



## Seven Litigation Attorneys with National Product Liability Practices Join Spencer Fane

Spencer Fane LLP is pleased to announce a team of seven attorneys joined the firm's Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice group from markets across the nation. The team includes partners Carmen Bickerdt (Minneapolis), [David Koob](#) (Minneapolis), [Tori Levine](#) (Plano), and [Hannah Lee](#) (Santa Monica); of counsel attorneys [Audra Dean](#) (Plano) and [Stacy Young](#) (Santa Monica); and attorney [Christa Chance](#) (Plano). The group of seven joins team lead and partner William Purnell (Phoenix) and of counsel attorney Vanessa Merassaint (Tampa), who officially joined Spencer Fane on March 25.

The dynamic team boasts an extensive range of experience and achievements that include David's prior service within the office of an attorney general and Tori's nationally implemented medical and scientific defense practices. Impressively, the team has played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of multiple national counsel programs, contributing to early case resolution, enhanced risk management, and more consistent practices across diverse, often specialized industries. Each of the attorneys offers distinctive strengths and, collectively, the group brings the firm deep experience defending a wide range of consumer products, heavy construction and industrial equipment manufacturers, and environmental services companies against product liability and toxic torts claims in addition to a wide variety of other general business litigation.

"We are humbled to be joined by such a phenomenal team of litigators who have established a practice from multiple markets that fortuitously align with our national platform," said Spencer Fane Chair [Patrick J. Whalen](#). "We are even more excited to be aligned in the areas that mean the most to our firm, including our shared appreciation for the value of collaboration, our approach to serving others, and our

investment in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), all of which enhance the insights and counsel we offer to clients.”

The team is notably involved in diversity programs and will be highly influential in the firm’s ongoing DEI educational opportunities, hiring practices, and internal, change-driving groups. Carmen, Hannah, and Stacy have been actively involved in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity’s Pathfinder Program, a pivotal juncture for high-performing but underrepresented attorneys Spencer Fane is historically proud to participate in.

## **ABOUT THE ATTORNEYS**

### **Carmen Bickerdt – Partner, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

Carmen represents clients in product liability, toxic tort, warranty, company car, and trucking litigation, defending both individual cases and claims and coordinated mass actions with proven strategies geared toward mitigating liability and preserving clients’ reputations regardless of scope, including with early resolution programs. With over 20 years of experience defending cases across the country, she focuses her practice on the automotive industry, defending catastrophic personal injury litigation involving multiple component defects, autonomous vehicle technology, toxic tort, and warranty matters on behalf of multiple domestic and international motor vehicle manufacturers. Notably, Carmen served as national coordinating counsel, regional counsel, and national discovery counsel for several clients. She also defends non-automotive corporations in a broad range of commercial, general liability, premises, subrogation, and product liability litigation. Carmen earned her Juris Doctor from Wayne State University Law School and her bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan.

### **Christa Chance – Attorney, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

Christa advises clients in complex, multiparty toxic tort and product liability litigation. Working closely with clients and their in-house counsel, she develops effective strategies for resolving cases and manages mass actions throughout the U.S. Christa also handles cases pending in both state and federal courts, including multidistrict litigation and class actions. She currently serves as national

coordinating counsel for litigation involving asbestos and has defended clients in toxic tort matters involving silica, benzene, and other substances. Additionally, Christa has defended manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors of consumer products and medical devices. She earned her Juris Doctor from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law and her bachelor's degree *summa cum laude* from Texas Tech University.

**Audra Dean – Of Counsel, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

Audra defends businesses in complex commercial, product liability, mass tort, and toxic tort disputes. With a domestic and international reach, she has defended manufacturers and retailers in product liability matters involving consumer products, medical devices, power tools, and vaping products. Audra has also defended contractors, premises owners, manufacturers, and distributors in asbestos-related claims as well as claims arising from human exposure to mold and various chemicals. Boasting deep experience in mass torts and litigation management across multiple jurisdictions, she has managed more than 10,000 asbestos claims as well as a large team of lawyers with highly successful outcomes. In Audra's insurance and professional liability practice, she has defended insurance agents and brokers in all lines of coverage and handled commercial disputes. She earned her Juris Doctor *cum laude* from Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, and her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Dallas.

**David Koob – Partner, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

David defends his clients in commercial, general liability, premises liability, complex product liability, drug and medical device, automotive, and toxic tort matters, with an impressive track record across all areas of his practice. In more than 20 years as a litigator, David has tried hundreds of cases in state and federal courts throughout the United States as well as in administrative and regulatory proceedings. He has notably served as national counsel for several large corporations and has experience in creating and implementing legal and business risk management programs for his clients. While serving in the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General, David managed civil and regulatory matters for a variety of Minnesota state agencies. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Minnesota Law School

and his bachelor's degree from California Polytechnic State University.

**Hannah Lee – Partner, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

Hannah defends clients on product liability, warranty, premises liability, toxic tort, and construction defect matters. From high-profile catastrophic injury cases to large-scale warranty matters, she brings focused experience within the automotive, consumer, and chemical product industries to achieve favorable outcomes for her clients. Specific to her product liability practice, Hannah defends major motor vehicle and highway product manufacturers in high-exposure cases often involving catastrophic injury and wrongful death. She is highly adept at managing warranty matters for automotive manufacturers in California and well-versed in Lemon Law, entrusted with overseeing more than 150 cases where she conducts case workup, discovery, and settlement negotiations. Hannah also has experience representing large retail stores and amusement parks in their premises liability matters. Her work with clients often results in defending their interests at trials in particularly tough California venues. Hannah earned her Juris Doctor from Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, and her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Tori Levine – Partner, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

Tori defends clients in complex disputes including product liability, premises liability, toxic tort, construction litigation, business and commercial disputes, insurance litigation, and noncompete and trade secrets litigation with an acute attention to detail across numerous industries. She also has deep experience creating and implementing legal and business risk management programs for manufacturers and other businesses and has served as general counsel to two startup companies. On a national level, Tori defends manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors of a variety of products and raw materials, frequently achieving successes at trial. She was instrumental in assembling a major automobile manufacturer's National Asbestos Trial Program and has remained on the trial team for the past 18 years. Tori has also served as national and regional coordinating counsel for multiple Fortune 100 clients as well as small businesses who face pattern litigation claims. She earned her Juris Doctor *cum laude* from Baylor Law School and her bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma.

## **Stacy Young – Of Counsel, Litigation and Dispute Resolution**

Stacy defends clients in complex product liability, premises liability, toxic tort, and construction defect disputes. Specific to her product liability practice, Stacy defends major motor vehicle and respiratory device manufacturers in high-exposure cases often involving catastrophic injury and wrongful death. She also has experience representing entertainment companies and amusement parks in premises liability matters. Stacy has also defended developers, general contractors, subcontractors, and insurance carriers in construction defect-related claims. With over 15 years of civil litigation experience, she is armed with a thorough understanding of California's civil procedure. Stacy's work includes researching cases, discerning relevant facts, researching novel areas of the law, and developing defense case strategies in complex litigation. She is incredibly adept at case workup, including preparing all aspects of written discovery, discovery motions, and dispositive motions. Stacy earned her Juris Doctor *cum laude* from Syracuse University College of Law, her master's degree *with honors* from Syracuse University Newhouse School, and her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley.