



Melissa Osorio Dibble

Partner

Estate & Trust Litigation

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Overview

Melissa advocates for clients in trust and estate disputes in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. An experienced trial attorney, Melissa handles all varieties of probate, general equity, and Orphans' Court matters, including, but not limited to, accountings, will contests, breach of fiduciary duty actions, trust modifications, contested guardianships, and matters involving the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act and the Slayer Statute. She represents institutions and individuals, including banks, universities, executors, trustees, beneficiaries of estates and trusts, and intestate heirs.

Clients turn to Melissa not only for her ability to navigate the complex legal and financial issues involved in trust and estate litigation, but also for her understanding and appreciation of the sensitive and emotional nature of these cases. Taking on her clients' cases as if they were her own, she brings an assertive, thoughtful and experienced approach.

Melissa helps clients understand their rights and duties and works to maximize each client's objectives by developing a customized litigation strategy, generally culminating in negotiated resolution, mediation, or trial. She is upfront and open with clients about the cost and toll of litigation, ensuring her clients are comfortable and informed at every stage.

Melissa is a Fellow of The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. She is a frequent speaker on topics regarding estate and trust litigation, and has authored articles on the doctrine of writings intended as wills and the Uniform Trust Code.

Prior to joining Archer, Melissa served as the law clerk for the Honorable Richard F. Wells in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Camden Vicinage.

Representative Experience

- Successfully obtained dismissal of a will challenge on the return date on behalf of an executor.
- Handled the termination of several uneconomical charitable trusts for a corporate trustee.
- Served as co-counsel defending an agent under a power of attorney in Orphans' Court.
- Represented a University in several successful applications to modify scholarships and prize funds under UPMIFA.
- Obtained countless settlements on behalf of individuals and institutions regarding disputes as to fiduciary compensation, fiduciary removal actions, and will and trust disputes.

Professional and Community Involvement

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Committee, The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC)
- Co-Chair, Ethics and Malpractice Committee, American Bar Association Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law (2023-2024)
- Leadership/Mentoring Task Force Member, American Bar Association Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law (2023-2024)
- Probate & Fiduciary Litigation Committee, American Bar Association Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law (Vice-Chair: 2020-2021; 2021-2022; Co-Chair: 2022-2023)
- Immediate Past President, Estate and Financial Planning Council of Southern New Jersey
- Fellow of The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC)
- Graduate of the Inaugural Class of the Mid-Atlantic Fellows Institute of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC)
- New Jersey State Bar Association
- New Jersey Women Lawyers
- Camden County Bar Association, Probate & Trust Committee
- Burlington County Bar Association
- Pennsylvania State Bar Association
- Philadelphia Bar Association, Probate & Trust Section
- Member, Samaritan's Healthcare & Hospice Planned Giving Committee



- Board Member, Interfaith Caregivers of Haddonfield, NJ (nonprofit organized to assist seniors with independent living) (2017-2023)
- Board Member, CONTACT Community Helplines (nonprofit agency staffed by trained and dedicated volunteers, and supported by the United Way (2013-2016)
- Mock Trial Coach for Paul VI High School (2011-2015)
- Homeless Advocacy Project Volunteer-Pro Bono Representation of Veterans (2011-2015)

Select Articles

- **“Who’s the Boss? Fiduciary Liability and Directed Trusts,** *Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Journal*, Volume 57, Number 3, American Bar Association (Fall/Winter 2022)
- “Recent Developments in Trust Law: New Jersey Enacts the Uniform Trust Code,” Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey *Connection Newsletter* (2016)

Past Speaking Engagements and Seminars

- “Developing Trends in Probate Law & the Exercise of Judicial Discretion in the Surrogates’ Courts: Understanding the Unique Position of the Surrogate in the New Jersey Judiciary and the Statutes, Cases and Court Rules Which Guide the Operation of the Surrogates’ Courts and the Exercise of Judicial Discretion,” Surrogate’s Section’s Annual Convention, Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey (September 2023)
- “Black Tie Optional: Non-Traditional and E-Wills” American Bar Association Annual Real Property, Trust & Estate Law National CLE Conference (May 2023)
- “The Steve & Tony & Friends Show,” 21st Annual Forum: Hot Trends in Estate Litigation, Camden County Bar Association (February 2023)
- “Evidence in Trust and Estate Litigation,” NJICLE, (August 2021)
- “Who is the Fiduciary? Traditional and Non-Traditional Roles in the Administration of Directed Trusts” American Bar Association Annual Real Property, Trust & Estate Law National CLE Conference (April 2022)
- “Developing Trends in Probate Litigation,” Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey, Surrogates’ Section (August 2020)
- “Toss the Blue-Backs and Sealing Wax, Electronic Wills Are Here! Or Are They?,” American Bar Association Annual Real Property, Trust & Estate Law National CLE Conference (May 2020)
- “Estate and Trust Fiduciary Litigation: Minimizing and Defending Breach of Duty Claims” Webinar (February 27, 2020)



- **“Evidence Issues for Trust & Estate Litigation,”** Camden County Bar Association (2019)
- **“Wills and Estate Planning Workshop,”** The Samaritan Center at Voorhees (2019)
- **“Hot Trends in Estate Litigation,”** CCBA (2018)
- **“Fiduciary Litigation Update,”** Greater Middlesex/Somerset County Estate Planning Council (2018)
- **“The Final Frontier: Concerns and Considerations of Electronic Wills Seminar,”** EFPCSNJ (2018)
- **“Hot Trends in Estate Litigation; Seven Deadly Claims,”** Archer Annual Estate Litigation Seminar (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018)
- **“Wills Seminar,”** The Samaritan Center at Voorhees (2017)
- **“Guardianship Update From The Surrogate’s Office,”** Camden County Bar Association (2017)
- **“A Case Study on the UTC,”** Society of Financial Service Professionals (2017)
- **“Charitable Bequests: How to Make Them Last,”** Samaritan Healthcare & Hospice (2017)
- **“Hot Trends in Probate Litigation,”** Camden County Bar Association Annual Forum (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)
- **“What We’ve Learned So Far Under Uniform Trust Code,”** Burlington County Bar Association (2016)

Credentials

Education

- Rutgers University, JD
- Bryn Mawr College, BA, *cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Offices

- Voorhees, NJ
- Philadelphia, PA



Areas of Focus

Practice

- Estate & Trust Litigation
- Private Wealth, Estates & Trusts

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