

Eight Partner Insurance Litigation Group to Join Sheppard Mullin

Expands Firm's San Diego Office; Bolsters Firm's Well-Regarded Insurance Practice

04.07.2014

Press Contact

Ralph Richardson

T: +1.213.617.5542

rrichardson@sheppardmullin.com

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP has announced the addition of eight partners to the firm's Insurance and Business Trial practices: Peter H. Klee, Ronald D. Getchey, Charles A. Danaher, John T. Brooks, Nathan S. Arrington, R. Randal Crispen, Marc J. Feldman and Theona Zhordania. The group will join Sheppard Mullin's San Diego office, except for Zhordania who will join the firm's Los Angeles office. They previously practiced together at McKenna, Long & Aldridge.

"We are so excited to bring on this group. The team is remarkable in so many ways: The partners have worked together for most of or their entire careers, they are strong from top to bottom, and they are renowned in their arena. It's like gaining in one fell swoop the eight position players on a world series team. We already had an outstanding Insurance Litigation Team and now we are at the top" said Guy Halgren, chairman of Sheppard Mullin.

"I have known of Peter and his group for more than 20 years and am thrilled to welcome them to the firm. Among insurance company clients and peer law firms, they are widely regarded as one of the premier insurance litigation groups in the state. They are known as highly skilled litigators and trial lawyers with tremendous breadth and depth of knowledge in insurance bad faith and coverage matters. They have not only litigated hundreds of insurance cases with great success at the trial court level, but they've also helped shape the law in this area through their published appellate decisions," commented Frank Falzetta, head of Sheppard Mullin's Insurance practice.

Klee's focus is defending insurance companies and their affiliates that are sued in individual actions and class actions for bad faith, fraud, unfair competition and other torts. He has handled over 1,000 such cases throughout the country over the past 25 years. Klee's client list includes most of the major insurance carriers doing business in California, including Allstate, State Farm, Fireman's Fund, MetLife, Infinity, St. Paul-Travelers, and the Automobile Club of Southern California. He has handled numerous jury trials in both state and federal court. No client represented in trial by Klee has ever been held liable for breach of insurance contract, bad faith or any other tort. Klee is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, which limits its membership to the top 1% of trial lawyers in the United States and Canada. He received a J.D. from University of California, Berkeley - Boalt Hall in 1983 and an A.B., Phi Beta Kappa, from University of California, Berkeley in 1979.

Getchey represents insurance companies that are sued for bad faith, fraud and unfair competition. While the focus of his practice is in California, he has or currently is representing insurance company clients in bad faith cases pending in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming. These cases often involve "institutional bad faith" allegations that often create high dollar exposure. Together with the members of his practice group, Getchey was one of the first attorneys in California to successfully advocate the "genuine dispute" defense against bad faith claims. He received a J.D., Order of the Coif, from Loyola Law School in 1991 and a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from University of California, Riverside, in 1987.

Danaher represents insurance companies that are sued for bad faith, fraud and unfair competition. His clients include Allstate, State Farm, Farmers, Infinity, and Automobile Club of Southern California. While the focus of his practice is in California, Danaher has represented insurance company clients in Wyoming, West Virginia, Nevada, Florida, Montana, Indiana, Missouri, Alaska, Maryland, Arkansas, Oregon, Georgia, Colorado and Ohio. He has served as lead counsel in numerous class actions filed against his insurance company clients. Danaher has successfully defended class actions involving such issues as the payment of overhead and profit, the payment of sales tax, the manner in which actual cash value is determined, whether coverage exists for innocent co-insureds, issues involving med-pay coverage, and allegations of premium overcharging. Danaher received a J.D., *cum laude*, from Harvard Law School in 1989 and a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from Rutgers College in 1986.

Brooks' practice focuses on insurance litigation, class action defense, and appellate practice. He represents insurance company defendants in all aspects of coverage and extra-contractual litigation. Brooks also represents class action defendants in a variety of fields, including insurance, unfair competition and false advertising, and credit card privacy. He has substantial trial experience, and has argued before the California Supreme Court and numerous times before the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the California Court of Appeal. He is also a member of the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers. Brooks received a J.D. from Stanford Law School in 1993 and a B.A., Phi Beta Kappa, from Stanford University in 1988.

Arrington's focus is defending insurance companies against bad faith, fraud and other tort claims. He has handled jury trials in both state and federal court. Arrington works mostly for property and casualty companies, including Allstate. He received a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1986 and a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from Brigham Young University in 1983.

Crispen specializes in litigating complex business disputes, with an emphasis on representing insurance companies in major coverage and bad faith lawsuits. As an example, he currently represents a major insurer in coverage litigation arising out of the National Football League and NCAA players' concussion injury litigation. Crispen also has obtained defense verdicts as lead trial counsel in state and federal courts throughout Southern California. He received a J.D. from University of California, Berkeley - Boalt Hall in 1985 and a B.A., *highest honors*, from University of California, Santa Barbara in 1981.

Feldman represents insurance companies that are sued for bad faith, fraud and other torts. He also represents clients in a variety of other business and financial disputes. Feldman has litigated a broad range of bad faith cases, ranging from large first-party property insurance disputes to multi-million dollar claims for excess judgments. His clients include Allstate, State Farm and Travelers. Feldman has handled lawsuits in state and federal trial courts throughout California and has argued cases before the California Court of Appeal and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. He received a J.D., *magna cum laude*, from Harvard Law School in 1989 and an A.B., Phi Beta Kappa, *cum laude*, from Princeton University in 1985.

Zhordania specializes in business and insurance litigation, and has served as outside general counsel to several technology and retail distribution companies. She has represented these clients in securities fraud litigation, RICO claims, first amendment cases, employment and real estate disputes and allegations regarding malfeasance against officers and directors. Zhordania has also represented these clients in administrative proceedings, regulatory investigations and disputes over corporate control. Recently, she won a trial in which her client was alleged to have improperly diluted the company's majority shareholder and CEO. She also successfully defended three class actions challenging Dole Food's use of the "all natural" label on its salad kits. Zhordania regularly represents insurance companies that are sued for bad faith, fraud and unfair business practices. Zhordania represents Allstate, Infinity Insurance Company, Safeway Insurance Company, State Farm and Unum Group. She received a J.D., *magna cum laude*, Order of the Coif, Order of the Barristers, and a M.B.A. from Pepperdine University School of Law in 2007 and a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from UCLA in 2003.

Sheppard Mullin has 90 attorneys based in its San Diego offices and 220 attorneys based in its Los Angeles offices.

Also announced today, Sheppard Mullin is adding partners Nancy T. Scull and David M. Hymer to the firm's Real Estate, Land Use and Environmental practice group. Scull and Hymer will join Sheppard Mullin's San Diego office from McKenna, Long & Aldridge.

Practice Areas

Insurance Litigation

Litigation

Industries

Insurance