

# Karen O’Kasey

## PARTNER

Karen O’Kasey is a 33-year trial attorney who defends employers and medical professionals in state and federal courts in Oregon and Washington. She has successfully defended employers in all types of employment claims in federal and state court. She has also tried to defense verdict numerous medical negligence claims in Oregon and Washington.

Ms. O’Kasey has extensive experience defending municipalities against all types of tort claims, including 42 U.S.C. § 1983 claims, First Amendment claims, and Americans with Disabilities Act claims.

Ms. O’Kasey is a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers, and a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates. For the past ten years, she has been named one of the “Top 25” Women Lawyers in Oregon by *Oregon Super Lawyers* magazine. In 2015, 2017, and 2023, she was singled out as Lawyer of the Year for Legal Malpractice Law in *The Best Lawyers in America*, and has been named a Local Litigation Star by *Benchmark Litigation*.

## REPRESENTATIVE CASES

***Ross v. The Oregon Zoo***, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2022)  
Wrongful death action against the Oregon Zoo. Plaintiff alleged that Zoo’s negligence resulted in death of concert-goer whose body was found in construction site within the Zoo after a concert. Defense verdict.

***Stockton-Smith v. Mee***, Marion County Circuit Court (2021)  
Medical malpractice claim for wrongful death based on failure to diagnose asthma. Defense verdict.

***Kirby v. OHSU***, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2021)  
Claim against Nursing School for failure to accommodate student’s



### Contact

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### LEGAL ASSISTANT

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### Practice Areas

Civil Rights Defense  
Employment Litigation  
Health Law  
Human Resources Consulting & Compliance  
Legal Malpractice Defense  
Medical Malpractice Defense  
Product Liability Defense

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disabilities under the federal Rehabilitation Act. Defense verdict.

***Stryffeler v. Anesthesia Associates NW***, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2019)

Thirty-eight million dollar medical malpractice claim against anesthesia provider and surgeon, alleging permanent, severe brain damage as a result of surgical complications. Defense verdict.

***Hicks v. Les Schwab Tire Centers of Portland, Inc.***, United States District Court — Pendleton Division (2019)

Employment discrimination claim involving Americans with Disabilities Act Workers’ Compensation and retaliation claims. Defense verdict.

***Gale v. Rebound Orthopedics***, Clark County Superior Court (2019)

Medical malpractice claim against orthopedic surgeon alleging negligence in planning and performing a hip replacement surgery. Defense verdict.

***Martin v. OHSU***, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2015)

Medical negligence claim against neurosurgeon for stroke experienced during brain aneurysm surgery. Defense verdict.

***Bozanich v. Radiology Specialists of the Northwest***, Multnomah County Circuit Court (2015)

Failure to diagnose breast cancer case against radiologist. Defense verdict.

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## EDUCATION

**Santa Clara University School of Law**

J.D., 1986

**San Francisco State University**

B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1983

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## EXPERIENCE

**Hart Wagner LLP**

*Partner*, 2002–present

**Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt**

*Partner*, 1993–2002

*Associate*, 1987–1993

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## ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Oregon State Court

Washington State Court

U.S. District Court: District of Oregon; Eastern and Western Districts of Washington

United States Court of Appeals: Ninth Circuit; Federal Circuit; District of Columbia Circuit; United States Supreme Court

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## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

Member, American Board of Trial Advocates

Martindale Hubbell AV Preeminent Rating

Best Lawyers in America

Medical Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2012 — 2024

Professional Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2014 — 2024

Ethics and Professional Responsibility Law, 2014 — 2024

Legal Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2014 — 2024

Lawyer of the Year, Legal Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2023

Lawyer of the Year, Professional Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2021

Lawyer of the Year, Legal Malpractice Law — Defendants, 2015, 2017, 2019

Oregon Super Lawyers

Employment Litigation: Defense, 2006 — 2023

Top 25 Women Lawyers, 2011 — 2023

Top 50 Lawyers, 2017, 2020 — 2023

Benchmark Litigation

Local Litigation Star — Labor and Employment, 2015-2018

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## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

**Oregon State Bar**, Labor and Employment Law Section, Federal Practice and Procedure Committee, 2008 — 2010

**Oregon Association of Defense Counsel**, Past Chair, Employment Law Subcommittee

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**American Bar Association**, Past Chair, Torts and Insurance Practice Section, Employers’ Liability Subcommittee, National Institute Faculty, 1992, 1994

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## PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

“Ending Probationary Periods,” Quote, Human Resource Executive Online, 2015

“Ten Ways to Avoid an Employment Lawsuit,” Portland Business Journal, 2014

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## PRESENTATIONS

“Employment Law–Veterans’ Rights — USERRA and the Implications of Staub v. Proctor Hospital on Cat’s Paw Liability,” Oregon State Bar Labor & Employment Section Annual Meeting, 2011

“Trial Skills,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 18th Annual Litigation Institute, 2011

“Oregon Pleadings and Parties: Tips and Traps for the Unwary,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2010

“OEC 104 In The Wake of Marcum v. Adventist Health,” Oregon Association of Defense Counsel Annual Convention, 2009

“Trial Advocacy in Action,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 16th Annual Litigation Institute, 2009

“Trial Evidence in Employment and Civil Rights Cases,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2007

“Discovery and Punitive Damages Motions,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2007

“Practical Considerations in Using Expert Witnesses,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 12th Annual Litigation Institute, 2005

“Powerful Motion Practice–Discovery Motions,” Oregon State Bar CLE Program, 2004

“Risk Management,” Dentist Benefits Insurance Company Training, 1994–2002

“An In–Depth Look at Title I of the ADA,” Oregon State Bar Americans with Disabilities Act CLE Program, 1996–1997

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## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

**St. Andrew Nativity School**, Finance Committee, 2014–present

**Oregon Ballet Theatre**, Board of Directors, 1989–1996

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