



*Leaders in Court
and Leaders at the Firm*

WilmerHale Women

WILMERHALE 

At WilmerHale, women lead both in the courtroom and at the firm.

WilmerHale is one of only a handful of law firms to have had a woman co-managing partner, Susan Murley, who served in that role 2012–2023. Women partners also hold key leadership positions in practices and committees across the firm. They help create a culture where women lawyers at all stages of their careers can succeed—and where clients can count on getting the best possible representation from the full breadth of the firm's talent.

More than 100 of the firm's women lawyers—including more than 25 partners—have trial experience. In the following pages, you'll meet women partners who have led high-stakes trials, and you'll learn about some of the victories in which their focus, dedication and years of practice have made the difference. These partners offer strategic analysis, critical courtroom advocacy and technical acumen, and they approach every phase of litigation with creativity, commitment and vigor—in other words, they embody the excellence that clients know to expect from WilmerHale.

WOMEN REPRESENT





Rachael Kent, Partner
Vice Chair, International Arbitration Practice

Pictured on cover from left: Partners Vinita Ferrera, Felicia Ellsworth and Lisa Pirozzolo

Felicia H. Ellsworth

Boston

Career Highlights: The vice chair of WilmerHale’s Litigation/Controversy Department and a member of the Management Committee, Felicia has netted wins in complex commercial litigation in both state and federal courtrooms. Major industry publications routinely recognize her; for example, she earned *The American Lawyer*’s Northeast Trailblazer title in 2021 and Litigator of the Week title in 2019.

Trial Wisdom: “The ability to think and act on your feet is so important as a trial lawyer. You need to avoid knee-jerk reactions, but at the same time, if an unexpected issue arises, you should take a beat to think about it, and then have the confidence to exercise your judgment and say, ‘Here’s what we’re going to do.’”



Vinita Ferrera

Boston

Career Highlights: Vinita has developed a broad practice as a trial lawyer. She represents clients in a wide variety of industries—from pharmaceuticals to consumer products to financial services—in both patent and trademark litigation. In one particularly hard-fought case, she helped persuade a jury to find for a small biotech company accused of infringement by a much larger competitor—a victory that kept her client from going out of business.

Trial Wisdom: “Before a trial, I do a lot of reading. It’s critical to be fully up to speed on everything in the record. For example, if I’m going to be doing the examination of a witness, I want to know everything that witness has said in a case. I make sure I’m not going to be surprised by anything.”



The American Lawyer named WilmerHale the **2020 Law Firm of the Year** and a finalist in its **2018 and 2021 Litigation Department of the Year** contest. The publication also recognized the firm with its **IP Litigation Department of the Year** title three times and has named WilmerHale a finalist in the category six times since establishing the category in 2004.

A Victory Protecting a Crucial Drug

When 25 generic pharmaceutical companies submitted applications to the FDA to sell generic forms of the blockbuster drug Eliquis®, Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) and Pfizer called on WilmerHale to help uphold their business-critical patents. Eliquis®, a novel anticoagulant used to treat and reduce the risk of blood clots and stroke in certain patients, is one of the most significant assets for the two companies, generating approximately \$5 billion annually in US sales.

With the BMS and Pfizer patents on one formulation of the drug's active ingredient, apixaban, not set to expire until 2026 and the other in effect until 2031, a WilmerHale team led by Partner Amy Kreiger Wigmore filed infringement suits against all 25 generics. By the time the suits were consolidated, the Eliquis® case was one of the largest Abbreviated New Drug Application suits ever filed. Over time, the team negotiated favorable settlements with 22 of the companies, and only three remained by the fall 2019 federal bench trial in Delaware.

At trial, the WilmerHale team methodically tackled the generics' two highly technical validity challenges, including one asserting that "pharmaceutically acceptable salt forms" of apixaban couldn't exist. The team called on the former chair of Harvard's chemistry department to describe how one of his students made three different apixaban salts in under five hours and ran a video showing the salt forming like snow in a flask. Next, a Philadelphia cardiologist and a Princeton medicinal chemist testified to the pharmaceutical safety of the salts. In a withering cross-examination, the team presented the generics' expert with numerous household items, including toothpaste, that contain chemicals with the same properties.

The judge's 87-page post-trial opinion found the Pfizer and BMS patents valid and infringed—a verdict that likely prevents these generics from entering the market until at least 2031, protecting tens of millions of our clients' revenue.

