SpencerFane®

Melissa Sherman

Partner

Contact

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Overview

Melissa Sherman helps businesses in an array of industries resolve their legal issues successfully and efficiently. Her practice focuses on business litigation, eminent domain, and outside general counsel services. During her more than 15 years in law, she has gained extensive trial and appellate experience while effectively arguing her clients' cases in state and federal courts. Whether presenting a case to a jury or facing opposing counsel at the negotiation table, Melissa is a passionate and powerful advocate for her clients.

In addition to litigation, Melissa specializes in representing small and mid-sized companies, as well as governmental entities, in all aspects of condemnation law. From helping school districts acquire land to defending landowners' property rights in court, Melissa adeptly guides clients through all phases of the eminent domain process.

Melissa also serves as outside general counsel for businesses in health care, real estate, financial services, and many other industries. She dedicates herself to understanding each client's business model and business objectives and partners with senior management to create innovative and effective legal strategies to achieve their goals. As general counsel, she shepherds clients through the numerous legal issues affecting day-to-day operations and draws on the expertise and resources of other attorneys in the firm to provide skilled guidance and support for her clients.

Melissa began her legal career as a law clerk for the Honorable Steve Leben, who now sits on the Kansas Court of Appeals and is the 2014 recipient of the William H. Rehnquist Award. Since then, she has earned a reputation as an exceptional litigation attorney. She has been recognized in *Kansas and Missouri Super Lawyers* nearly every year since 2009. She has also been awarded an AV Preeminent Rating by Martindale-Hubbell.

Melissa, who earned her law degree at the University of Kansas, is active in several professional organizations. She has served as a task force leader for the Earl E. O'Connor American Inn of the Court, helping it to become one of only a handful of local inns nationwide to achieve the platinum-level designation.

Education

- University of Kansas School of Law, 2001 (J.D.)
- University of Kansas, 1998 (B.A.), *with highest distinction*

Bar Admissions

- Kansas
- Missouri

Court Admissions

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

Community Involvement

- Earl E. O'Connor American Inn of the Court, Achieving Excellence Committee, Chair, 2010-2017
- Kansas City Children's Advisory Network, Advisory Board, 2012-present
- Leadership Lenexa, 2004

Distinctions

- *Best Lawyers in America,* 2019-2027
  - Lawyer of the Year, Litigation – Real Estate, 2021
- *Kansas Law Review*, August 2000-May 2001
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV Preeminent Rating
- *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers,* Rising Stars, 2009-2011, 2013-2016
- National Moot Court Competition, 2000
- Order of the Coif
- Phi Beta Kappa
- University Scholar

Memberships

- Kansas Bar Association
- The Missouri Bar
- Johnson County Bar Association
- American Bar Association

Presentations and Publications

- "Protecting Your Book and License: RIA Risk Mitigation Strategies," Spencer Fane Webinar, October 2026

- “Yellowstone and Eminent Domain: Separating Myth from Reality at the Dutton Ranch,” Spencer Fane Advantage CLE, June 2025

Related Experience

- Helped to obtain and defended the complete grant of summary judgment in favor of clients in a case where the plaintiff had alleged discriminatory treatment and sought $19 million in damages, which was later affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit and denied review by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Obtaining summary judgment on behalf of the City of Topeka, Kansas in a $4 million breach of contract action involving Heartland Park race track.
- Won on appeal to the Kansas Court of Appeals regarding the proper tax classification of a client’s real estate, resulting in a favorable ruling for the client on all issues and a complete reversal of the underlying decision of the Board of Tax Appeals.
- Served as trial counsel and obtaining a complete defense verdict in favor of an ambulance service sued for wrongful death in a lengthy and expert-intensive jury trial, where the plaintiffs had demanded more than $4.5 million in damages and rejected an offer of $500,000 during trial.
- Assisted a commercial client in defending and ultimately obtaining the dismissal of a case involving breach of contract and numerous other claims alleging approximately $10 million in damages relating to the termination of a lease at the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant.
- Served as special condemnation counsel to the City of Lee’s Summit, Missouri.
- Pursued litigation to condemn oil and gas interests.
- Obtained a jury award for $1 million in damages, plus statutory interest, in a highly-contested condemnation matter involving the taking of access by a local municipality and a state department of transportation for which the pre-appeal appraisers’ award was $530,000.
- Served as trial counsel and obtaining a $500,000 judgment in favor of the client, which was later affirmed by the Kansas Supreme Court, in a condemnation matter involving the apportionment of an appraisers’ award pursuant to a commercial lease.
- Obtained an appraisers’ award for a commercial client that was roughly $800,000 above what was offered by the condemning authority.
- Resolved an eminent domain matter for a local developer for roughly $500,000 above what was initially offered by the condemning authority.
- Assisted a client in the healthcare industry in connection with contracts with its customers, labor and employment issues, and general corporate matters.
- Represented a client in the purchase of an established and well-respected service company, including work to structure and complete the transaction.
- Assisted a client in the sale of significant business interests, in starting a new company, and with related intellectual property matters.