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Kristi W. Dean
Managing Partner

Kristi W. Dean, *Managing Partner*, is a skilled trial lawyer who represents clients in business disputes. She focuses on complex litigation matters and litigates cases in both State and Federal Court.

Kristi was named a **2013 Trusted Advisor** by the San Fernando Valley Business Journal. She has been consistently named a "Southern California Super Lawyer" and recognized as "one of the top" lawyers in Southern California by her peers in Los Angeles Magazine, Law & Politics Media, Inc., and Super Lawyer publications for thirteen years in a row. She celebrated her 36th year of practicing law in December 2020.

Kristi represents corporations and business organizations in litigation disputes, including breach of contract, shareholder disputes, unfair business competition, trade secret misappropriation, tortious interference, wage & hour, shareholder derivative actions, and breach of fiduciary duty claims. She also acts as general counsel for businesses who seek to avoid litigation through effective risk management techniques. She has over 30 years in handling insurance defense assignments from insurers and self-insured entities in the areas of products, premises and construction defect and accidents.

Kristi also has a unique understanding of the operations, procedures, responsibilities and concerns of the insurance industry, retail agencies and brokerages, surplus line brokers and underwriters in MGA and GA capacities. Her experience spans a broad and exhaustive spectrum of insurance issues, including errors and omissions claims, drafting and negotiating agent and broker agreements, producer agreements, insurance policy construction and interpretation, drafting of manuscript endorsements, insurance coverage analysis, declaratory relief and insurance bad faith litigation, third party defense litigation,

and both corporate and regulatory matters specific to the insurance industry. She represents insurance professionals and businesses ancillary to the insurance industry such as loss adjusters, auditing agencies, premium finance companies, property and risk inspectors, and software providers. Utilizing her knowledge of the inner-workings of the insurance industry, Kristi helps her clients navigate through regulatory and litigation environments. She counsels in employee disputes, Title VII claims, wrongful termination and sexual harassment claims, and fashions pathways to minimize e&o claims and employer risk management.

Kristi is a regular speaker and panelist throughout the United States and U.K on issues affecting the insurance industry for groups such as the California Insurance Wholesalers' Association; Los Angeles Insurance Women's Association; West Valley Claims Association; San Gabriel Valley Claims Association; American Association of Managing General Agents; CPCU Societies for El Camino, Los Angeles, and the Natural Chapter; and multiple Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Associations. She also is qualified as a continuing education provider for the California Department of Insurance and provides [CE courses](#) to her clients.

AREAS OF PRACTICE:

- Commercial Litigation
- Insurance Coverage
- Insurance Administrative/Regulatory Matters
- Professional Liability
- Products and Premises
- Construction Accidents
- Mergers and Acquisitions (Insurance Industry)
- Contracts/Transactions (Insurance Industry)

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS:

Litigation:

- Defense verdict obtained on behalf of board of directors by corporate shareholders.
- Numerous defense verdicts on products and premises litigation matters.
- Numerous defense verdicts obtained on behalf of wholesale surplus line brokers in negligent procurement claims by insureds and retail insurance brokers.
- Defense award and affirmative relief on a retail insurance producer in an unfair competition dispute.
- A million dollar award on behalf of an outgoing broker against a retail insurance brokerage for unfair business competition.
- Defense verdicts in construction defect claims, and accompanying awards for attorney's fees.
- Non-suit in jury trial on behalf of defendant construction company in a wrongful death claim.
- Numerous successful summary judgments on behalf of insurance companies in coverage disputes/bad faith claims.

- Favorable verdicts in admitted liability jury trials for insureds and insurance companies.
- Successful resolutions of claims between insurance brokers in unfair competition and trade secret litigation filed by competitors, including an appellate court affirmation.
- Successful resolutions of sexual harassment and wrongful termination claims on behalf of employers and employees.
- Prosecution and successful resolution of complaints in interpleader on behalf of insurance companies.
- Successful prosecution of declaratory relief actions affirming non-coverage on behalf of insurers.
- Successful resolution and negotiation of policy releases on behalf of insurers in fraud claims and bad faith litigation matters.
- Successful defense verdicts and settlements of retail and wholesale insurance professional errors and omissions claims, including negligent procurement, placement with insolvent carriers, and mistakenly issued quotes, binders and endorsements.
- Negotiation and resolution of defense and additional insured obligations related to insurance policies.
- Extensive experience litigating California Business and Professions Code section 17200 claims and unfair business competition litigation in trial and appellate courts and arbitrations involving multiple trades and businesses.
- Favorable settlement for telecommunications company involving shareholder dispute and breach of fiduciary duty claims.
- Favorable settlement for an auto dealer credit provider in a trademark infringement dispute and unfair business competition claim.
- Multiple multi-million dollar awards and settlements for aggrieved insurance brokers who left their agencies and were victims of unfair business competition.

Non-Litigation:

- Drafting and modification of agency agreements between carriers and general agents.
- Drafting and modification of producer agreements between retail and wholesale producers.
- Drafting and implementation compensation/commission agreements between insurance brokers and their employees/independent contractors.
- Creation of separation agreements, employment agreements, personnel manuals, independent contractor agreements, and software development agreements.
- Assistance in the formation of business entities, including submission of business entity licenses, organization endorsement appointments and individual licensee applications with the Department of Insurance.
- Drafting of book of business acquisition agreements between insurance brokers.
- Drafting of asset purchase agreements and mergers/acquisition transactions between insurance brokerages.
- Presentation of numerous continuing education classes approved by the California Department of Insurance for licensed property and casualty brokers and agents.
- Presentation of supervisor training, errors and omissions risk prevention and sexual harassment training.

EDUCATION:

- Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, California State University, Fresno (1980)
- Juris Doctorate, Pepperdine University School of Law (1984)

MEMBERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES:

- California Insurance Wholesalers Association (“CIWA”)
- National Association of Professional Surplus Lines Offices (“NAPSLO”)
- United States District Court for the Northern, Eastern, Central and Southern Districts of California, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
- State Bar of California (1984)
- United States Supreme Court (2011)
- The Esquire Network (“TEN”)
- DRI – The Voice of the Defense Bar
- Member of Council on Litigation Management and committees on Extra Contractual Liability
- Insurance Brokers & Agents of the San Fernando Valley (“IBA SFV”)
- Los Angeles County Bar Association
- San Fernando Valley Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Approved California Department of Insurance CE Provider
- Approved Fee Arbitrator California State Bar
- Approved Fee Arbitrator San Fernando Valley Bar Association

PERSONAL:

Kristi is California born and raised, and lives in Tarzana. She enjoys outdoor activities, especially involving her gardening, riding horses, and traveling.