



KANSAS CITY

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PRACTICE AREAS

Product Liability & Tort Litigation
Contaminants & Toxic Tort
Class Action
Organizational Misconduct
Odor Nuisance
PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl
substances)

INDUSTRIES

Cannabis
Agribusiness & Food

COURT MEMBERSHIPS

- Missouri
- Kansas
- U.S. District Court of Kansas
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern
District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Western
District of Missouri

Mara H. Cohara

Partner | mara.cohara@lathrooggpm.com

As Leader of the Environmental and Tort Practice Group and a member of the firm's Executive Committee, Mara Cohara focuses her practice on litigation matters involving toxic tort, nuisance, product liability, premises liability, breach of warranty and the defense of religious institutions. She has significant experience coordinating large-scale "bet the company" matters and defending high-profile lawsuits that involve media and community attention.

Mara defends companies and religious institutions in jury trials, mediations and arbitrations. Her track record spans state and federal courts in more than 20 states and includes multiple outcomes favorable to her defendant clients in notoriously "plaintiff-friendly" venues. She advises clients in a wide variety of industries, including manufacturing, religious organizations, agribusiness and hospitality. Mara is well-versed in managing litigation teams under alternative fee arrangements, including phased fees and flat fees, and has spoken on the issue to the Association of Corporate Counsel and other organizations.

Mara has an established track record of bringing adversarial parties to agreement. She is an effective and efficient advocate throughout the litigation process, often securing summary judgment dismissals, discovery victories and favorable settlements for her clients. Her "bulldog with a bow-tie" reputation is built on resolving issues and her take-charge attitude.

She is active in many civic and legal organizations, serving as a board member with groups including Camp Fire, Greater Missouri Leadership Challenge Foundation, Lawyers Encouraging Academic Performance,

EDUCATION

University of Missouri-Kansas
City School of Law, J.D., *with
distinction*, 2001

- UMKC Honor Society, Order of the Bench and Robe Award, 2001
- *UMKC Law Review*, Note and Comment Editor
- Special President's Award, UMKC Law Alumni Association
- UMKC Student Bar Association, President, 2000-2001

University of Missouri-Columbia,
B.S., *summa cum laude*, 1998

and the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Foundation.

Representative Experience

- Conduct internal investigations for clients in multiple industries.
- Successfully represented a major equipment manufacturer in a large breach of warranty matter involving an Original Engineering Manufacturer (OEM), incorporating the client's engines in their heating equipment. The firm conducted a thorough investigation and mediations, which resulted in favorable settlement for our client, who was pleased with the outcome.
- Successfully represented waste management company in two class actions filed in 2014. The second action was brought by different class representatives and alleged negligence and nuisance. It included subclasses including business owners, business employees and mortgage holders for all property located within three miles of the landfill and residents living in the second and third miles around the landfill. This matter was dismissed without prejudice, on motion of the Plaintiffs, in January 2016 following discovery, which was prior to class certification briefing. (The first class action was dismissed as well.)
- Lead trial counsel for multi defendant lawsuit in which an adult plaintiff claimed he was assaulted during a counseling session that took place when he was a minor; the district court dismissed the claim, finding it was barred by the Kansas statute of repose, and the Kansas Court of Appeals affirmed. *See F.M. Doe v. Popravak, et al.*, Case No. 16-115282 (Kan. Ct. App. Jun. 9, 2017).
- Represented an agricultural and food production company in multiple cases involving 280 plaintiffs who brought claims regarding odor nuisance, emanating from hog farms across Missouri. The representation involved more than 10 individual cases and three cases that went to trial.
- Defended a large religious institution against claims arising from allegations of abuse. Her team's strategy led to a complete dismissal of all claims at the earliest possible stage before the district court. The dismissal was affirmed on appeal.
- Successfully defended a large animal agriculture company in multiple nuisance cases, leading to the firm's working with state communities and state legislature to redefine Missouri nuisance law for both temporary and permanent nuisance.
- Provided a cross-functional team to address a personal injury claim filed against a family-owned livestock operation. Obtained a

confidential settlement following a successful mediation process. In addition, secured coverage from insurance company resulting in full coverage of settlement cost and all defense costs.

- Defended a multinational food company against several hundred claims across the state that the company's hog barns created a nuisance. Won defense verdicts in two trials prior to settlement of the remaining claims.
- Following a three-week jury trial in which a single plaintiff was seeking more than \$10 million alleging sexual abuse against a religious institution, settled that claim along with 31 other claims for less than the demand in the single case.
- Obtained dismissals of more than 100 claims against religious organization clients, and have helped develop a body of law that strengthens available defense to religious organizations.
- Represented a diocese in a group settlement of 52 claims and a subsequent group settlement of 32 claims.

