

Claire-Lise Y. Kutlay

Counsel



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Education

J.D., *cum laude*, University of California, Irvine School of Law

B.Com., University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Admissions

California

Biography

Claire-Lise Kutlay is an accomplished trial lawyer, consistently providing outstanding representation to both plaintiffs and defendants in groundbreaking matters. She is routinely retained by companies and high-level executives to handle their most important matters, serving as lead counsel at trial and arbitration. Claire-Lise has experience litigating cases in a broad range of practice areas, including employment, fraud, business torts, defamation, real estate, contracts, business partnership disputes, and misappropriation of trade secrets. She has been lead counsel in a number of high-profile cases involving significant national and international media attention, including matters reported in *The New York Times*, CNN, *Vanity Fair*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, and *The Daily Journal*. In 2018, she achieved Top Verdict recognition on both the plaintiff and defense sides.

Claire-Lise is recognized in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch®* in America and has been honored by the *Daily Journal* on its lists of Top 40 Lawyers Under 40, Top Labor and Employment Lawyers, and Top Women Lawyers, noted for Employment Litigation and Trial. The *Los Angeles Business Journal* has recognized Claire-Lise on its lists of Women of Influence: Attorneys and Leaders of Influence: Litigators and Trial Attorneys. She has also been selected as a Southern California Super Lawyers Rising Star every year since 2020.

Prior to joining Miller Barondess, Claire-Lise was a partner at an elite trial law firm, where she built the employment practice group, served as lead counsel in multiple matters, including high-profile matters, and authored numerous appellate briefs.

Claire-Lise earned her B.A. in Commerce from the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and her J.D. from the University of California, Irvine School of Law. Prior to law school, Claire-Lise worked as a behavioral safety trainer in the United Arab Emirates.

Notable Representations

Employment Litigation

- Served as lead counsel and trial counsel representing a banking executive wrongfully terminated after reporting potential violations of federal banking regulations. The matter was resolved during the arbitration hearing.
- Represented a city in a high-profile age and disability discrimination lawsuit filed by two employees. Secured a dismissal for lack of federal jurisdiction. After plaintiffs refiled their case in state court, handled all discovery and negotiated a cost-of-defense settlement.
- Represented a former Investigative Sergeant against a county in a high-profile lawsuit alleging retaliation after plaintiff refused to endorse the now-Sheriff-Coroner in the election, and plaintiff made repeated complaints regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. Obtained a favorable settlement and reinstatement of the plaintiff shortly after filing the lawsuit.
- Represented celebrity and highly sought-after real estate professional in a complex case involving allegations of misappropriation of trade secrets, defamation, breach of contract, and violation of various wage-and-hour provisions. After replacing prior counsel, defeated multiple dispositive motions and obtained favorable settlement.
- Represented an attorney whistleblower in a high-profile wrongful termination lawsuit concerning reports about improper and illegal contracts that would have provided improper windfalls to Board Members or their close associates at a school district. Negotiated a highly favorable settlement for the plaintiff.
- One of the lead attorneys representing a former equity shareholder against an AmLaw 100 firm and its senior management in a gender discrimination lawsuit described by the *Daily Journal* as “groundbreaking.” After replacing prior counsel, defeated dispositive motions, both in an arbitration forum and in the Superior Court.
- Represented plaintiff who was constructively terminated after blowing the whistle on significant violations of law and unlawful business practices, including violations of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974, in the title insurance industry. Negotiated a highly favorable settlement for plaintiff.
- As lead trial associate, won a seven-figure jury verdict for plaintiff in a whistleblower/wrongful termination lawsuit and a multi-million-dollar attorney fee award. The verdict was one of California’s largest single-plaintiff whistleblower retaliation verdicts and was recognized as a *Daily Journal* Top Plaintiffs Verdict.

Commercial and Other Litigation

- Won a defense ruling for a not-for-profit corporation in an arbitration seeking over \$10 million in damages for alleged fraud, bribery, and breach of contract. After a multi-day arbitration, established the corporation had engaged in no wrongdoing and obtained an award entirely in its favor.
- Represented a top executive in a personal matter to address a multi-year campaign of harassment by a neighbor couple. After a ten-day bench trial, won complete relief for the client, defeated counterclaims, and obtained a six-figure attorney fee award.
- Second-chaired trial and won a seven-figure verdict for a plaintiff in a reformation of contract case.
- Lead counsel representing executive in a civil lawsuit against his former business partner who had engaged in a murder-for-hire plot. Successfully defeated motion for summary judgment, obtained an order permitting pre-trial financial discovery, and negotiated a favorable settlement.
- Defended a case alleging fraudulent transfer, the latest lawsuit in decades-long litigation between the parties. With trial only weeks away, obtained rulings based on the statute of repose that resulted in dismissal of all claims. Briefed appeal resulting in the Court of Appeal affirming the ruling in a partially published decision.
- Lead trial associate obtaining a complete defense jury verdict for AmLaw 200 firm in a case seeking \$500 million for violation of civil RICO, fraud, and other torts. the *Daily Journal* recognized the verdict as one of the Top Defense Verdicts 2018.
- Defended a trustee of various trusts against trust and probate litigation brought by the San Diego Zoo, resulting in a highly favorable settlement for the trustee.
- Defended Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX) employees in trade secrets misappropriation litigation filed by Broadcom Corporation.

Honors and Awards

- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America* – Recognized in Commercial Litigation and Labor and Employment Litigation (2024-2026)
- Top Women Lawyers, noted for Employment Litigation and Trial (*Daily Journal*, 2024-2025)
- Top Labor and Employment Lawyers (*Daily Journal*, 2024)
- Women of Influence: Attorneys (*Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2024)
- Leaders of Influence: Litigators and Trial Attorneys (*Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2024)
- Top 40 Lawyers Under 40 in California (*Daily Journal*, 2023)
- Rising Stars® (*Southern California Super Lawyers*, 2020-2025)
- Top Defense Verdict (*Daily Journal*, 2018)
- Top Plaintiff Verdict (*Daily Journal*, 2018)

Professional Activities

- Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA), Board of Trustees, 2023-Present; Labor and Employment Law Section, Executive Committee Member/Barristers Liaison, 2019-2020
- LACBA, Barristers/Young Attorneys Section, President, 2025-2026; President-Elect, 2024-2025; Vice President, 2023-2024; Secretary 2022-2023; Assistant Vice President of Public Relations 2021-2022; Executive Committee, 2018-Present
- Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA)
- Authored article “Trial-Focused Advocacy” published in the Los Angeles Lawyer Magazine
- Authored article “Conducting and Documenting Proper Evidence Collections” published in the Los Angeles Lawyer Magazine