



James H. Heller

Co-Chair, Commercial Litigation Department
Chair, Product Liability

Philadelphia

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Jim Heller is a nationally recognized product liability attorney with nearly 40 years of trial experience. He is co-chair of the Commercial Litigation Department, chair of the firm's Product Liability Practice Group, and a member of the firm's Management Committee and Board of Directors.

The focus of Jim's preeminent product liability practice is defending single- and multi-plaintiff catastrophic personal injury and wrongful death claims. Jim has tried more than 60 cases to verdict or judgment and litigated hundreds of matters in state and federal trial and appellate courts across the country. His record of success representing companies faced with extraordinary liability, sympathetic plaintiffs, and intense media scrutiny places him squarely among top-tier defense counsel.

Jim serves as national trial counsel to two public corporations. In that role, he first-chairs all litigation and trials, coordinates national litigation strategy, advises on external communications and product manuals, and serves as liaison to regulators and policymakers.

In addition to his primary practice, Jim has deep experience litigating toxic tort class actions, complex commercial disputes, health care fraud, and intellectual property infringement claims.

He first joined Cozen O'Connor in 1985, when the firm still had fewer than 60 lawyers, and has played a central role in building Cozen O'Connor's award-winning Commercial Litigation Department from the ground up. Jim was recently profiled in *The American Lawyer's* "Litigation Leader" series, which featured practice leaders of the country's biggest litigation firms.

Jim is a SuperLawyer, and ALM Top-Rated Lawyer. He is also a member of the Product Liability Advisory Council and Phi Alpha Delta, the largest professional law fraternity in the U.S.

Jim earned his Bachelor of Business Administration at the University of Michigan in 1982, and his J.D. at the University of Miami School of Law in 1985.

Experience

Secured dismissal of all claims brought against the individual owners of a technology company by former consultants and employees, alleging infringement of copyrights for software solutions they created for the company. In addition to dismissing the claims, which the plaintiffs asserted in three iterations of their complaint, the court invited us to file a motion for attorneys' fees and costs.

Delivered a resounding victory in a month-long trial in plaintiff-friendly Cook County, Ill., for a leading manufacturer of consumer safety products. A unanimous defense verdict was rendered after just 2.5 hours of deliberation, defeating allegations that the product failed to operate in response to a fire that caused the plaintiff to sustain catastrophic injuries.

Successfully defended a product manufacturer in a products liability claim that involved multiple deaths, where plaintiffs sought millions of dollars in compensatory and punitive damages for deaths they attributed to carbon monoxide poisoning from a heater manufactured by our client. The jury found for the defense on all issues.

Practice Areas

- Product Liability
- Commercial Litigation
- Real Estate Litigation
- Class Actions

Education

- University of Miami School of Law, J.D., 1985
- University of Michigan, B.A., 1982

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania

Court Admissions

- U.S. Bankruptcy Court -- Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. District Court -- Eastern District of New York
- U.S. District Court -- Middle District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court -- New Jersey
- U.S. District Court -- Southern District of New York

Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- American Trial Lawyers Association
- Defense Research Institute
- New Jersey State Bar Association
- Pennsylvania Bar Association
- Philadelphia Bar Association
- Product Liability Advisory Council, Inc.

Awards & Honors

- Chambers & Partners USA: Litigation: General Commercial, 2024. This award is conferred by Chambers & Partners. A description of the selection methodology can be found here. No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.
- ALM Top Rated Lawyer – Litigation
- Pennsylvania Super Lawyer 2008-2021. This award is conferred by Super Lawyers. A description of the selection methodology can be found here. No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

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Won several defense verdicts in jury trials by utilizing advanced fire modeling software to quantify and illustrate the movement of flames, heat, smoke, and other products of combustion during a fire event.

Successfully obtained numerous defense verdicts in fire litigation across the country by demonstrating that the plaintiff intentionally set the fire at issue.

Successfully defended product manufacturers and obtained defense verdicts and judgments in a number of products liability claims that involved multiple injuries and deaths, where plaintiffs sought millions of dollars in compensatory and punitive damages for deaths they attributed to the negligent manufacture and/or design of its products.

Successfully defended ladder manufacturer from manufacturing and design defect claims where plaintiffs sought millions of dollars in compensatory damages for severe and permanent back and neck injuries sustained from a fall from a ladder.

Obtained dismissal of complaint/litigation for product manufacturer wherein 35-year-old woman suffered serious brain damage from a carbon monoxide exposure.

Litigated first amendment speech issues, obtaining a temporary restraining order and preliminary and permanent injunction preventing protests including picketing and libel and slanderous statements, in front of office and near residences of officers and directors.

Retained after a substantial judgment was entered against a corporation when plaintiff attempted to pierce the corporate veil and collect from the officers, directors and shareholders personally. Represented the officers, directors and shareholders presenting evidence and testimony from lay and expert witnesses and were successful in protecting their personal assets and liability.

Successfully defended a company and obtained a complete defense verdict in a suit filed by its former CEO seeking compensatory and punitive damages relating to his employment and his termination from the company.

Represented an Icelandic corporation in a contractual dispute with its German bank.

Obtained summary judgment for a product manufacturer whose product was alleged to have proximately caused five deaths. The court held that the plaintiffs failed to establish a product defect and/or that the alleged product defect was the proximate cause of the plaintiffs' deaths. This result was affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.