



Sherry A. Knutson

Partner

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Sherry Knutson co-chairs the Tucker Ellis Health & Life Sciences Group.

Appreciated by clients as “a fantastic trial partner,” Sherry has tried cases to verdict in Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, New Jersey, Georgia, and West Virginia. In one trial, the presiding judge commented that Sherry could teach a master class in effective cross examination. Clients also describe her as “an exceptional attorney” with “a knack for understanding very complex scientific and medical issues and making them easy to understand to both clients and a layperson on the jury.”

Sherry has over 25 years of experience in product liability and toxic tort cases, with an emphasis on defending pharmaceutical and medical device companies. Sherry’s practice ranges from multi-plaintiff, multi-jurisdiction litigations to single plaintiff cases. She has served as national coordinating counsel in multiple pharmaceutical mass torts. Sherry also has served as lead counsel in several coordinated proceedings in Chicago.

Ranked in Chambers USA 2022 in the area of Product Liability & Mass Torts (Nationwide), Sherry is recognized as “understand[ing] the big-picture issues and themes, while also somehow knowing the most minute details of the case. She is strategic, practical, calm, and persuasive.” Clients praise Sherry as “hard-working, a consummate professional and extremely well prepared,” “an amazing trial attorney who has great presence,” and “creative, thoughtful and smart.” According to Who’s Who Legal, where she is recognized in both “Life Sciences – Product Liability” and “Product Liability Defence,” Sherry is celebrated as “one of the best national strategic thinkers, advocates and trial attorneys” and highly recommended as “one of the best national coordinating counsel and trial counsel” who “absolutely belongs on the list.” Described as “superbly qualified, knowledgeable,” she has “a keen ability to develop sophisticated strategies which bring excellent results on a consistent basis and in an efficient and cost effective manner.”

Early in her career, Sherry clerked for the Honorable N. Patrick Crooks of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, who reinforced integrity and civility in the law – values Sherry has carried with her throughout her career.

Sherry, her husband, twin boys, and dogs split their time between a condo in downtown Chicago and a log cabin in rural Indiana, enjoying all the best of the city and country.

Education

- Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology (J.D., with high honors, 1996); Chicago-Kent Law Review, Notes and Comments Editor
- Marquette University (B.A., magna cum laude, 1993); Phi Beta Kappa

State Admissions

- Illinois, 2002
- Wisconsin, 1996

Federal Admissions

- United States Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- United States District Court, District of Colorado
- United States District Court, Central District of Illinois
- United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- United States District Court, Southern District of Illinois
- United States District Court, Eastern District of Michigan
- United States District Court, Western District of Michigan
- United States District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- United States District Court, Western District of Wisconsin

Service Areas

- Health & Life Sciences
- Life Sciences Litigation
- Mass Tort & Product Liability
- Appellate & Legal Issues
- Business Litigation
- Class Action Litigation
- eDiscovery

Industries Represented

- Athletic Equipment Manufacturers
- Chemical
- Clinical Trials
- Hospitals
- Medical Devices
- Pharmaceutical & Medicine

Experience

- Served as co-lead trial counsel for defendants in transvaginal mesh product liability case; obtained a defense verdict on failure to warn after plaintiff's counsel requested over \$8.6 million in compensatory damages during closing
- Served as lead trial counsel for defendant in multi-defendant talcum powder product liability case alleging decedent developed ovarian cancer causing her death; obtained full defense verdict in favor of all defendants after plaintiff's counsel requested over \$84 million in compensatory damages during closing
- Served as co-lead trial counsel in a case involving transvaginal mesh in Chicago, securing a defense verdict on two of three claims; jury awarded only \$55,000 in compensatory damages (past medical expenses) and no punitive damages on remaining claim despite plaintiff's request for \$85 million
- Served as co-lead trial counsel in a case involving a diabetes drug in West Virginia, securing a defense verdict on three of four claims; jury awarded only \$155,000 in compensatory damages and no punitive damages on remaining claim
- Served as co-lead trial counsel in the first bellwether case involving a diabetes drug in Chicago, obtaining a defense verdict in less than two hours following a trial lasting longer than three weeks in which plaintiff requested over \$10 million in damages
- Obtained summary judgment in a product liability case involving ski bindings as to all of plaintiff's claims against client and excluding testimony from plaintiff's only expert witness against client
- Successfully argued appeal to Seventh Circuit (Judge Posner presiding) on behalf of a major pharmaceutical company with regard to removal and fraudulent joinder
- As part of trial team in a case alleging nuisance due to hydrogen sulfide exposure, successfully limited jury award to only \$17,500 despite plaintiff's counsel's request for over \$1.2 million in closing argument; preclusion of plaintiffs' expert toxicologist from testifying on medical causation affirmed
- Obtained defense verdict as part of trial team in a latex glove allergy case