Clients: Pfizer and BMS



Amy Kreiger Wigmore, Partner

Rachael D. Kent

Washington DC

Career Highlights: Rachael, who vice-chairs the firm’s International Arbitration Practice, has led international arbitration hearings around the world, including in disputes arising under M&A agreements, construction and infrastructure contracts, and technology licensing and transfer agreements. *Chambers Global*, which regularly recognizes her, says she “knows the arbitration process backwards and forwards and makes really good strategic calls.”

Trial Wisdom: “Every case is different, and a good advocate will adjust to the arbitral seat, the governing law, the nationalities of the arbitrators and the commercial context. But good advocacy always comes down to anticipating the hard questions and walking the arbitrators through every step of the analysis they need to reach the result their client is seeking.”



Hallie B. Levin

New York

Career Highlights: Hallie co-chairs the firm’s Trial Practice. Among many other achievements, she co-led the team that represented T-Mobile and Deutsche Telekom in the landmark 2019 antitrust trial in which attorneys general from 13 states and the District of Columbia failed in their effort to enjoin the merger of T-Mobile and Sprint. The victory received global press, including in *The New York Times*, and Hallie was named Litigator of the Week by *The American Lawyer Litigation Daily* and honored as a 2020 Winning Litigator by *The National Law Journal* for her work. *Litigation Daily* again named her Litigator of the Week in 2021 for another T-Mobile victory, this time in a contract dispute with Cox Communications.

Trial Wisdom: “Turn off the PowerPoint, step away from the podium, look each juror in the eye. Repeat. You will never establish a relationship of trust with jurors if you’re talking at them, not to them.”



In 2017 and 2021, Dell Technologies awarded WilmerHale its **Legal Diversity Award**, given annually to one of Dell’s partner law firms that excels at embracing and promoting workplace diversity.



Sonal N. Mehta

Palo Alto

Career Highlights: For two decades, Sonal has represented technology and life sciences companies in high-stakes patent and technology disputes. A first-chair trial lawyer, her experience spans all aspects of trial practice, from opening to closing, pre-trial to post-trial, and everything in between. Sonal is also a member of the firm's Management Committee.

Trial Wisdom: "As a trial lawyer, my job is to arm the jury with the facts and the narrative and legal framework to apply those facts. Juries see through bluster, name-calling and distractions. I want the jury to know that I am giving them the facts that matter (and only the facts that matter) and to know that they can trust my explanation for *why* those facts matter. When I am before a jury, nothing matters more than my credibility and that of my client."



Lisa J. Pirozzolo

Boston

Career Highlights: Lisa co-chairs the firm's Intellectual Property Litigation Practice and has led multiple trial teams in patent infringement disputes for leading life sciences and medical device companies. *Chambers USA*—which has recognized her for the past decade—notes that she is "held in high regard" and that she is "praised by her clients for her courtroom skills."

Trial Wisdom: "To effectively represent our clients in court, we need to tell their stories well. When we get a new patent litigation matter, one of the first things we do is interview the people who developed the technology involved to understand how they came up with their invention—what problem they were trying to solve, what hurdles they faced, how they were able to succeed and how their invention helps patients."



Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) awarded WilmerHale the MCCA Approved 2023 GOLD Seal in recognition of the firm's commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.



WilmerHale received the **2023 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity's Compass Award** in recognition of the firm's continued commitment to building a more inclusive profession.

A Novel Trial Approach Saves T-Mobile Merger

In a landmark antitrust trial, Partner Hallie Levin led a WilmerHale team to a resounding victory for clients T-Mobile and Deutsche Telekom. Attorneys general from 13 states and the District of Columbia sought to enjoin the merger of T-Mobile and Sprint, but, in a February 2020 decision, the US District Court for the Southern District of New York unambiguously rejected the plaintiffs' arguments and credited the testimony and evidence presented by T-Mobile's legal team.

This team developed the crucial strategy, unusual for antitrust litigation, that focused on the credibility of T-Mobile's executives and argued, through the extensive use of T-Mobile's normal course-of-business documents, that the plaintiffs' theories were inconsistent with T-Mobile's long-standing "Un-carrier" business model.

"As a trial lawyer, I was always convinced that, despite the predictive nature of antitrust law and its emphasis on economic analysis, the real-world facts should and would matter here," Hallie later told *The American Lawyer Litigation Daily*. "And the real-world evidence in this case is unambiguously that New T-Mobile will enhance, not lessen, competition."

