Karen O'Kasey

PARTNER



Karen O'Kasey is a trial attorney who defends employers and medical professionals in state and federal courts in Oregon and Washington. She has tried one hundred civil trials over her thirty-nine years of practice. She has successfully defended employers in all types of employment claims in federal and state court, and has tried to defense verdict numerous medical negligence claims in Oregon and Washington.

Ms. O'Kasey has extensive experience defending municipalities against all types of tort claims, including 42 U.S.C. § 1983 claims, First Amendment claims, and Americans with Disabilities Act claims.

Ms. O'Kasey is a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers, and a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates. For the past fifteen years, she has been named one of the "Top 25" Women Lawyers in Oregon by *Oregon Super Lawyers* magazine. Karen was named Lawyer of the Year in Professional Malpractice Law — Defendants in 2026 by *The Best Lawyers in America*. She was also recognized multiple times as Lawyer of the Year for Legal Malpractice Law in 2015, 2017, 2023, and 2025. In addition, she was named Lawyer of the Year for Medical Malpractice Law in 2025 by *The Best Lawyers in America*.

REPRESENTATIVE CASES

Scheel v. Samaritan Health and Jacob Light, M.D.. Benton County Circuit Court (2026)
Multi-million dollar case against anesthesiologist for alleged nerve injury caused by spinal block. Defense Verdict.

Scheneman v. Oregon Anesthesiology Group PC. Multnomah County Circuit Court (2025)

Contact

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LEGAL ASSISTANT

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Practice Areas

Civil Rights Defense

Employment Litigation

Human Resources Consulting & Compliance

Legal Malpractice Defense

Medical Malpractice Defense

Product Liability Defense

Claim against anesthesiologist for dental injury. Defense verdict.

Tamarie Richards v. Legacy Health, et al., Multnomah County Circuit Court (2024)
Represented urologist in a ten million dollar medical malpractice case where plaintiff claimed that the physician did not give informed consent in pelvic mesh case. Defense verdict.

Wyatt v. OHSU, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2024)
Eight million dollar medical malpractice claim against pediatric urologist. Defense verdict.

Ross v. The Oregon Zoo, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2022)
Wrongful death action against the Oregon Zoo. Plaintiff alleged that Zoo's negligence resulted in death of concert-goer whose body was found in construction site within the Zoo after a concert. Defense verdict.

Stockton-Smith v. Mee, Marion County Circuit Court (2021)
Medical malpractice claim for wrongful death based on failure to diagnose asthma. Defense verdict.

Kirby v. OHSU, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2021)
Claim against Nursing School for failure to accommodate student's disabilities under the federal Rehabilitation Act. Defense verdict.

Stryffeler v. Anesthesia Associates NW, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2019)

Thirty-eight million dollar medical malpractice claim against anesthesia provider and surgeon, alleging permanent, severe brain damage as a result of surgical complications. Defense verdict.

EDUCATION

Santa Clara University School of Law
J.D., 1986

San Francisco State University
B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1983

EXPERIENCE

Hart Wagner LLP
Partner, 2002-present

Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt
Partner, 1993-2002
Associate, 1987-1993

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Oregon State Court

Washington State Court

U.S. District Court: District of Oregon; Eastern and Western Districts of Washington

United States Court of Appeals: Ninth Circuit; Federal Circuit; District of Columbia Circuit; United States Supreme Court

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

Member, American Board of Trial Advocates

Martindale Hubbell AV Preeminent Rating

Chambers USA, Employment Litigation, 2025

Best Lawyers in America
Medical Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2012 — 2027
Professional Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2014 — 2027
Ethics and Professional Responsibility Law, 2014 — 2027
Legal Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2014 — 2027

Lawyer of the Year, Legal Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2015, 2017, 2019,2023, 2025, 2027
Lawyer of the Year, Professional Malpractice Law, 2021, 2026
Lawyer of the Year, Medical Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2025

Oregon Super Lawyers
Employment Litigation: Defense, 2006 — 2026
Top 25 Women Lawyers, 2011 — 2026
Top 50 Lawyers, 2017, 2020 — 2026

Benchmark Litigation

Local Litigation Star — Labor and Employment, 2015-2018

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Oregon State Bar, Labor and Employment Law Section, Federal Practice and Procedure Committee, 2008 — 2010

Oregon Association of Defense Counsel, Past Chair, Employment Law Subcommittee

American Bar Association, Past Chair, Torts and Insurance Practice Section, Employers' Liability Subcommittee, National Institute Faculty, 1992, 1994

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

"Ending Probationary Periods," Quote, Human Resource Executive Online, 2015

"Ten Ways to Avoid an Employment Lawsuit," Portland Business Journal, 2014

PRESENTATIONS

"Employment Law–Veterans' Rights — USERRA and the Implications of Staub v. Proctor Hospital on Cat's Paw Liability," Oregon State Bar Labor & Employment Section Annual Meeting, 2011

"Trial Skills," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 18th Annual Litigation Institute, 2011

"Oregon Pleadings and Parties: Tips and Traps for the Unwary," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2010

"OEC 104 In The Wake of Marcum v. Adventist Health," Oregon Association of Defense Counsel Annual Convention, 2009

"Trial Advocacy in Action," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 16th Annual Litigation Institute, 2009

"Trial Evidence in Employment and Civil Rights Cases," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2007

"Discovery and Punitive Damages Motions," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2007

"Practical Considerations in Using Expert Witnesses," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 12th Annual Litigation Institute, 2005

"Powerful Motion Practice–Discovery Motions," Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2004

"Risk Management," Dentist Benefits Insurance Company Training, 1994–2002

"An In-Depth Look at Title I of the ADA," Oregon State Bar Americans with Disabilities Act CLE Program, 1996–1997

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

St. Andrew Nativity School, Finance Committee, 2014–present

Oregon Ballet Theatre, Board of Directors, 1989–1996