



Sandra Edwards

Partner

Chair, Product Liability and Mass Torts and San Francisco Litigation Practices

San Francisco

+1 415-591-1412

Chair of Winston & Strawn’s Product Liability & Mass Torts Practice and a former Assistant District Attorney in San Francisco, Sandra has extensive civil trial and complex litigation experience. Her practice focuses on product liability and pharmaceutical litigation, mass and toxic torts, and commercial litigation. She has been recognized as one of the nation’s “Top 100 Trial Lawyers” and one of California’s “Top 20 Trial Lawyers” by *Benchmark Litigation US*.

A recognized trial lawyer with significant experience representing major U.S. and international corporations in high-stakes disputes, Sandra has successfully represented a wide range of clients in federal and state courts around the country. Her trial work includes high-profile matters defending companies and their products, as well as trade secret and commercial disputes. Her litigation practice includes managing multidistrict litigation and coordinated proceedings, as well as mass tort claims. Sandra is the chair of the firm’s Product Liability and Mass Torts Practice, head of the firm’s Litigation Practice for the San Francisco office, and a member of the firm’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Sandra’s experience has led her to be recognized by Legal 500 US and *Lawdragon* as one of the “500 Leading Litigators in America” for Complex Commercial, Product Liability, and Mass Tort. *Benchmark Litigation US* lists her as

one of California's "Top 20 Trial Lawyers," one of the nation's "Top 100 Trial Lawyers" and "Top 250 Women in Litigation," and a "National Practice Area Star" for Product Liability. She has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Product Liability Litigation: Defense and Litigation: Environmental, and is recognized by Northern California *Super Lawyers*.

Sandra has deep ties to the Bay Area and served as the General Counsel and on the Board of Directors for the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce for eight years. She is co-chair of the MDL Task Force for the Product Liability Advisory Council (PLAC) and is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America.

Key Matters

Some of the experience represented below may have been handled at a previous firm.

Trial Experience

- Served as trial counsel with Winston & Strawn on the team defending Monsanto Company in the first Roundup® product liability and failure-to-warn case to go to trial in the U.S. Following an eight-week jury trial, the trial team successfully reduced a punitive damages award by US\$211 million, and the verdict was further reduced on appeal.
 - Has since served, and is now serving, as trial counsel defending Monsanto Company in additional Roundup product liability and failure-to-warn cases, including in the first case involving claims relating to pediatric leukemia.
- Served as one of the lead counsel representing Monsanto in the Judicial Council Coordinated Proceeding ("JCCP") in Alameda Superior Court, defending against hundreds of product liability and failure-to-warn cases involving Roundup-related products, and as the JCCP disbanded, in other courts throughout California.
- Currently serving as trial counsel for a Fortune 50 company in connection with several high-stakes toxic tort litigation matters.
- Currently serving as trial counsel for a Fortune 50 company in several hundred wrongful-death, high-profile actions.
- Served as trial counsel in the successful defense of a pharmaceutical company against claims of failure-to-warn and punitive damages. In a four-week jury trial in U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California (Hon. J. Rakoff, S.D.N.Y.) following the court's dismissal of punitive damages claim and entry of directed verdict for the client, the jury returned a unanimous defense verdict.
- Served as trial counsel in a jury trial in San Francisco Superior Court involving claims of fraud, negligence, and breach of contract in a complex real estate and construction action. Obtained a verdict with findings of statutory violations resulting in an award of attorneys' fees to the client.
- Served as lead trial counsel for one of the world's largest aviation authorities against construction-related claims in Los Angeles Superior Court. The matter resolved on favorable terms immediately prior to jury selection.
- Represented a pharmaceutical corporation in more than 50 pharmaceutical product liability lawsuits alleging personal injuries from the use of an FDA-approved cancer treatment. The representation included successful pre-trial strategies that greatly reduced or limited the ability of certain plaintiffs to recover damages and resulted in several summary judgment orders and voluntary dismissals.
- Served as trial counsel in two jury trials in San Diego Superior Court and the U.S. District Court, Southern District of California, involving claims of product liability and punitive damages, earning defense verdicts for clients in both cases.
- Successfully represented an international pesticide manufacturer in numerous coordinated product liability lawsuits throughout the West Coast alleging crop damage resulting from use of an EPA-regulated plant-growth regulator.

