



→ Sarah A. K. Blitz

Associate

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Sarah Blitz is an associate in the Business Trial Practice Group in the firm's Los Angeles office. She is the Leader of the firm's Cannabis Industry Team and a member of the firm's Food and Beverage industry and Product Liability teams.

Areas of Practice

Cannabis

Sarah is a co-founder and leader of Sheppard Mullin's Cannabis Team, which has been recognized as a "Cannabis Practice Group of the Year" by *Law360*. Sarah has been individually recognized as a "Top Cannabis Attorney" in California by the *Daily Journal* and was named to the Global Top 200 Cannabis Attorneys list in 2022. Sarah's cannabis practice spans the legal-cannabis industry value chain. She represents cannabis, hemp, and ancillary businesses in litigation and before regulatory agencies and she also provides counsel on regulatory compliance, business strategy, and risk management. A commercial litigator by training, Sarah is valued by her clients for her strategic insights and ability to anticipate and account for issues before they arise.

Litigation

Sarah serves as litigation counsel on a wide array of complex commercial cases. Sarah has extensive experience litigating claims of breach of fiduciary duties, product liability, professional responsibility, breach of contract, unfair competition, fraud, and other business torts. Sarah handles all stages of litigation from case filing to dispositive motions to mediation, arbitration, trial and judgment enforcement. She also has significant appellate and writ experience before the California Court of Appeal.

Product Liability

In addition to her broad cannabis and commercial litigation practice, Sarah also regularly advises consumer products manufacturers and distributors on products liability and regulatory compliance. Sarah regularly works with clients to anticipate, respond to, and address a wide range of product issues - - including liaising with regulatory agencies such as the CPSC, FDA, DEA, and DCC. She also provides due diligence counseling on litigation and product liability issues in connection with investments, mergers, and acquisitions in an array of industries, including cannabis, industrial materials, manufacturing, and consumer packaged goods.

Activities

Outside the firm, Sarah is involved with the Alliance of Moms. She formerly served on the Advisory Council for City Scholars Foundation. Sarah is also active with the Anti-Defamation League and a participant in the Glass Leadership Institute. She was selected to participate on *Law360's* 2020 Cannabis Editorial Advisory Board.

Honors

- Top Cannabis Lawyer, *Daily Journal*, 2022
- Global Top 200 Cannabis Lawyers, 2021/2022, 2022/2023

Experience

Select Representative Matters:

- Secured the return of the Ontario International Airport from the City of Los Angeles back to the City of Ontario.
- Obtained complete dismissal at the pleadings stage of lawsuit against Ernst & Young's Korean member firm involving allegations of negligence and misrepresentation.
- Obtained complete defense victory in professional liability lawsuit following an eight-day arbitration.
- Advised various consumer products businesses in the CBD and cannabis space regarding California regulatory framework and FDA regulations.
- Substantial experience representing foreign clients challenging personal jurisdiction in actions based on both contract and the so-called "stream of commerce" theory, and has obtained dismissals on behalf of multiple clients based on the lack of "minimum contacts" under California's and federal due process standards for jurisdiction.
- Obtained favorable settlement for charitable foundation in a breach of contract dispute with a university over the disposition of a collection of sports memorabilia and a failure to account for donations to university programs.
- Represented pharmaceutical company in product liability lawsuit. Obtained complete early dismissal of claims following aggressive and targeted discovery.
- Obtained summary judgment for London based insurance companies on a \$25 million claim involving arson, theft, murder, corruption and bribery.
- Represented golf club manufacturer in breach of contract dispute. Resolved by favorable settlement.
- Represented insurer in bad faith and breach of contract dispute with insured. Obtained complete dismissal at the pleadings stage.
- Represented clothing manufacturer in breach of contract dispute with fashion house. Resolved by favorable settlement.

Published Appellate Decisions:

- *Quanta Computer Inc. v. Japan Communications Inc.* (2018) 21 Cal. App. 5th 438 (upholding trial court's discretion to refuse to enforce forum selection clause on foreign defendant.)

Articles

- Better Late Than Never
Daily Journal, 12.29.2022
- Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Enters the Fray Around Regulating Hemp Derived Cannabinoids
Daily Journal, 06.20.2022
- Marketing pet foods with CBD: A regulatory perspective
PetfoodIndustry.com, 12.02.2019
- FDA warning letters shed light on enforcement priorities for CBD-infused food
Food Dive, 10.17.2019
- Into the Weeds
Walking the Regulatory Line of CBD in Cosmetics
Cosmetics & Toiletries, 07.2019
- What We Learned From FDA's Public Hearing On Cannabis
Law360, 06.04.2019
- "Obscenity on the Internet: Nationalizing the Standard to Protect Individual Rights," 38 *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly* 233, 2010

