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Areas of Practice

Securities Litigation & Enforcement

Litigation

Commercial Litigation,
Insolvency & Creditors' Rights

Complex Litigation

Class Action

Professional Liability

IP Litigation

Trade Secrets

Entertainment

Employment Advice & Litigation

Education

University of California, Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall), J.D., 1985, Member, *California Law Review*

University of California, Berkeley, B.S., 1982

Bar & Court Admissions
California

US District Courts for the Central and Northern Districts of California

Kirsten Hicks Spira

Kirsten Hicks Spira is a partner in the Century City office of Steptoe & Johnson LLP, where she is a member of the Litigation Department. Ms. Spira practices general civil litigation at the trial and appellate levels. Her practice is diverse, with an emphasis on complex business, employment, entertainment, unfair competition, and shareholder disputes. Her experience includes both lead counsel and secondary roles at trials (bench and jury), arbitrations, and governmental administrative hearings.

General Civil Litigation

Ms. Spira has handled a wide array of complex matters, including breach of contract, business torts (particularly fraud and breach of fiduciary duty), entertainment disputes, corporate governance (with an emphasis on shareholder derivative litigation), CERCLA, and almost every other type of civil dispute.

Employment Litigation

Ms. Spira has successfully litigated the gamut of issues raised in employment litigation, including those involving wrongful discharge, sexual harassment, discrimination, and wage and hour claims.

Community and Professional Activities

Ms. Spira is involved in various community service programs; she has judged moot court at UCLA pursuant to invitation, acted as an assistant coach for a constitutional rights foundation middle school team, and long been actively involved in improvement programs for school and public libraries. In 2003 her article on library programs was published by *School Library Journal*.

Noteworthy

- *Southern California Super Lawyers*, Business Litigation, 2006-2012
- Extern, Honorable Irving Hill, United States District Court, Central District, 1984

Representative Matters

General Civil Litigation

- Defended two complex lawsuits alleging fraud and breach of fiduciary duty arising from a joint venture waste-by-rail landfill project.
- Trial counsel in a significant CERCLA matter in United States District Court, Central District of California on behalf of a major insurance company; won liability verdict.
- Counsel for appellant in administrative hearing before Los Angeles County Department of Public Works concerning a \$20 million Enforcement Order issued by the County.

Kirsten Hicks Spira

- Represented individual in complex action alleging fraud arising out of alleged tax scheme. Client dismissed from action following successful demurrer.
- Member of trial team which won a \$5.7 million jury award in a palimony action in Los Angeles Superior Court.
- Represented numerous corporations in a variety of shareholder derivative actions and direct actions alleging fraud and other torts.
- After winning judgment at the trial level, acted as counsel for Respondent on appeal in action alleging environmental contamination of real property (judgment was affirmed in *PNL v. Waste*, 2004 WL 2320349 (Cal. App. 4 Dist.).
- Counsel for “sellers” in an arbitration of a dispute over a complex “earn-out” provision wherein client was awarded \$40 million.
- Obtained verdict for client (as lead counsel) following jury trial in Los Angeles Superior Court of breach of contract and fraud claims in connection with a real estate venture.

Employment Litigation

- Defended several putative wage hour “class” actions- most recently defeated a class certification motion in an action pending in Los Angeles Superior Court.
- Defended FEHA and other claims brought against company (after reduction in force) by more than 50 individual plaintiffs, in twelve separate lawsuits, for alleged discrimination based upon their national origin.
- Represented two plaintiffs in a sexual harassment suit involving high profile sports figures.
- Counsel for Respondent on appeal (after winning at the trial level) in a lawsuit alleging claims for discrimination and retaliation. (Judgment affirmed in *Fernandez v. Waste*, 2005 WL 1090305 (Cal. App. 2d Dist.).

Entertainment Related Litigation

- Represented multinational corporation in litigation against studio alleging breach of a product placement contract valued at over \$50 million.

Kirsten Hicks Spira

- Represented film distributor in several separate actions against a major studio regarding various accounting disputes.
- Defended film distributor in action seeking to enjoin movie release based on allegations of fraud, breach of contract and conspiracy.
- Represented television producers in “idea submission” case involving significant alleged damages.
- Represented reality television producer in several separate matters involving disputes with celebrities.

Selected Publications

Employment Update - California Supreme Court Issues Opinion on Employer Meal and Rest Break Obligations
April 12, 2012

Co-author, “Defamation Damages,” a chapter of California Tort Damages (CEB 1988)

Professional Affiliations

Member, Litigation and Intellectual Property Section of the California Bar

Member, Association of Business Trial Lawyers