- Represented a pesticide manufacturer in separate coordinated proceedings throughout California alleging groundwater contamination due to historical applications of soil fumigants. Successfully negotiated the resolution of seven of the eight original lawsuits.

Recent Experience

Winston Serves as Trial Counsel in Monsanto Roundup Litigation

Recognitions

- Recognized in *The Legal 500 US* (2020–2023)
- Recognized in *Lawdragon* as one of the “500 Leading Litigators in America” for Complex Commercial, Product Liability, and Mass Tort (2023–2024)
- Recognized in *Benchmark Litigation US* as one of the nation’s “Top 100 Trial Lawyers” (2019–2024), one of the “Top 250 Women in Litigation” (2019–2024), and one of California’s “Top 20 Trial Lawyers” (2021–2023)
- Recognized in *Benchmark Litigation US* as a “National Practice Area Star” for Product Liability (2019–2024)
- Recognized in *Benchmark Litigation US* as a “California Litigation Star” for Commercial and Product Liability (2019–2024)
- Recognized in *Best Lawyers*® “Women in the Law” (2021)
- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Product Liability Litigation: Defendants (2018–2024)
- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Litigation: Environmental (2019–2024)
- Recommended in *Who’s Who Legal* as a “Global Leader” for Environment (2022)
- Named among the Northern California *Super Lawyers* (2014–2021)
- Litigation Counsel of America: Fellow

Activities

- Member, Winston & Strawn’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee
- Member, Law360’s Trials Editorial Advisory Board (2020–2024)
- Fellow, The Litigation Counsel of America
- Co-chair, Product Liability Advisory Council MDL Task Force
- Sustaining member, Product Liability Advisory Council
- Secretary, Board of Directors, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce (2008–2018)
- General Counsel, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce (2010–2018)
- Former Assistant District Attorney, City and County of San Francisco
- Co-chair, Subcommittee of Women Environmental Lawyers, Environmental Litigation Committee, American Bar Association Section of Litigation (2010–2018)

“Peers have been impressed by her trial skills and her poise and

strategic abilities. ”

Benchmark Litigation US

Credentials

EDUCATION

Sandra received a J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law, where she served as a member of the *Law Review*. During law school, she completed a judicial externship with Robert H. Schnacke, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. She received an A.B. from Occidental College where she played singles and doubles for a nationally ranked women's tennis team.

ADMISSIONS

- California

Related Insights & News

Speaking Engagements

- “Using Census Registries in MDLs Large and Small: A Realistic View of What can be Accomplished - and What Can be Improved - Through Census Registries,” PLAC, Co-speaker, Sept., 2023
- “Preparing and Presenting Corporate Witnesses at Trial,” Winston & Strawn Product & Mass Torts Summit, June 7, 2022
- “*An Industry Under Attack: Addressing the Recent Rise of OTC Product Liability Litigation*,” ACI Drug & Medical Device Litigation Conference, NY Marriott Marquis Hotel, Co-speaker, Dec., 2021
- “*Making Technology Relatable: How to Try and Win Highly Technical Cases*,” Winston & Strawn Webinar, Co-speaker, Aug., 2021
- “*Jurors’ Views in These Transformative Times: What Jury Research Shows*,” Winston & Strawn Webinar, Co-speaker, May, 2021
- “*Product Liability Immunity: Understanding COVID-19 Immunity Under the PREP ACT*,” Winston & Strawn Webinar, Co-speaker, May, 2020
- “*Jurors’ Views in These Transformative Times: What Jury Research Shows*,” Winston & Strawn Webinar, Co-speaker, May, 2020
- “*Identifying and Preparing Expert Witnesses for Trial*,” Litigation Management: A Helping Hand on the Rio Grande Hyatt Regency Tamaya, April, 2019
- “*Advancing the Careers of Women in the Environmental Practice: Obstacles & Opportunities*,” ELI, March 2019
- “*What Every Company Needs to Know When Selling Products in California: Navigating the Rough Waters of California Products Regulations*,” The Terranea Resort, Oct., 2017
- “*Law Seminars International: Natural Resource Damages Conference*,” La Fonda Santa Fe Hotel, July, 2017
- “*Legal Issues Surrounding the Internet of Things*,” BASF Conference Center, Co-speaker, May, 2017
- “*Driving Change from Within*,” LinkedIn, May, 2017