Events

- Exploring PFAS in Food
May 5, 2021
- State of Litigation Virtual Event Series
Session 1 - Thursday, July 16; Session 2 - Thursday, July 23;
Session 3 - Thursday, July 30
- 2019 State of Litigation
June 6, 2019

Presentations

- Presenter, "Merging in a Pandemic Unexpectedly Merging in a Pandemic: An Integration Success Story," Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, July 14, 2021
- Co-presenter, "Managing Your Company's Environmental Legal Risk: What You Need to Know," Association of Corporate Counsel - Mid-America Chapter, April 7, 2021
- Speaker, "Ethics Considerations for Attorney-Client Privilege & Attorney Work Product," Association of Corporate Counsel - Mid-America Chapter, May 2017
- Panelist, "Film and the Law Series: Flash of Genius," University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, June 2015
- Speaker, "Trends and Issues Currently Pending in Missouri and Kansas," Association of Corporate Counsel - Mid-America Chapter,

April 2014

- Speaker, "Value Billing," Association of Corporate Counsel - Mid-America Chapter, 2012

Publications

- Co-Author, "Why 2021 Could Be a Year Like No Other for PFAS," DRI - For the Defense, June 2021 Issue
- Author, "Will 2021 Be Remembered for a PFAS Sea Change?" Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel, Insight, Spring 2021 Issue
- Co-Author, "Food Packaging Emerges as PFAS Battleground," Food Industry Executive, May 24, 2021
- Co-Author, "Defending Against Pandemic-Related Lawsuits," Ingram's Magazine, May 2020

Client Alerts And Blog Posts

- Far-Reaching Executive Order Pushes Toward National "Right to Repair"
July 14, 2021
- Tort Alert: Recent Dismissals of COVID-19 Lawsuits Provide Lessons for Businesses Reopening
September 16, 2020
- Missouri Aims to Weed out Meritless Punitive Damage Claims and Reign in Consumer Protection Claims
May 22, 2020

In The News

- For the Defense Features Article by Mara Cohara and Ally Cunningham on PFAS Regulations and Litigation
June 2021
- Insights Features Article by Mara Cohara on Changing PFAS Regulation
Spring 2021
- Food industry Executive Features Article by Mara Cohara, Ally Cunningham and Matt Walker
May 24, 2021
- Inside TSCA Features Article on PFAS in Food Based on Recent Lathrop GPM Webinar
May 13, 2021

- McKnight's Long-Term Care News Quotes Mara Cohara on COVID-19 Litigation
September 4, 2020
- Ingram's Magazine Features Article by Mara Cohara and Eric Swan on COVID-19 Related Lawsuits
May 2020
- Business Class News Interviews Mara Cohara and Eric Swan on Mitigating Litigation Risks as Businesses Reopen
May 14, 2020
- CFO Dive Quotes Mara Cohara on Tort Risks
April 29, 2020
- Dallas Morning News Quotes Mara Cohara on Employees Returning to Work
April 29, 2020
- Mara Cohara, Rosalee McNamara, and Dale Werts Profiled in Kansas City Business Journal's Best of Bar Special Issue
October 25, 2019
- Mara Cohara Selected as an Ingram's Magazine's 50 Missourians You Should Know
March 1, 2019
- KCBJ: Four Lathrop Gage Attorneys Selected as Best of the Bar in 2015
September 25, 2015
- Mara Cohara co-chairs LEAP Back to School Breakfast
August 1, 2014
- Missouri Lawyers Weekly: Jury Rules in Favor of Firm Client in Hog Farm Lawsuit
July 19, 2011
- Trenton Republican-Times: Jury Rules in Favor of Firm Client in Hog Farm Lawsuit
June 24, 2011

News Releases

- Lathrop GPM PFAS Team Honored in Top Legal Innovations Awards by Missouri Lawyers Media
December 8, 2021
- Mara Cohara Honored as a Top Woman Executive in Kansas City
November 22, 2021
- Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers Recognizes 30 Lathrop GPM Attorneys

November 16, 2021

- Seven Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named Lawyer of the Year, 100 Ranked as The Best Lawyers in America©
August 19, 2021
- Mara Cohara Named to Missouri Power List for Business Defense
June 2, 2021
- Chambers USA 2021 Names Lathrop GPM a Top Law Firm, Franchise Group Ranked Nationwide
May 20, 2021
- Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers Recognizes 34 Lathrop GPM Attorneys
November 16, 2020
- Lathrop GPM Attorneys Named to The Best Lawyers in America©, Lawyer of the Year, and Ones to Watch for 2021
August 20, 2020
- Mara Cohara Honored in Women Who Mean Business
June 18, 2020
- Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers Recognizes 42 Lathrop Gage Attorneys
November 13, 2019
- Three Lathrop Gage Partners Among Kansas City's Best of the Bar
August 29, 2019
- Super Lawyers Recognizes 47 Lathrop Gage Attorneys in Missouri and Kansas
November 14, 2018
- Three Lathrop Gage Partners Named Among Kansas City Business Journal's Best of the Bar
August 30, 2018
- Lathrop Gage Announces 2018 Executive Committee Members
July 23, 2018
- Super Lawyers Recognizes 57 Attorneys from Lathrop Gage in Missouri and Kansas
November 9, 2017
- Lathrop Gage Obtains Women in Law Empowerment Forum's 2015 Certification
June 25, 2015
- Four Lathrop Gage Partners Honored as Best of the Bar
September 26, 2014

