



Leo J. Murphy Counsel

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Leo Murphy is Counsel to the Firm in the Litigation Services Department. He advises manufacturers concerning product liability law, defends manufacturers against product liability claims, represents insurers, financial institutions, and other businesses in litigation matters, and facilitates the resolution of a variety of civil cases by serving as a mediator.

Mr. Murphy's product liability practice has involved coordination of product liability litigation worldwide for domestic and offshore manufacturers. In this role, he has managed product liability claims from initial investigation through final disposition. This has included development of case management databases, document retention programs, and cost containment policies. He has overseen the investigation of incidents that might give rise to claims, selected and supervised local counsel engaged to assist in the defense of product liability litigation, managed the discovery process, developed defense strategy, and defended manufacturers in jury trials in California and other states. Outside of the litigation context, he has represented manufacturers before regulators such as federal OSHA and comparable state agencies. He also has advised design engineers and manufacturing executives concerning preparation of operator manuals and warning labels, implementation of design changes and product recalls, the effectiveness of limited warranties, and the enforceability of indemnification agreements.

Representative Matters

Product Liability

- Successfully defended manufacturers against product liability claims in jury trials in California and in other states
- Coordinated product liability litigation worldwide for a leading manufacturer of aerial access equipment including scissor lifts, boom lifts, and scaffolds.

Aviation

- Successfully defended product liability claims against manufacturers of aircraft and related components in federal and state courts.
- Successfully defended the manufacturer of an electronic component that had been incorporated into a commercial airliner that crashed into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Successfully defended the manufacturer of an electronic component that had been incorporated into a commercial airliner that crashed upon takeoff from Madrid, Spain.

Insurance Litigation

- Recovered \$5 million from a manufacturer for an insurer in a subrogation action brought following a fire caused by an electrical product that had exploded.
- Obtained judgment in favor of two insurers in a six-week trial involving claims by a builder that \$7.5 million in construction defect damages were covered by insurance.

Business Litigation

- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a multinational energy company in a lawsuit brought by a former subsidiary seeking \$41 million in environmental remediation costs.

Civil Rights Litigation

- Successfully defended an operator of professional golf competitions against discrimination claims.

Government and Regulatory Affairs

- Represented an automotive repair franchisor in connection with a government investigation of suspected violations of environmental laws by franchisees.
- Successfully defended a government contractor in litigation brought by the San Francisco District Attorney alleging false claims and fraudulent business practices by showing that the improper conduct had been committed by a few rogue employees acting without the knowledge of the contractor.

Community and Pro Bono

- Mr. Murphy's community focus is on disadvantaged youth. He is a past director and life member of The Guardsmen. Each year, the organization sends 2,500 at-risk youth to outdoor education programs and provides scholarships to more than 250 students, to enable them to attend top flight independent schools. Mr. Murphy also served two terms as a director of Mission Dolores Academy, a racially diverse independent K through 8 school at which 85% of the students receive financial aid. The rigorous academic program provided by the Academy enables graduates to be admitted to the best local high schools where they continue to receive very substantial tuition assistance. In the great majority of cases, Mission Dolores alumni become the first members of their families to attend college.

Education

- University of San Francisco School of Law, J.D., 1972
- University of San Francisco, B.A., 1969

Bar Admissions

- California

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Central, Eastern, and Southern Districts of California

Clerkships

- Judge Edmund L. Palmieri, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York

Other Distinctions

- Completed "Mediating the Litigated Case," a 40-hour alternative dispute resolution program conducted by Pepperdine Law School's Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution
- Served on the judicial selection advisory boards of two California governors
- Rated AV® Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell®
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* for Product Liability Litigation-Defendants, 2019-2022
- *University of San Francisco Law Review*, assistant editor
- Alpha Sigma Nu
- U.S. Army Reserve, 1969-1977, honorably discharged with the rank of captain
- University of San Francisco Alumni Service Award
- The Guardsmen Hall of Fame

Practices

- Government and Regulatory Affairs
- Litigation
- Product Liability
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

Industries

- Aviation
- Insurance