Publications

- [“Survival Law Change Calls For Trial Preference Revamp,”](#) Law360, Co-author, Feb., 2022
- [“Texas District Court Allows Class Action Against Apple to Proceed,”](#) Dec., 2021
- [“PREP Act Update: The inconsistent Treatment of Preemption in Claims Against Nursing Homes Continues,”](#) Co-author, March, 2021
- [“Amendment to PREP Act Declaration Expands Pool of Vaccinators,”](#) Co-author, Feb., 2021
- [“Advisory Opinion Clarifies Expansive PREP Act Preemption,”](#) Co-author, Jan., 2021
- [“HSS Issues Fourth Amendment to PREP Act COVID-19 Declaration,”](#) Co-author, Dec., 2020
- [“Limitations on PREP Act Preemption as Basis for Removal,”](#) Co-author, Dec., 2020
- [“Recent Decisions Provide Insights on Preemption and the PREP Act, for COVID-19 Claims,”](#) Co-author, Sept., 2020
- [“Third Amendment to PREP Act Declaration Expands Scope of COVID-19 Liability,”](#) Co-author, Aug., 2020 [HC1]
- [“The Growing Challenges To Drug Cos.’ Preemption Defense,”](#) August 2020
- [“FDA Premarket Review/Authorization No Longer Needed for COVID-19 Laboratory Developed Tests,”](#) Co-author, Aug., 2020
- [“Johnson & Johnson Asks Missouri Supreme Court to Review \\$2.1 Billion Ruling,”](#) Co-author, Aug., 2020
- [“Missouri Court of Appeals Reduces \\$4.69 Billion Talc Verdict as a Result of Personal Jurisdiction Challenge,”](#) Co-author, June, 2020
- [“California Appeals Court Reverses Dismissal Based on Preemption in Risperdal Case,”](#) Co-author, June, 2020
- [“Missouri Appellate Court Hears Oral Argument in Johnson & Johnson \\$4.7B Appeal,”](#) Co-author, June, 2020
- [“Amended PREP Act Declaration Clarifies Products Used to ‘Limit the Harm’ from COVID-19,”](#) Co-author, June, 2020
- [“States Expand COVID-19-Related Immunity and Provide Guidance to Businesses Reopening,”](#) Co-author, June, 2020
- [“Maintaining Product Liability Immunity During The Pandemic,”](#) Law360, Co-author, May, 2020
- [“HHS Advisory Opinion on Immunity under the PREP Act,”](#) Co-author, April, 2020
- [“States Providing Liability Immunity to Health Care Providers in the Face of COVID-19,”](#) Co-author, April, 2020
- [“Immunity for Manufacturers and Distributors of COVID-19 Countermeasures,”](#) Co-author, April, 2020
- [“California Court Ruling Leads to New Labeling Requirements for Coffee Products,”](#) *Food Manufacturing*, Co-author, May, 2018
- [“Selling Products in California: Navigating Product Regulations,”](#) Oct., 2017
- [“The Toxic Substances Control Act Reform Bill – What It Means to You,”](#) *Industry Week*, June, 2016
- [“Update: Unpacking the Toxic Substances Control Act Reform Bill,”](#) *Environmental Leader*, Co-author, Aug., 2016

RECOGNITIONS

Law360 Names Winston Attorneys to 2024 Editorial Advisory Boards

MARCH 21, 2024

BLOG

Beyond the Obvious: Does the Failure to Rule Out Idiopathic Causes Survive a Rule 702 Challenge?

NOVEMBER 17, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2024 *Benchmark Litigation*

OCTOBER 6, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Partners Named to *Benchmark Litigation's* 2024 Top 100 Trial Lawyers

OCTOBER 6, 2023

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Sandra Edwards Speaks on the Use of Census Registries in MDLs

SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Partners Recognized in 2024 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Litigators in America

SEPTEMBER 8, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2024

AUGUST 17, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Partners Named to *Benchmark Litigation's* 2023 List of the Top 250 Women in Litigation

AUGUST 3, 2023

SEMINAR/CLE

Winston & Strawn's Product & Mass Torts Summit 2023

JUNE 14, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500 U.S.* 2023

JUNE 7, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Law360 Names Winston Attorneys to 2023 Editorial Advisory Boards

APRIL 10, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Partners Named to *Benchmark Litigation's* 2023 Top 100 Trial Lawyers

OCTOBER 21, 2022

Capabilities

Product Liability & Mass Torts

Commercial Litigation & Disputes

Environmental Litigation & Enforcement

Medical Devices