In finding for WilmerHale's clients, the court relied heavily on the testimony of T-Mobile's then-CEO, John Legere, and its then-president and current CEO, Mike Sievert—who were questioned by Hallie during the trial—finding that the trial evidence "credibly presented by T-Mobile executives" reflected "a company [New T-Mobile] reinforced with a massive infusion of spectrum, capacity, capital, and other resources, and chomping to take on its new market peers and rivals in head-on competition."

Clients: T-Mobile and Deutsche Telekom



Hallie B. Levin, Partner
Co-Chair, Trial Practice



Davina Pujari

San Francisco

Career Highlights: As a former federal and state prosecutor and an experienced defense lawyer, Davina navigates federal and state courtrooms with confidence. Her trial experience spans environmental, fraud, and negligence cases, and also includes arbitration and administrative proceedings. Davina enjoys working with scientific experts on multi-disciplinary teams to win complex environmental cases.

Trial Wisdom: "Translating scientific concepts for the jury and judge is critical in environmental cases. I love the idea of "beautiful evidence" and work closely with technical experts to ensure illustrations and graphics are colorful and easy to understand. And after every trial, I take time to write down the lessons learned, things we did well and what I would do differently in the future. This allows me to assimilate the experiences from the trial and move forward to the next one."

Mindy V. Sooter

Denver

Career Highlights: Mindy, who focuses on patent litigation and other IP and business disputes, has achieved many notable trial victories involving complex technologies. Recently, she led Comcast to an outright victory in an expedited patent infringement case in the Northern District of California, involving 10 patents. The Denver office partner-in-charge and a member of the firm's Management Committee, Mindy was named to *Law Week Colorado's* Top Women Attorneys list in 2017 and 2020 and was the magazine's 2018 Top Litigator.

Trial Wisdom: "I worked as an engineer before law school, then built up nearly 15 years of trial experience as an attorney. That combination of experience makes me particularly effective at advocating for our technology clients. Lawyers with backgrounds like mine are one reason WilmerHale has such a strong patent litigation practice."



The firm received **Mansfield Certification Plus** status in 2023, the highest designation possible for supporting the rule's goal of boosting the representation of diverse lawyers in law firm leadership. WilmerHale has received the designation since 2018, when it was part of the initial group of firms to agree to have their diversity efforts evaluated.

Cindy D. Vreeland

Boston

Career Highlights: Cindy, who focuses on patent and trade secrets litigation, has served as lead or co-lead trial counsel in more than 20 trials. She has successfully tried cases in technologies ranging from wireless devices, semiconductor chips and computer storage to medical devices and pharmaceuticals. *Law360* honored her as one of only two IP litigators selected for its inaugural list of Top Female Trial Attorneys.

Trial Wisdom: “It’s all about the story—even in a technical patent case. Our job as trial lawyers is to keep digging until we find a compelling story we are excited to tell.”



Amy Kreiger Wigmore

Washington DC

Career Highlights: Amy draws on a deep understanding of the complexities of Hatch-Waxman litigation and the trial process to secure business-critical results for clients. Amy has led several Hatch-Waxman cases involving multiple generic challengers that have resulted in successful judgments or settlements for her branded pharmaceutical clients. She also played a significant role in a jury trial involving design patents that resulted in a substantial damages award for her client.

Trial Wisdom: “Preparation is the key. As a patent litigator, you need to truly understand the facts so that you can communicate complex ideas to lay judges and jurors. I’ve always been amazed at how well nonscientists can grasp the important information if it is presented correctly.”



Seramount/Working Mother named WilmerHale a 2023 Best Law Firm for Women & Diversity. WilmerHale is one of only two law firms recognized for being on the list since its inception in 2007.



In 2023, the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance recognized WilmerHale for the third year as “**Tipping the Scales**” for having 50% or more women in its US-based new partner class.

A Long-Fought Victory for the NCAA in Libel Suit

A WilmerHale team headed by Partner Felicia Ellsworth achieved a win for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in May 2016 when a jury in Massachusetts found for the defense after a seven-day libel trial. The plaintiff, a former SUNY Buffalo men's basketball head coach, sought \$25 million in damages.

The victory capped more than a decade of litigation between the two parties. Beginning in 2003, the coach filed multiple lawsuits against the organization after an NCAA disciplinary board determined that he had violated NCAA rules during his tenure. Through discovery in this litigation, the coach obtained an internal NCAA memo that, he claimed, contained a libelous statement about him, which led him to file suit against the NCAA and three of its officials in 2013.

After navigating the case's circuitous path between federal and state courtrooms, the WilmerHale team secured a major win when, in March 2015, the Massachusetts Superior Court dismissed the three individual defendants as well as many of the plaintiff's claims, leaving a single libel claim as the only remaining count in the case. When this claim proceeded to trial, a 14-person jury cleared the NCAA.

"We were very pleased to obtain a total defense verdict for the client. The jury's verdict meant that the plaintiff could not prove that the statement at issue was defamatory or false, or that the NCAA had written it with the intent required for liability," says Felicia. "Although any one of these findings would have been sufficient for a defense verdict, the jury found for the NCAA on all three issues. That means the jury agreed with us at every turn—and that we did our job."

Client: National Collegiate Athletic Association



Felicia Ellsworth, Partner
Vice Chair, Litigation/Controversy Department

Lawyers Grow Their Trial Skills While Helping Others

At WilmerHale, lawyers at all stages of their careers have regular opportunities to sharpen their trial skills through pro bono work.

Boston litigators can gain extensive trial practice in six-month rotations at the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, where they prosecute larceny, assault and other criminal cases.

"I carried about 200 cases at any given time and first-chaired 15 trials, including six jury trials. That amount of experience alone shows the value of the rotation," says Partner Jessica Lewis, who

"I carried about 200 cases at any given time and first-chaired 15 trials."

—Partner Jessica Lewis, San Francisco

and coordinating with witnesses and victims' advocates, I gained skills that I continue to apply when handling matters at the firm."

For Denver-based Partner Nora Passamaneck, a pro bono case provided valuable trial experience and led to a rare favorable outcome for a prison inmate. Nora helped represent a Colorado inmate who accused corrections officers of violating his Eighth Amendment protection against cruel and unusual punishment when they Maced him while

trying to quell a disturbance—one in which he was not involved—and then refused to let him wash it off immediately, as required by prison regulations.

At the jury trial, the client had the chance to tell

"[I]t's also an opportunity to use your legal skills to make a positive difference."

—Partner Nora Passamaneck, Denver

his story. "He felt like no one at the prison believed him, so what he really wanted was to be heard," Nora

says. After only two days of trial, the team secured a settlement from the Colorado Department of Corrections.

WilmerHale lawyers make it possible for people in vulnerable circumstances—from veterans facing the loss of state or federal benefits to victims of domestic violence and human trafficking—to assert their rights in cases like these. "Not only do you get valuable on-your-feet trial experience doing pro bono work, but it's also an opportunity to use your legal skills to make a positive difference," says Nora. "As lawyers, we don't always appreciate the power we have to transform people's lives."

WilmerHale Makes Diversity a Business Priority

BY THE NUMBERS

TRUSTED ADVISORS

66%

of the firm's public offerings and Rule 144A placements were led by women, raising nearly \$50 billion in 2022-2023

16

appellate arguments in seven state and federal courts were handled by WilmerHale women in 2022-2023

80%

of the 30 largest investigatory matters handled by the firm were led or co-led by WilmerHale women in 2022-2023

66%

of the trials handled by the firm were led or co-led by WilmerHale women in 2022-2023



MINDFUL INCLUSION

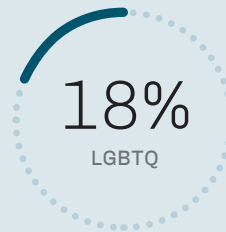
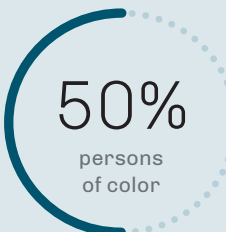
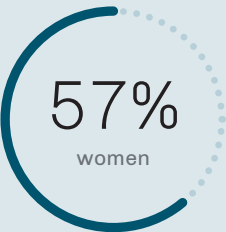
16%

of US equity partners are lawyers of color
*more than average compared with equity partners at major law firms**

30%

of US equity partners are women
*more than average compared with equity partners at major law firms**

2023 SUMMER ASSOCIATE PROGRAM



*Source: NALP

Connect with us   

[wilmerhale.com](https://www.wilmerhale.com)

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP is a Delaware limited liability partnership. WilmerHale principal law offices: 60 State Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02109, +1 617 526 6000; 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20037, +1 202 663 6000. Our United Kingdom office is operated under a separate Delaware limited liability partnership of solicitors and registered foreign lawyers authorized and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA No. 287488). Our professional rules can be found at www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/code-of-conduct.page. A list of partners and their professional qualifications is available for inspection at our UK office. In Beijing, we are registered to operate as a Foreign Law Firm Representative Office. This material is for general informational purposes only and does not represent our advice as to any particular set of facts; nor does it represent any undertaking to keep recipients advised of all legal developments. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. © 2024 Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP