

Sondra A. Hemeryck

Partner

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In her impressive and wide-ranging legal career, Sondra Hemeryck has been an influential player on teams that have defended the business interests of a world-famous athlete, protected the copyrights of some of the most celebrated movies in history, and established important protections from defamation lawsuits for Illinois publishers. You know, the usual stuff.



As persuasive on the page as she is in the courtroom, Sondra is a compelling writer and a tenacious litigator. She has an impressive track record of obtaining dismissals, summary judgments, and defense verdicts in favor of her clients in a wide range of class action cases and other complex litigation in federal and state courts nationwide.

Sondra has ably and diligently defended clients ranging from individuals to Fortune 50 and multinational corporations in cases involving consumer fraud, deceptive trade practices, antitrust, breach of warranty, breach of contract, insurance bad faith, trademark and trade dress infringement, copyright infringement, and defamation. She prides herself on understanding her clients' goals and creating and executing legal strategies that are designed to achieve them.

Sondra is the Co-Lead of the firm's Class Actions Practice Team.

EXPERIENCE

Clerkships

Hon. Richard D. Cudahy, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (1991-1992)

Representative Engagements

- Sondra has successfully defended United Airlines in over a dozen putative consumer class actions, involving a wide range of issues, from the way United calculates frequent flier miles, to its ability to make changes to its frequent flier program, to its baggage-handling practices, and asserting a variety of claims including breach of contract, consumer fraud, violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, and RICO.
- Sondra has also obtained dismissals or summary judgments in putative class actions asserting claims for breach of contract, bad faith, and violation of state consumer fraud statutes against a major insurance company.
- Sondra represented a multinational consumer products company in a class action involving an allegedly defective haircare product, negotiating, defending, and implementing a nationwide class settlement of the claims.
- Sondra represented another major consumer products company in a class action asserting that the company had made false claims about a children's product, resulting in a nationwide class settlement.
- Sondra successfully represented the founder and president of Rhee Bros., the leading Asian food distributor in the United States, along with a number of affiliated companies, in a dispute with his Chicago-area partners that resulted in an award of damages to and sole ownership of the Chicago-area business by Sondra's client.

- Sondra represented a world-famous athlete in a case asserting that a magazine ad misappropriated his identity in violation of a state right of publicity statute, resulting in a seven-figure damages award to Sondra's client in a federal jury trial.
- When the tattooist who created Mike Tyson's facial tattoo claimed that Warner Bros.' use of the tattoo in the movie *The Hangover Part II* infringed his copyright, Sondra helped to defeat the preliminary injunction motion, allowing the film to open as scheduled.
- Sondra also represented Warner Bros. in a case asserting copyright and trademark infringement claims against a defendant who was illegally licensing images from *Wizard of Oz*, *Gone With the Wind*, and the *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. Sondra obtained summary judgment for Warner Bros., resulting in entry of a permanent injunction and an award of damages against the infringer.
- When a major consumer products manufacturer faced a trade dress infringement claim, Sondra's defense in a federal jury trial resulted in a verdict for the defendant.
- Sondra's representation of a small magazine publisher in a defamation case before the Illinois Supreme Court resulted in an opinion that substantially strengthened the fair report privilege in Illinois.

CREDENTIALS

Education

Harvard Law School, J.D., 1991, *magna cum laude*; Editor, *Harvard Law Review*
Yale University, B.A., 1987, *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa

Bar Admissions

Illinois
Pennsylvania
U.S. Supreme Court
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (Trial Bar)
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin

Professional Memberships

American Bar Association
Section of Litigation
Class Actions and Derivative Suits Committee
Chicago Bar Association

Honors & Awards

The Best Lawyers in America

Best Lawyers® (Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions-Defendants, 2024-2025)

Chicago's Notable Women in Law

Crain's Chicago Business (2020)

Illinois Leading Lawyer

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2008-2010, 2012-2024)

Top 100 Leading Women Business Lawyers

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2018-2020)

Top Women in Law

Law Bulletin Media (2023)

Illinois Super Lawyers

Thomson Reuters (2023-2024)

Rising Star

Euromoney's Benchmark Litigation (2009, 2012-2013)