

Snell & Wilmer



Patricia Lee Refo

Partner | Phoenix

Tel. 602.382.6290

prefo@swlaw.com

Main Bio

Trish Refo is the President-Elect of the American Bar Association. Her practice is concentrated in complex commercial litigation and internal investigations, with extensive experience in professional malpractice defense, commercial and business torts, financial institutions litigation, class actions and trade secret litigation. She chairs the firm's Professional Liability Litigation group. Trish is a sought-after speaker at international, national, state and local continuing legal education conferences. A thought leader on litigation and trial issues, Trish has been named one of the most influential women lawyers in the country. She has served as Chair of the ABA House of Delegates and the ABA Section of Litigation. Trish served on the Arizona Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on the Rules of Evidence, and is a former member of the Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Evidence of the United States Judicial Conference.

Representative Matters

- Obtained defense verdict for "Am Law 200" law firm on malpractice and breach of fiduciary duty claims
- Obtained summary judgment for "Am Law 100" law firm on malpractice and related claims
- Defended major accounting firm in arbitration
- Represented numerous clients in securities and consumer fraud class actions
- Obtained dismissal of breach of fiduciary duty claims against large foundation and defended dismissal on appeal
- Obtained unanimous Arizona Supreme Court opinion interpreting voter referendum
- Conducted internal investigations for clients in numerous industries

Education

- University of Michigan School of Law (J.D., cum laude, 1983)
- University of Michigan (B.A., high honors and high distinction, 1980)

Professional Memberships & Activities

- United States Judicial Conference
 - Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Evidence (2000-2006)
(appt'd by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist)
- Arizona Supreme Court

- Advisory Committee on Rules of Evidence (2010-present)
- Business Courts Advisory Committee (2014-2015)
- American Bar Association
 - President-Elect (2019)
 - ABA Day in Washington
 - Chair (2016-2018)
 - House of Delegates
 - Chair (2014-2016)
 - Executive Committee (2014-2016)
 - Section of Litigation
 - Chair (2003-2004)
 - Executive Committee (1994-2010)
 - Standing Committee on Membership (2008-2012)
 - Chair (2008-2011)
 - American Jury Project
 - Chair (2004-2005)
 - Special Consultant and Member (2005-2014)
 - Commission on Civic Education and the Separation of Powers (2005-2007)
- American Bar Endowment, Director (2009-2014)
- ALI Litigation Advisory Panel (2008-present)
- National Association of Women Lawyers
 - Committee for the Evaluation of Supreme Court Nominees, Co-Chair (2005-2014)
- Commercial Lending Litigation News, LRP Publications
 - Board of Advisors (1989-present)
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, Fellow
- American Law Institute

Representative Presentations & Publications

Trish Refo is a frequent speaker at continuing legal education programs and has appeared in more than 100 programs in the United States and internationally.

- "[ABA forms group to identify solutions, provide resources for post COVID-19 legal landscape,](#)" Quoted, American Bar Association Press Release (May 13, 2020)
- "Updates, Strategies, and Coping Techniques for Addressing Diversity Issues During COVID-19," Presenter, Law School Admissions Council (May 1, 2020)
- "[ABA Board of Governors Backs Limited Practice For Recent Law School Grads as They Await Bar Exam,](#)" Quoted, ABA Journal (April 7, 2020)
- "[Phoenix Business Journal honors Outstanding Women in Business for 2020,](#)" Featured, Phoenix Business Journal (March 9, 2020)

- ABA Tax Section Midyear Meeting Plenary Luncheon, Speaker, Boca Raton, FL (February 1, 2020)
- "Fast Forward — The Practice of Law in 2040," Speaker, Loyola University Law School, Chicago, IL (November 20, 2019)
- National Convention of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, Speaker, Austin, TX (November 10, 2019)
- ABA Section of Infrastructure and Regulated Industries, Speaker (October 21, 2019)
- Annual Forum on the Entertainment and Sports Industries, Speaker, Las Vegas, NV (October 15, 2019)
- National Conference for Lawyer Assistance Programs, Speaker, Austin, TX (October 2019)
- "Honoring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor," Moderator, ABA Section of Litigation, Scottsdale, AZ (October 2019)
- "Building Trial Skills," Keynote Speaker, National Institute for Trial Advocacy, San Diego, CA (October 2019)
- "[Trish Refo Named ABA President-Elect](#)," Featured, Michigan Law, University of Michigan (September 24, 2019)
- "[ABA Welcomes New Leadership](#)," Featured, American Bar Association August 2019 Washington Letter (August 21, 2019)
- "[Toward Legal Profession Gender Equality](#)," Arizona Attorney (February 2019)
- "[ABA Day lobbying focused on Legal Services Corp., student loan forgiveness](#)," Quoted, ABA Journal (June 2018)
- "[Splitting the Ninth Circuit](#)," Arizona Attorney (July/August 2017)
- "[ABA Midyear Meeting 2015: House of Delegates with Trish Refo](#)," Podcast Interview, Legal Talk Network (February 18, 2015)
- "Investigation of the Case, Business and Commercial Litigation in Federal Courts," Third Edition, West Publishing (2011)
- "A Roadmap for Trials: The Ethical Treatment of Jurors," 36 Stetson L. Rev. 821 (2007)
- "Revitalizing the Jury System," The Delaware Lawyer (Fall 2005)
- "Trial Rescue," Litigation (Summer 2004)
- "The Vanishing Trial," Litigation (Winter 2004)
- "Pinching Pennies, Squeezing Justice," Litigation (Fall 2003)
- "Training the Next Generation of Lawyers," Litigation (Summer 2003)
- "Closing Argument: A String of Pearls," Litigation (Fall 1998)
- "Class Action Controversies," Co-Author, Practising Law Institute (1992, 1994)
- "Notice to the Class," Co-Author, Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education (1986, Supplements 1990, 1992, 1996)

Professional Recognition & Awards

- Outstanding Women in Business Award, Phoenix Business Journal (2020)
- The Best Lawyers in America[®], Commercial Litigation, Legal Malpractice Law - Defendants (2003-2020), Bet-the-Company Litigation (2003-2015), Corporate Law (2003-2013)

- Phoenix Lawyer of the Year, Legal Malpractice Law (2012)
- Southwest Super Lawyers[®], Business Litigation (2007-2020)
- Who's Who Legal, Commercial Litigation (2008-2018)
- Maricopa County Bar Association Hall of Fame (2017)
- President's Award, State Bar of Arizona (2014)
- ABA Jury System Impact Award (2009)
- The 50 Most Influential Women Lawyers in America, The National Law Journal (May 2007)
- Distinguished Achievement Award, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (2007)
- William Reese Smith Jr. Distinguished Lecturer in Litigation Ethics, Stetson Law School (2006)

Community Involvement

- University of Michigan College of Literature, Science & the Arts, Honors Alumni Council (2016-present)
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, Council Member (Arizona Representative)
- Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce
 - Director (2005-2011)
- Arizona Foundation for Women, Director (1999-2005)
- Arizona Academic Decathlon Association
 - Director (1997-2001)
- The Episcopal Parish of St. Barnabas on the Desert
 - Finance Committee (2011-present)
 - Senior Warden (2008-2011)

Other Professional Experience

- Jenner & Block, Chicago, Illinois, Partner (1990-1996), Associate (1983-1990)

Bar Admissions

- Arizona
- Illinois

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of Arizona
- Supreme Court of Illinois
- United States District Court, District of Arizona
- United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit