

Debra Albin-Riley

PARTNER

Debra specializes in helping clients navigate sophisticated health care-related disputes.



Industries

Health Care

Practices

Complex Litigation

Languages

English

Education

University of Southern California JD,
1983

University of California, Los Angeles BA,
Art History, cum laude, 1980

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Debra is a skilled and experienced trial lawyer who has successfully served as first chair or lead attorney on numerous high-profile federal, state, and appellate matters in courts and tribunals throughout Northern and Southern California, as well as jurisdictions and courts across the country. Debra regularly handles high-stakes and bet-the-company litigation. Her significant experience before judges, juries, and other decision makers allows her to take matters to trial, or skillfully negotiate positive resolutions for her clients.

Debra's practice focuses on complicated health care and peer review hearings and litigation. Over the years she has gained extensive experience in sophisticated commercial contract disputes, class actions, Proposition 65, consumer fraud, product liability, and trust and estate matters.

Debra has first-chaired cases in California and other jurisdictions throughout the country, including state and federal trial and appellate courts in Texas, Florida and Illinois, the United States Court of Claims, and the United States Tax Court. She regularly handles administrative peer review hearings.

She has been rated among the "Top Women Lawyers" in California by the *Daily Journal* as a result of her impressive track record of success before judges, juries and administrative hearing officers. Debra is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America, a trial lawyer honorary society composed of less than one-half of one percent of American lawyers. Litigation Counsel of America Fellows are selected based upon excellence and accomplishment in litigation, both at the trial and appellate levels, and superior ethical reputation.

Health Care Litigation

Debra counsels and represents hospitals, health systems, and medical staffs in matters relating to peer review, including bylaws revision, exhaustion of administrative remedies, California Evidence Code Section 1157, and Anti-SLAPP issues.

Representative recent health care matters include:

- Debra represents a major health care system serving Central California, handling their litigation and medical staff peer review matters. She directs litigation strategy, as well as prepares witnesses and presents testimony in medical staff matters.
- Debra successfully convinced the California Supreme Court to accept review of an appellate decision involving a retaliation claim by a physician whose privileges to perform surgeries at two Orange County hospitals had been suspended. The matter is pending.
- Debra was the lead lawyer representing a major hospital in connection with claims by podiatrists regarding the hospital's medical staff credentialing. Debra came into the case shortly before trial and immediately mastered the matter. She prepared the case for trial, directed strategy and discovery, identified and retained expert witnesses, worked with fact witnesses, and ultimately orchestrated a comprehensive mediation that resulted in a favorable resolution.
- Debra was the lead lawyer in a toxic tort matter concerning a hospital in Northern California. She successfully obtained summary judgment for the client on the basis that the plaintiffs' claims were barred by the workers compensation exclusive jurisdiction over employee claims related to the workplace. As to those claims not dismissed by the summary judgment order, Debra successfully obtained a superlative resolution that resulted in the dismissal of all of plaintiffs' claims against the hospital.
- Debra has skillfully negotiated settlements between physicians, medical staffs and hospitals in contentious peer review matters.

Proposition 65, Product Liability and Consumer Fraud Litigation and Counseling

Debra has significant experience representing clients in product liability, toxic tort, consumer fraud, and Proposition 65 matters. For several years, Debra traveled throughout the country defending class action and opt-out cases brought against a major international pharmaceutical company.

Debra recently defended Chevron U.S.A. Inc. and Chevron Corp., in connection with claims filed by the City of Richmond related to a 2012 refinery fire in Richmond, California. She was a key player in the expert discovery, drawing on her focus on selecting, developing and presenting expert testimony. After expert discovery and successful pre-trial motions that eliminated claims and damage theories, the case settled for a nominal amount in 2018.

Debra currently represents several manufacturers and distributors in claims brought pursuant to California's Proposition 65. Her clients hail from a wide variety of industries, including beauty supplies, cosmetics, food products and automobile accessories. She has developed a program for clients and in-house counsel, "What You Need to Know About California's Proposition 65."

She also has defended claims based on California Business and Professions Code Section 17200 and the California Consumer Legal Remedies Act for clients in the food, computer and technology industries, defeating several of those claims at the pleading stage. She obtained a rare summary judgment victory in the Los Angeles County Superior Court for a food manufacturer, defeating claims based on allegations of consumer confusion and deception. Debra also has experience in claims involving the use of "natural" in labeling and advertising food products. More information on this program can be found by clicking [here](#).

Class Actions

Throughout her career, Debra has developed expertise in class action matters, including matters in the state and federal courts. She represented a major telecommunications company in defending a putative class action involving claims of text message “cramming.” Her client was dismissed from the litigation without payment to the class.

Debra has also represented clients in developing complex settlement structures for resolution of multi-party and class action claims. In years-long litigation involving a prescription medication, she not only tried several cases, but played a pivotal part in devising a settlement scheme for the efficient and effective resolution of tens of thousands of claims.

Debra also secured victories for clients in the computer industry, defeating claims in putative class actions prior to class certification.

Trust & Estates Litigation

Debra represents individuals and entities in complicated trust and estate litigation.

Debra recently represented a California non-profit health clinic in a matter involving a 65-year old trust, obtaining a favorable result for the client. She also represented a major charitable institution in an appeal involving trust and conservatorship issues. Debra also represented members of a prominent California family in several highly complicated and contentious related probate and civil matters involving trust revocation and valuation of significant parcels of agricultural property throughout California.

Debra was instrumental in obtaining a favorable settlement in a highly publicized dispute between family members owning the 11th largest winery in the nation. Brought into the case only eight weeks before trial, she quickly mastered the case, argued several key dispositive motions and handled the execution of the complex settlement involving over 20 trust and other settlement documents.

Professional Activities

Debra is the past chair of the Litigation Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. She also served on the board of governors of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers. In addition, she plays an active role within Arent Fox, serving on three firm-wide committees, including the firm’s Professional Conduct Committee, the Associate Evaluation Committee, and the Women’s Initiative Committee. She chairs the Women’s Initiative for Arent Fox’s Los Angeles office.

Memberships

Debra is a member of the California Society of Healthcare Attorneys, the American Health Lawyers Association, California Association of Medical Staff Services, and the Litigation Counsel of America.

Publications, Presentations & Recognitions

Debra has been rated among the “Top Women Lawyers” in California by the *Daily Journal* as a result of her impressive track record of success before judges, juries and administrative hearing officers. She was also listed as one of *Lawdragon Magazine’s* “Top 500 Leading Litigation Lawyers.” She has been named as a “Super Lawyer” by *Los Angeles Magazine* every year since 2004 and is rated “AV Preeminent” by *Martindale Hubbell*.

Debra published an article in *BNA's Health Law Reporter* entitled "California Anti-SLAPP Motions in a Post-*Fahlen* World," which covers a recent California Supreme Court ruling that significantly impacts the Anti-SLAPP motion's viability in cases involving hospital peer review actions. In addition, Debra recently commented on California decisions involving health care data privacy and information breaches in Arent Fox's *Health Care Counsel* blog in an article entitled "No Harm, No Foul: California Court Denies Class Action Bid Seeking \$4 Billion from Provider." A link to the *Health Care Counsel* blog can be found [here](#).

Debra recently served as a panelist during *Daily Journal's* second annual "Women Leadership in Law" conference. Debra's panel was titled "Women In The Courtroom" and brought together successful women trial lawyers who are serving as first chairs at significant trials and are paving the way for other women to follow in their footsteps.

Debra has developed an MCLE program, "Boilerplate Bombshells: Commonly Ignored Standard Terms That Can Torpedo Your Case," in which she advises transactional and litigation counsel about the pitfalls of common "boilerplate" terms in contracts and how to avoid them. Debra has presented this program to in-house counsel throughout California and New York.

Debra has also developed a program for clients and in-house counsel, "What You Need to Know About California's Proposition 65." More information on this program can be found [here](#).

Life Beyond the Law

Debra serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for the Library Foundation of Los Angeles.

Bar Admissions

California

Court Admissions

US Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit

US Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

US Court of Federal Claims

US Tax Court

US District Court, Northern District of California

US District Court, Central District of California

US District Court, Eastern District of California

US District Court, Southern District of California

US District Court, Northern District of Illinois

US District Court, Central District of Illinois

US District Court, Southern District of Illinois