Cannabis Law Blog Posts

- "BREAKING NEWS: Biden to Pardon Federal Marijuana Possession Convictions," October 6, 2022
- "Warning! FDA Issues Warning Letters for Products Containing Delta-8 THC," May 11, 2022
- "Movement On CMRE Act and MORE Act On Capitol Hill," March 30, 2022
- "AB-45: California Finally Welcomes Hemp Products To The Marketplace," October 25, 2021
- "USDA Hemp Production Final Rule," February 18, 2021
- "BREAKING NEWS: USDA Releases Interim Final Hemp Rule," October 29, 2019
- "California Revises Its Hemp Cultivation Laws," October 15, 2019
- "CBD Unfair Competition and False Advertising Lawsuits Are On The Rise," October 11, 2019
- "U.S. House of Representatives Passes SAFE Banking Act," September 26, 2019

Class Action Defense Strategy Law Blog Posts

- "Unreasonable Reliance: Ninth Circuit Affirms Dismissal of FAL, Fraud and UCL Claims at the Pleading Stage," September 17, 2012
- "The Ninth Circuit Again Follows Concepcion And Enforces Consumer Arbitrations," March 28, 2012

FDA Law Blog Posts

- "New Set Of Guidance From FDA Provides Clarity On Digital Health Policies, Machine Learning," September 30, 2019

Media Mentions

State Cannabis Regulations In Question After 1st Circ. Ruling
Law360, 08.18.2022

Another Year Without Federal Pot Reform, But States Step Up
Law360, 12.10.2021

Why 2019 Was A Tipping Point For BigLaw And Cannabis
Law360, 10.15.2019

Sheppard Mullin Bets on Cannabis With New 70-Lawyer Practice Group
Practice leader Whitney Hodges said the firm, with 40 cannabis clients already, is taking a "boots-on-the-ground" approach.
The American Lawyer, 06.05.2019

Sheppard Mullin Latest Big Law Firm to Launch Cannabis Practice
Bloomberg law, 06.04.2019

Speaking Engagements

- Speaker, "Cannabis 101," California Lawyers Association, January 25, 2023
- Speaker, "The Impact of DCC on the Existing State-Specific Regulations and Eventual Legal National Cannabis Marketplace," myLawCLE, December 28, 2022
- Panelist "Recent Developments in Business & Corporate Litigation," ABA Business Law Section 2020 Spring Meeting, March 26, 2020
- Panelist, "Green Light to Grow: Navigating Hemp's Inaugural Growing Season," Native American Finance Officer Association's 38th Annual Conference, April 7, 2020
- "New Set of Guidance Provides Clarity on Digital Health Policies, Clinical Decision Support," Celesq Webinar, December 12, 2019

Events

Webinar: Cannabis 101 – The Practitioner's Introduction to Cannabis Law
02.15.2023

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday – 50 State Survey and Legislative Updates
Webinar, 03.02.2022

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday – 50 State Survey and Legislative Updates
Webinar, 01.27.2021

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Taxation of Cannabis: Navigating Challenges in Cannabis Accounting
Webinar, 11.18.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday - Breaking Down COVID-19's Impacts on the Cannabis Industry
Webinar, 04.22.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Getting Your CBD/Hemp Product To Market- Current Issues in Risk Management
02.19.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: 50 State Survey and Legislative Updates
01.15.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: The State of Cannabis Banking and U.S. Anti-Money Laundering Law
10.16.2019

Hemp-CBD: Enabling Growth by Managing Legal Risks
Celesq Webinar, 09.25.2019

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Hemp-CBD: Enabling Growth by Managing Legal Risks
07.17.2019

Memberships

- Member, National Cannabis Industry Association
- Member, National Association of Cannabis
- Member, California State Bar, Litigation Section
- Member, Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles
- Member, City Scholars Foundation Advisory Council
- Member, International Cannabis Bar Association
- Member, Anti-Defamation League, Glass Leadership Institute

Podcasts & Webinars

Cannabis Wednesday Webinar - 50 State Survey and Legislative Updates
03.02.2022

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday – 50 State Survey and Legislative Updates
01.27.2021

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Taxation of Cannabis: Navigating Challenges in Cannabis Accounting
11.18.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Getting Your CBD/Hemp Product To Market- Current Issues in Risk Management
02.19.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Cannabis 2019 Year In Review
01.15.2020

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: The State of Cannabis Banking and U.S. Anti-Money Laundering Law
10.16.2019

Cannabis Webinar Wednesday: Hemp-CBD: Enabling Growth by Managing Legal Risks
07.17.2019

Practices

Class Action Defense

Litigation

Toxic Tort and Product Liability

Industries

Cannabis

Esports & Games

Food and Beverage

Education

J.D., University of California, Hastings, College of the Law, 2011, *cum laude*

B.A., University of California, Berkeley, 2007, *with honors, Order of Omega*

Admissions

California

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Court for the Central District of California