Publications & Events

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- “‘Kung Flu’: A History of Violence and Hostility against Asian Americans,” DRI 2023 Drug and Medical Device Seminar, New Orleans, Louisiana (May 2023)
- “Building Resilient Legal Teams Client Panel,” Moderator, Tucker Ellis In-House Counsel Summit Webinar (November 2021)
- “City of Chicago vs. Catherine O’Leary (and Her Cow),” IADC 2021 Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois (August 2021)
- “Cooking and Conversation with Sherry Knutson, Rupert Vaughan, and Xavier Vaughan,” IADC Foundation Social Series (November 2020)
- “‘22 Lewd Chinese Women’: A Diversity and Inclusion CLE Historical Reenactment” and “Jurors in the Age of Trump,” DRI Drug and Medical Device Litigation Seminar, Washington, D.C. (May 2019)
- “Civil Litigation in the ‘Post Truth’ Era: Defending Against Motivated Reasoning,” IADC 2018 Midyear Meeting, La Quinta, California (February 2018)
- International Association of Defense Counsel’s (IADC) 45th Annual Trial Academy, Faculty Member (August 2017)
- “[The Current Legal Landscape for ‘Discovery on Discovery,’](#)” Moderator and materials prepared for “Preparing Corporate Witnesses for Discovery about Discovery and Preservation; Collection and Production Issues,” Environmental & Energy, Mass Torts and Products Liability Litigation Committees’ Joint CLE Seminar, American Bar Association, Squaw Valley, California (January 2017)
- “Working with Experts: Best Practices,” IADC Webinar (January 2017)
- “Be Prepared: Best Practices, Tips and Strategies for Trial Preparation,” Drug & Device Forum 2016, HB Litigation Conferences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (December 2016)
- “Developing a Game Plan for a Successful MDL Practice,” IADC Annual Meeting, Southampton, Bermuda (July 2016)
- “Trying the Products Liability Case: Tips and Strategies from Pros,” IADC Webinar (January 2016)
- “Trying a Products Liability Case: Best Practices, Tips and Strategies,” Moderator, ABA Women of the Section of Litigation Conference, Chicago, Illinois (November 2015)
- “Lessons Learned from E-Discovery Sanctions in Mass Tort Litigation: Where Do We Go from Here?,” DRI Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C. (October 2015)
- “Hot Topics,” DRI Drug and Medical Device Conference, San Francisco, California (May 2015)
- “Trials: A Multi-Chair Perspective,” ABA Section of Litigation, Women in Product Liability Roundtable (July 2014)
- “E-Discovery: Predictive Coding—Friend or Foe?,” DRI Product Liability Conference, Specialized Litigation Workshop: Mass Tort and Class Actions, National Harbor, Maryland (April 2013)

PUBLICATIONS

- “Michigan Product Liability Law: Retroactivity of New Law and Primer,” Drug & Device Law Blog (February 2024)
- “Evaluating Retroactivity of Michigan Drugmaker Immunity Repeal,” *Law360* (January 2024)
- “But Is It Retroactive? Michigan Repeal of Drugmaker Immunity Statute Set to Go Into Effect February 2024,” Tucker Ellis Client Alert (January 2024)
- “Jury Trends in the Post-Truth Era and Strategies to Maximize Your Chances of Success,” *IADC Trial Techniques and Tactics* (March 2020)
- “Juror Jeopardy: What Is Gender Fluidity and How Does It Impact Voir Dire?“, *IADC Trial Techniques and Tactics Committee Newsletter* (October 2019)
- “Satellite Witnesses Part II: Strategic Considerations Before and During Trial,” *IADC Product Liability Newsletter* (October 2017 – Second Edition)
- “The Evolution of Diacetyl-Related Litigation: Parts 1 and 2,” *Law360* (August 2016)
- “Is Your Industry Under Fire? Targeting Entire Industries Through Enterprise Liability,” *Inside Counsel* (June 2015)
- “Satellite Witnesses: Can Corporate Witnesses be Required to Testify Live from Across the Country?“, *IADC Committee Newsletter* (May 2015)
- *FDA Basics for the Drug and Medical Device Lawyer*, DRI Defense Library Book, Editor (2015)

MEDIA

- “J&J, Ethicon Sink Failure-to-Warn Claim in Pelvic Mesh Trial,” *Law360* (July 2022)
- “CVN’s Top 10 Most Impressive Defense Verdicts of 2021,” Courtroom View Network (December 2021)

Honors

- Chambers USA
 - » Product Liability & Mass Torts (Nationwide) (2016–2023)
 - » “Up and Coming,” Product Liability & Mass Torts (Nationwide) (2015)
- International Society of Barristers, Fellow (2016)
- Benchmark Litigation
 - » Top 250 Women in Litigation
 - » Top 250 Women – Midwest
 - » National Practice Area Star (Product Liability)
 - » Litigation Star (Product Liability)
 - » Top 100 Trial Lawyers
- Who's Who Legal
 - » Thought Leaders – USA
 - » Life Sciences – Product Liability
 - » Product Liability Defence
 - » Life Sciences – Product Liability
 - » Product Liability Defence
 - » Illinois – Product Liability (2006–2008)
- Law360
 - » Product Liability MVP (2014)
- The Legal 500
 - » Product Liability and Mass Tort Defense: Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices
- LMG Life Sciences
 - » Life Sciences Star (Product Liability) (2019–2023)
- Illinois Super Lawyers® (2013–2024)
 - » Top 100 (2022)
 - » Top 50 Women (2022)
- Illinois Super Lawyers Rising Stars® (2011, 2012)
- The Best Lawyers in America® (2023, 2024)

In the Community

- International Association of Defense Counsel (IADC)
 - » Annual Meeting Steering Committee (2020)
 - » Trial Tactics & Techniques Committee, Vice Chair – Diversity (2019-2020)
 - » 45th Annual Trial Academy Faculty, Stanford Law School (2017)
- Defense Research Institute
 - » Philanthropic Activities Committee (2017)
 - » Steering and Planning Committees for Drug and Medical Device Substantive Law Committee (2015-present)
 - » Drug and Medical Device Substantive Law Committee, Chair of Marketing (2017-present)
 - » Drug and Medical Device Substantive Law Committee, Vice Chair of Marketing (2015-2017)
- American Bar Association
 - » Section of Litigation, Women in Product Liability Subcommittee, Co-Chair (2014-2015)
 - » Section of Litigation, Women in Product Liability Workshop, Co-Chair (2012, 2013)
- Chicago Bar Association
 - » Alliance for Women Executive Committee, Girl Scouts Project Law Track, Co-Chair (2016-2018)
- Ronald McDonald House, Volunteer