

Kristi K. Brownson

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“I bring a fresh perspective on creative ways to approach cases, which benefits my clients. I love coming up with novel ideas to transform a dark situation into a bright outcome.”

Kristi is the Managing Shareholder of Brownson Norby. With nearly 25 years of experience in a litigation practice that takes her across the country, Kristi has expansive expertise in insurance coverage and asbestos litigation. Collegial and engaging, Kristi is as comfortable at a ranch in North Dakota as she is in a boardroom in Manhattan. Driven to win every case, she values working closely with her clients as she seeks innovative ways to achieve the best outcome.



Insurance Coverage Litigation

Kristi skillfully represents insurers in personal and commercial general liability insurance coverage disputes. The unique challenge of representing insurance companies is Kristi's forte, as she brings sensitivity to managing and resolving contentious cases. Valuing that her clients are experts in their fields, she collaborates with them to devise strategies for handling complex issues. Adept with lengthy insurance policies, she understands the language, and knows how courts across the United States have variously interpreted it.

She has litigated jury trials in state and federal courts, and handles cases involving:

- insurance fraud
- historical lost policy issues
- primary/excess coverage issues
- multi-year, long-term exposure coverage allocation issues
- insurance coverage arbitrations
- insurance policy exhaustion procedures and disputes

Asbestos Defense Litigation

Kristi has been involved in asbestos liability litigation for her entire career. She represents manufacturers and distributors in personal injury and wrongful death asbestos liability claims in Minnesota and North Dakota. She serves as National Coordinating Counsel, regional counsel, and North Dakota trial counsel.

Kristi brings a successful track record of managing and ending asbestos litigation cases. Directing lawyers on cases across the country from start to finish, she's unwavering in protecting her clients from being barraged during the litigation process. She skillfully analyzes cases and addresses legal defenses immediately, often identifying cases before they start for early resolution and responsible settlement.

With creative legal thinking she minimizes her client's exposure, swiftly gets cases dismissed, and significantly reduces their caseload.

Kristi oversees and manages litigation as the National Litigation Counsel for the API, Inc., Asbestos Settlement Trust, an asbestos bankruptcy settlement trust established by the United States Bankruptcy Court in Minneapolis.

North Dakota Litigation

Kristi has handled thousands of cases in every North Dakota judicial district, and has conducted jury trials and appeals to the North Dakota Supreme Court. A native of Bismarck, she is extremely proud to be from North Dakota, and defending clients in the state is near and dear to her heart. Her family descends from Dakota Territory homesteaders, and has been involved in cattle ranching, farming, education, and public office. Kristi was elected to leadership as a State 4-H Ambassador, charged with training members statewide. Because of her rural culture heritage, she knows the issues, and generates trust and instant credibility with juries and judges.

In addition, she has consistently served for nearly 15 years as the exclusive Panel Counsel for a group of major property and casualty insurers in North Dakota, handling the entire scope of their commercial, professional, and innkeeper liability matters. They rely on her savvy knowledge and experience to favorably settle cases, obtain summary judgment or dismissals, and successfully litigate cases.

Leadership

Kristi is dedicated to serving as the law firm's Managing Shareholder, fostering excellence and a collaborative culture among its talented lawyers and staff. She has served as an Adjunct Professor at Mitchell/Hamline Law School, teaching Lawyering: Advice and Persuasion in the school's Executive L.D. (EJD) program, the nation's first combined on-campus/online program at an ABA-approved law school; and an Adjunct Professor teaching Legal Writing at the University of Minnesota Law School.

Outside the courtroom, Kristi has a commitment to diversity as one of the few female law firm leaders in Minnesota. In 2018, she served as a moderator at the national Perrin Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Industry Conference in Philadelphia. Kristi also devotes her energy to charitable activities focusing on the homeless and rescue animals, including the two cats and two dogs she has adopted.

Representative Cases:

- *Michael P. McGill and Tatyana McGill v. Conwed Corporation*, U.S.D.C., District of Minnesota, Civil No. 17-01047 (SRN/HB), 2017.
- *Appletree Square I Limited Partnership, and Business Consultants, Inc., as Liquidating Agent for Appletree Square I Limited Partnership v. O' Connor & Hannan, et. al.*, 575 N.W.2d 102 (Minn. 1998)
- *Conwed Corp. v. Union Carbide Chemicals & Plastics Co., Inc.*, 634 N.W. 2d 401 (Minn. 2001)
- *Juelich v. Yamazaki Optonics Corp.*, 682 N.W. 2d 565 (Minn. 2004)
- *APM, LLLP v. TCI Insurance Agency, Inc.*, Cass County, North Dakota District Court, Case No. 09-2014-CV-12885 (N.D. 2015). Obtained summary judgment in favor of insurance agency in professional liability case.
- *Jeffrey Wotzka v. Minndakota Limited Partnership, d/b/a Radisson Hotel Bismarck*, Burleigh County, North Dakota District Court, Case No. 08-2011-CV-01867 (N.D. 2014). Obtained favorable jury verdict in innkeeper negligence case, resulting in dismissal of all claims and award of costs to client.
- *Janet Phelps v. Pembina County Memorial Hospital*, United States District Court, District of North Dakota, Northeastern Division, File No. 2:05-cr-65 (D.N.D. 2006) Obtained dismissal of HIPAA claim against hospital by former employee, finding no private right of action under HIPAA, and dismissal without prejudice of employment claims for lack of federal subject matter or supplemental jurisdiction.

- *Steven Shelquist v. Black Gold Farms, et al.*, County of Kidder, North Dakota District Court, Case No. 04-C-53 (N.D. 2006) Obtained summary judgment in favor of national farming operation in serious injury motor vehicle claim.

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Bar Admissions

- Minnesota (1995)
- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota (1996)
- Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals (2003)
- North Dakota (2004)
- U.S. District Court, District of North Dakota (2005)

Education

- J.D., *cum laude*, University of Minnesota Law School (1995)
- B.A., *summa cum laude*, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN (1991)
 - Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Society

Honors & Awards

- Featured in *Attorney at Law Magazine*, 2016 Women in Law Issue, November, 2016
- AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rating, *Martindale-Hubbell®*
- Rising Star, *SuperLawyers* 2008 edition
- Adjunct Professor, Mitchell/Hamline School of Law, teaching *Lawyering: Advice and Persuasion*
- University of Minnesota Law School, Adjunct Professor (1998-2014) Service Award
- National Moot Court, Director

Presentations

- Moderator, Diversity & Inclusion in the Legal Industry, Perrin Conference, November 1, 2018.
- Presenter at MDLA CLE: *Putting an End to Forum Shopping. Step One: Personal Jurisdiction Defense*, February 22, 2018
- Presenter, Insurer and Defense Counsel Meeting, “2011-2018” *Defendant Case Trends in Asbestos Litigation*, October 2, 2018.
- Panelist, Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association (MDLA), Women in the Law Committee, CLE: “*Managing Partners Panel: Leading & Succeeding*,” September 28, 2018.

Memberships

- Defense Research Institute (DRI)
- Claims & Litigation Management Alliance (CLM)
- American Arbitration Association; AAA Neutral; AAA Panel of Arbitrators
- Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA)
- Hennepin County Bar Association (HCBA)

Publications

- Author, *Brownson Norby, PLLC: Taking the Lead in Promoting Women in the Workplace*, Brownson Norby, PLLC, 2017, www.BrownsonNorby.com/publications
- Co-author, *Current and Historical American and Selected State Asbestos Regulations, 2017 Update*, Brownson Norby, PLLC, 2017, www.BrownsonNorby.com/publications
- Author, *Case Dismissed or Maybe Not?*, Brownson Norby, PLLC, 2016, www.BrownsonNorby.com/publications
- Co-author, *North Dakota Supreme Court Issues Important Decision Clarifying Standard of Care of Insurance Agents*, Minnesota Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Association, April 5, 2016, newsletter

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- Presenter, Insurer and Defense Counsel Meeting, *“Personal Jurisdiction, New Rulings from the United States’ Supreme Court, and the Impact on Asbestos Litigation,”* November 1, 2017.
- Presenter, Insurer and Defense Counsel Meeting, *“Intensive Analysis of Future Asbestos Litigation Issues,”* November 5, 2014