



SpencerFane®

Kristen M. O'Neal

Of Counsel

Contact

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Overview

A skilled litigator, capable of handling matters from intake to conclusion, Kristen approaches every matter with the mindset that it will ultimately go to trial. Even though most cases resolve before trial, preparing in this manner positions her clients to more effectively reach an advantageous resolution.

With more than a decade of experience, Kristen is capable of managing discovery, handling depositions, drafting and arguing affective motions, negotiating resolutions, and trying cases to jury verdicts. She has represented hospitals, doctors, mid-level providers, and nurses; public school districts, administrators, and teachers; attorneys; trucking companies; electrical companies; auto parts retailers; and insurance companies and their insureds.

Her track record of success spans matters involving:

- transportation related claims, such as helping clients navigate and manage claims, investigate accidents, and negotiating to resolve claims both in and out of court all over the nation;
- employment matters related to discrimination, retaliation, contract disputes, and separation;
- professional negligence, including attorney, physician, and hospital negligence;
- student discrimination and constitutional issues;
- personal injury and wrongful death claims; and
- declaratory judgments, subrogation, and interpleader actions.

Kristen has notable experience representing individuals and entities before the Missouri Commission of Human Rights, Missouri Department of Education, and Missouri Board of Healing Arts.

Having grown up in a family of educators, she worked as a substitute teacher and assistant high school softball coach while completing her undergraduate studies in secondary education, experience which informs her work representing public schools.

Education

- University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law, 2012 (J.D.)
- Southwest Baptist University, 2009 (B.S.)

Bar Admissions

- Kansas
- Missouri

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas

Distinctions

- *Missouri Lawyers Media*, Women's Justice Award, Litigation Practitioner, 2025
- *Missouri and Kansas Super Lawyers*, Rising Stars, 2018-2023
- *Missouri Lawyers Media*, Top Defense Verdicts & Settlements, two cases recognized, 2020

Memberships

- Trucking Industry Defense Association
- Missouri Bar Association
- Missouri Trucking Association
- Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association
- Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers
- Southern Missouri Women Lawyers

Presentations and Publications

- "It's one, two, three strikes you're out....Spring Personnel Decisions for Certified Personnel," Missouri Association of Rural Education
- "Limitations on Working After Retirement: It's Not Just for Employees Anymore," Missouri Association of Rural Education
- "Disciplining Staff in Light of Missouri's New Whistle Blower Protections," Missouri Association of Rural Education K-8 Conference, Education Law Update, UMKC CLE Program
- "[Damages – Do You Know the New Rules?](#)" Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association, Webinar, September 2020

Related Experience

- Upheld motion to dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction in the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Southern District.
- Obtained summary judgment upheld by 10th Circuit for school district and administrators by employee who alleged discrimination and retaliation.

- Obtained summary judgment for a healthcare provider following 2017 changes to Chapter 538 related to vicarious liability.
- Achieved a successful defense verdict while representing a physician in a medical malpractice action brought by a patient who alleged negligence neurosurgery with use of bone morphogenic protein. Punitive damages were sought.
- Achieved a successful defense verdict while representing a trucking company in wrongful death action arising out of a tractor-trailer accident.
- Filed several writs for mandamus/prohibition against the Missouri Commission of Human Rights (MCHR) on behalf of school districts based upon Missouri Supreme Court precedent at the time. There was concern any argument regarding failure to meet the statute of limitations was waived if the MCHR issued a right to sue letter.