

## RITA MAIMBOURG

Partner  
*Tucker Ellis & West*

If Rita Maimbourg hadn't gone to law school, the Tucker Ellis & West partner might have been a teacher. Or a politician.

She stuffed envelopes for Hubert Humphrey's 1968 presidential campaign, after all, and marched in Washington in protest of the Vietnam War in 1972.

But Ms. Maimbourg, who is co-chair of the medical and pharmaceutical liability practice group at Tucker Ellis, never had any interest in being a doctor. Still, she is in awe of the skill and talent of those who did go to medical school, marveling recently at the doctors who performed a face transplant at the Cleveland Clinic, for example.

"It's so complicated, it's mind-boggling," she said. "But I'm very happy with the law."

Ms. Maimbourg started off doing labor and employment law at Arter & Hadden, the firm that dissolved in 2003 before Tucker Ellis rose from its ashes. In the mid-1980s, she worked on cases involving the Dalkon Shield, a form of birth control that was withdrawn from the market by its manufacturer, which then entered bankruptcy.

The rest, as they say, is history. She now defends clients such as Johnson & Johnson, the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals and reads publications such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"It's fascinating," Ms. Maimbourg said of the medical cases she handles.

The Erie, Pa., native wanted to be a lawyer since the seventh grade, deciding then that the law was a good way to make an impact. She has a passion for mentoring and likes delegating work to younger attorneys.

"There's a teacher inside me," she said. "There's no greater pleasure than seeing a lawyer you trained go out and do something."

Curt Isler, the firm's managing partner, said judges and juries like Ms. Maimbourg because she's good, but not abrasive. Mr. Isler said as the co-chair of the firm's flagship practice group, Ms. Maimbourg's presence is a great benefit to Tucker Ellis.

"She's constantly sought after



and retained by large companies to try their toughest cases," he said. "She's capable and well-prepared."

When she's not defending big-name clients, Ms. Maimbourg plays tennis, attends plays and spends time with her family — 14-year-old twins, a 20-year-old stepson and her husband, Chuck.

She was also a board member with the Epilepsy Foundation for a number of years, worked with the Animal Protective League and is a member of the judicial selection committee for the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association.

Ms. Maimbourg said she thinks she is gaining wisdom as she ages, but she hasn't lost sight of the University of Pittsburgh and Case Western Reserve University School of Law graduate who used to run

cases by her mother to make sure she understood what was important about the facts.

"I am who I am because of who I came from," she said. "I worked hard, and a little luck got me where I am today. I never take that for granted."

— Arielle Kass

### The Professional

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