

“we distinguish ourselves through our dedication to our clients.”

Melissa L. Yemma

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Melissa Yemma concentrates her practice in the areas of product liability, retail liability and insurance litigation. In addition, she defends independent and public schools in a variety of matters involving student safety, school policy and civil rights.

Ms. Yemma’s experience covers all aspects of discovery and trial preparation. She has successfully arbitrated many cases in both federal and state courts throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Ms. Yemma was recognized as a Rising Star in the 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 editions of Pennsylvania Super Lawyers magazine, a distinction that recognizes the top 2.5 percent of Pennsylvania lawyers in practice for 10 years or less.

Relevant Experience

- Representation of manufacturers and servicers in product liability litigation involving a range of residential and commercial products including appliances, recreational products and vehicles, snow making equipment and heating products.
- Representation of a global leader in the manufacture of home products in product litigation involving refrigerators, freezers, ranges, washers, dryers, dishwashers, dehumidifiers and vacuum cleaners.
- Serves as national coordinating counsel for global manufacturer in product litigation filed throughout the United States. Responsible for coordination of discovery and trial preparation.
- Representation of leading global automotive supplier in product litigation.
- Representation of a diversified manufacturer of industrial components serving the railroad, vehicular and construction markets.
- Representation of insured individuals and commercial entities involved in general liability litigation.
- Experience in the representation of independent schools in matters involving discrimination, admission practices, policies, procedures and student safety.
- Experience in the representation of public schools in matters involving student safety, dismissal procedures, student supervision, threat assessments, civil rights, premises liability and school policies.
- Representation of national retailers in matters involving premises liability, product sale, product installation and service.

Education

Judicial Clerkship, The Honorable William C. Carpenter, Superior Court of Delaware, 2003-2004

J.D., Villanova University School of Law, 2003

Symposium Editor, Villanova Sports and Entertainment Law Journal

Student-Attorney, Villanova Farmworker Legal Aid Clinic

B.A., Villanova University, 2000

Admissions

Pennsylvania

New Jersey

United States District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania

United States District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania

United States District Court, Western District of Pennsylvania

United States District Court, District of New Jersey

United States Court of Appeals, third Circuit

United States District Court, Northern District of Florida

- Representation of commercial entities in litigation involving their employees and their properties.
- Representation of servicers and installers of residential and commercial products in matters where it is alleged that their work resulted in property damage and personal injury.

Representative Matters

- Defense verdict in Pennsylvania Federal Court where it was alleged that a compact refrigerator caused a fire at a high school resulting in substantial property damage. Obtained precedent setting ruling on spoliation of evidence resulting in an adverse inference instruction to the jury. The defense verdict was affirmed on appeal to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Defense verdict for a private day and boarding school in a lawsuit brought by a student for personal injury sustained by the student when he was hit by a vehicle at a pedestrian cross-walk on a campus roadway. The defense successfully proved through expert engineering testimony that the injuries sustained by the student were the result of his inattention and not the result of defective roadway engineering or the lack of proper pedestrian warning devices.
- Defense arbitration decision in Pennsylvania federal court action where it was alleged that a dehumidifier caused a fire and resulting property damage. The defense successfully proved that the dehumidifier was not in the area of fire origin and that the dehumidifier did not contain any evidence of abnormal electrical activity.
- Obtained a voluntary dismissal of a Pennsylvania federal court action where it was alleged that a defective dryer caused a fire and resulting property damage. The defense was successful in establishing through expert opinion that the fire originated to the exterior of the dryer and that the dryer was attacked by the fire.
- Obtained summary judgement in favor of appliance manufacturer in a lawsuit brought by homeowners for damages sustained as a result of a fire. The defense successfully established that the dishwasher at issue was not an unreasonably dangerous product as a matter of law.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a property owner in a lawsuit brought by a business invitee for personal injuries sustained by the individual when she fell from a loading dock on the property. Through fact discovery, the defense successfully established that the property owner was a landlord out of possession and therefore, owed no duty to the business invitee.
- Obtained voluntary dismissals of product litigation venued throughout the United States. The litigation claimed millions in damages and was based upon allegations that a defectively designed product caused fires.
- Successfully litigated matter on behalf of school district where teacher alleged wrongful termination was the result of her disability. School district defended action by establishing termination was based upon poor performance and not teacher's disability.
- Achieved cost-effective settlement on behalf of HVAC installer and servicer where it was alleged that improper installation and service was the cause of a fire which destroyed a commercial building resulting in significant property damage and business income loss.

Membership

NAMWOLF (National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms)

WBENC (National Women's Business Enterprise Certification)

Pennsylvania Bar Association

New Jersey Bar Association

Defense Research Institute, Young Lawyers Committee

Other

Arbitrator, Delaware County Court of Common Pleas

Volunteer, Camp Dost, A Pediatric Oncology Camp, Millville, Pennsylvania, 1996-2010.

Marathon Runner, completing nine marathons in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.