 June 2022, Litigation Minute: The "E": Environmental Regulation and Ethos
- 19 May 2022, Vale's ESG Disclosures Lead to Regulatory and Shareholder Litigation
- 19 April 2022, ESG Insights: Impact on Operations
- 12 November 2021, Not-So-Free Shipping: Yeezy Brand to Pay US\$950,000 Over Late Shipping Under California Consumer Protection Laws
- 20 October 2021, No Supplies in the Chain
- 25 September 2020, A Snap Chat: Removal Jurisdiction

- 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
- 4 June 2020, COVID-19: America's Return to Work: Liability and Risk Mitigation Outlook
- 30 April 2020, COVID-19: Defending Class Action Litigation in Pennsylvania
- 21 April 2020, COVID-19: Force Majeure Checklist for the GC's Office
- 30 July 2018, New Jersey Supreme Court Affirms Pro-Policyholder Rulings in Honeywell
- 18 November 2015, Emerging Issues in Health Care Litigation
- 2 June 2015, Pennsylvania Hospitals Successfully Challenge Sequestration Reductions

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "[Exploring opportunities, trends and risks in the manufacturing industry: Q&A with women leaders at K&L Gates LLP](#)," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, 1 August 2023

NEWS & EVENTS

- 13 November 2025, K&L Gates Bolsters International Arbitration Practice With Partner in Paris
- 5 June 2025, K&L Gates Receives More Than 240 Firm, Individual Rankings in 2025 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 27 March 2025, K&L Gates Expands Litigation Practice With Wilmington Partner Addition
- 26 February 2025, K&L Gates Adds Commercial Disputes Partner to New York Office
- 3 February 2025, K&L Gates Paris Managing Partner Elected President of the Paris Bar
- 28 January 2025, K&L Gates Enhances Litigation Practice With Orange County Partner Addition
- 1 October 2024, K&L Gates Enhances Litigation Practice With Seattle Partner Addition
- 6 June 2024, K&L Gates Receives More Than 200 Firm, Individual Rankings in 2024 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 10 January 2024, K&L Gates Adds Litigation and Dispute Resolution Lawyer to Chicago Office
- 8 August 2023, K&L Gates Welcomes Insurance Litigation Partner to Washington, D.C., Office
- 1 June 2023, K&L Gates Receives Firm, Individual Rankings in 2023 *Chambers USA* Guide
- May 2023, K&L Gates Partners Host Women in Manufacturing Event
- 16 May 2023, Women in Manufacturing: Navigating 2023 Disruptors
- 14 March 2023, K&L Gates Strengthens Consumer Products Industry Capabilities With Los Angeles Lawyer Additions
- 13 February 2023, K&L Gates Expands Litigation Practice With Addition of San Francisco Partner

- 3 November 2022, Annual "Best Law Firms" Report Names K&L Gates 2023 "Law Firm of the Year" in Commercial Litigation, One of 170 First-Tier Practice Rankings for Firm
- 18 August 2022, More Than 350 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2023 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 1 June 2022, K&L Gates Receives Firm, Individual Rankings in 2022 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 24 June 2021, K&L Gates Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice Ranked Among Leaders by Legal 500 2021 United States Guide
- 21 May 2021, K&L Gates Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice, Lawyers Recognized in 2021 Chambers USA Guide

MEDIA MENTIONS

- 20 January 2026, *The AmLaw Litigation Daily* | Litigation Leaders: Melissa Tea of K&L Gates on Guiding a Global Practice Through Growth and Change

OTHER MEDIA MENTIONS

- "[Litigation Leaders: Melissa Tea of K&L Gates on Guiding a Global Practice Through Growth and Change](#)," *Law.com*, January 2026
- Quoted, "[Data disputes, funding probes and court rivalries: a glimpse into 2025](#)," *Commercial Disputes Resolution*, 16 December 2024
- "C Suite: Get To Know The 2024 Honorees (Profiles)," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, 24 October 2024
- Quoted, "[ESG: A lawyer's dream \(or nightmare\)](#)," *Politico*, 30 January 2024
- Quoted, "How effective are liability waivers in the age of the novel coronavirus?," *Texans for Lawsuit Reform*, 2 July 2020
- Mentioned, "[Judge Trims Investors' Claims In Revamped Grenfell Fire Suit](#)," *Law360*, 23 June 2021

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Commercial Disputes
- Class Action Defense
- Insurance Recovery and Counseling
- Mass Tort
- Product Liability
- Trade Secrets Litigation

INDUSTRIES

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

EMERGING ISSUES

- Emerging Contaminants
- ESG: Sustainability and Responsible Business

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Representation of a global financial technology company against a business tort claim arising in connection with a Independent Verification and Validation contract
- Representation of a global aluminum manufacturing company in connection with contract and supply chain disputes arising out of a Membership Interest Purchase Agreement
- Representation of an international aerospace company in disputes arising under Aircraft Modification Agreements and Aircraft Conversion Agreements
- Representation of a global aluminum manufacturing company in connection with disputes arising under a Transition Support Services agreement
- Representation of an alumina refinery in connection with a demolition contract dispute, including TRO and preliminary injunction hearing
- Advising an international logistics company in connection with supply chain disputes arising out of COVID-19 related transportation delays
- Advising a global aluminum manufacturing company in connection with commercial supply chain disputes
- Advising an aerospace braking system manufacturer in breach of contract and warranty claims arising under long-term global supply agreements
- 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

- Representation of an 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 a major aluminum manufacturer in catastrophic workplace personal injury actions in trial and appellate court proceedings