- Super Lawyers Recognizes 71 Lathrop Gage Attorneys
October 14, 2013
- Lathrop Gage Promotes Six Attorneys to Partner Status
January 5, 2009
- Lathrop Gage Hosts Santa Snow Ball for LAKC
November 26, 2008

Professional Affiliations

- Kansas City Sports Commission & Foundation, Board of Directors
- Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel, Vice Chair, Toxic Tort and Environmental Law Section, 2019-2021
- National Diocesan Attorneys Association, 2002 - Present
- Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association Foundation, 2013-2016; Legal Advisor to the Foundation Board of Directors, 2015-2016; Foundation Secretary, 2016-2017; Foundation Treasurer, 2017 - 2018
- DRI, Women in Law, Toxic Torts & Environmental Law, and Product Liability Sections, 2014 - Present
- Kansas City Association for Women Lawyers, 2002 - Present
- Platte County Bar Association, 2010 - Present
- Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce, 2012 - 2020
- Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City, 2010-2017
- Lawyers Association of Kansas City/YLS, President, 2008-2009; President-Elect, 2007
- American Bar Association, Tort Litigation Section, 2007 - Present
- American Lung Association, Leadership Counsel, 2012-2014
- UMKC
 - Law School Alumni Association
 - Law Foundation Board, 2013-Present
 - Immediate Past President, 2013-2014
 - President, 2012-2013
 - VP/President Elect, 2011-2012
 - Secretary/Treasurer, 2010-2011
 - Director of Membership, 2006-2008
 - Board of Directors, 2004-2005

- Law School Foundation
 - Executive Officer, Vice President for Alumni and Constituent Relations, 2012-2013;
 - Member, 2013-Present
- Inns of UMKC, Coordinating Master, 2004-2005; Inn Master 2007-2008

Community Involvement

- Park University, Board of Trustees, 2019 - Present, Co-Chair of the Strategic Alliances Committee
- Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Executive Women's Leadership Council, 2018 - Present, Advocacy and Community Subgroup Co-Chair
- Lawyers Encouraging Academic Performance (LEAP), Elected Lifetime Member 2021, Board Member, 2008-Present; Vice President, 2015-Present; Secretary, 2013-2015
- CROWN, the Cross Organizational Women's Network in Kansas City, Steering Committee, 2019
- TEDxKCWomen, Advisory Council, 2019
- Camp Fire, National Board of Trustees, 2016; Governance Chair, 2016-2017; Secretary, 2016-Present
- Greater Missouri Leadership Challenge, 2010; Alumni and Kansas City Planning Committee, 2011-2017; Foundation Board of Directors, 2016 - 2020; Advisor, 2020 - Present
- Platte County South Community Center YMCA, Board of Directors, 2016-2018
- Operation Breakthrough, Back to School Drive Co-Chair, 2012-2016
- 100+ Women Who Care, 2014 - 2019
- Harvest Ball Society, 2013 - 2020
- Heartland Women's Leadership Council (HWLC), Board Member, 2011-2014; Co-Governance Chair, 2014-2015
- Kansas City Tomorrow, 2005-2006; Alumni Board Member, 2006-2008; Alumni Member, 2008 - Present
- Women's Foundation - 360 Degrees of Giving, Founding Board Member

Honors

- *Ingram's Magazine*, WeKC - Women Executives Kansas City, 2021
- *Missouri Lawyer Weekly*, Power 30 - Business Defense, 2021
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, Litigation: General Commercial, 2021
- Selected among *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2021 - 2022
- *Kansas City Business Journal*, "Women Who Mean Business," 2020
- The Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, Vice Chair of Toxic Tort and Environmental Law Section, 2019-2020
- *Kansas City Business Journal*, "Best of the Bar", 2012 - 2015, 2018 - 2019
- *Ingram's Magazine*, "50 Missourians You Should Know", 2019
- Martindale-Hubbell® "AV" Rating
- Missouri & Kansas *Super Lawyers*, 2013-2020; "Top 50 Female Lawyers," 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018; "Top 100 Lawyers" 2017; "Rising Stars," 2009
- *Ingram's Magazine*, "40 Under Forty", 2015
- LEAP - Mardi Gras Luncheon, Queen, 2015; President's Award, 2013 and 2014
- *Missouri Lawyers Weekly's* Women's Justice Awards, "Rising Star", 2013
- *KC Business Magazine*, "Rising Star", 2013