

# Snell & Wilmer

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## Patricia Lee Refo

Partner | Phoenix

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### Main Bio

Trish Refo is the Immediate Past President 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 (2020-2021)
  - 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 Supports Universal Background Checks, Other Proposals to Curb Gun Violence, Lawmakers Told](#)," Quoted, American Bar Association Journal (March 30, 2021)
- "[Tech Issues Hobble U.S. Tenants Fighting Eviction in Remote Hearings](#)," Quoted, Thomson Reuters Foundation News (March 30, 2021)
- "[American Bar Association Slams Trump Supporters' Assault on US Capitol](#)," Quoted, The Global Legal Post (January 7, 2021)
- "[ABA President Condemns Mob Assault on Capitol as Rep. Gohmert Asks SCOTUS to Stop Pence](#),"

Quoted, ABA Journal (January 6, 2021)

- "[ABA Study Wonders Why Jury Trials 'Disappear' to Alternatives,](#)" Quoted, Law Week Colorado (January 5, 2021)
- "[Study Examines Decline in Civil and Criminal Jury Trials and How to Bring Them Back,](#)" Quoted, ABA Journal (January 5, 2021)
- "[Legal Sector Regulatory Reform Is Key To Closing Justice Gap,](#)" Author, Law360 (January 4, 2021)
- "[3 Things For Lawyers To Know About New COVID-19 Aid Deal,](#)" Quoted, Law360 (December 22, 2020)
- "[Laws Are Killing Jury Trials, Hurting Due Process, Study Says,](#)" Quoted, Law360 (December 18, 2020)
- "[Congress Must Act to Protect Federal Judges,](#)" Author, The Boston Herald (November 28, 2020)
- "[ABA, Law Schools Study Legal Issues in Policing, Public Safety,](#)" Quoted, Grand Rapids Legal News (November 25, 2020)
- "[Report Looks at Roadblocks Among Women Lawyers, Offers Tips,](#)" Quoted, Grand Rapids Legal News (November 25, 2020)
- "[The Pandemic and the Opportunity For Reform With President of the American Bar Association Patricia Lee Refo,](#)" Reimagining Justice Podcast (October 2020)
- "[Women Lawyers Face Racial Roadblocks in Gender Diversity Push, ABA Study Finds,](#)" Quoted, The Global Legal Post (October 28, 2020)
- "[Six-Figure Debt Loads Taking 'Mental Toll' on US Law Students, ABA Study Finds,](#)" Quoted, The Global Legal Post (October 27, 2020)
- "[ABA Says School Debt Forces New Attys Into Unwanted Jobs,](#)" Quoted, Law360 (October 26, 2020)
- "[ASU Collaborates With ABA, Other Law Schools on Legal Issues in Policing, Public Safety,](#)" Quoted, ASU Now (October 26, 2020)
- "[ASU Law School Joins Group To Examine Legal Issues In Policing,](#)" Quoted, Patch.com (October 26, 2020)
- "[Becoming Notorious: RBG's Impact on Litigations and Dissents,](#)" Panelist, American Bar Association CLE (October 21, 2020)
- "[ABA, Law Schools Study Legal Issues In Policing, Public Safety,](#)" Quoted, Macomb County Legal News
- "[How the Pandemic is Transforming the Courts and the Legal Industry,](#)" Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Podcast (October 16, 2020)
- "[ABA, Nebraska Law, Other Schools to Develop Model Policy for Police,](#)" Quoted, The Daily Record (October 14, 2020)
- "[ABA Collaborates With Law Schools on Legal Issues in Policing, Public Safety,](#)" Quoted, American Bar Association Legal News (October 12, 2020)
- "[Point of View: Tenants, Landlords Both Need Help During Pandemic, ABA Says,](#)" Author, The Palm Beach Post (October 12, 2020)
- "[A Democracy in Search of First Responders,](#)" Quoted, North Carolina Lawyers Weekly (October 7, 2020)
- "[Relief for Drowning Renters, Landlords Must be Priority,](#)" Author, Waco-Tribune Heard (October 7,

2020)

- "[ABA Encourages Attorneys and Law Students to Volunteer as Poll Workers](#)," Quoted, The National Law Review (September 29, 2020)
- "[RBG: A Special Friend to the ABA](#)," Speaker, American Bar Association Video Tribute (September 28, 2020)
- "[Congress Needs to Help Tenants and Landlords](#)," Author, The New York Times (September 27, 2020)
- "[Lawyers Group Wants Senate to Slow Amy Coney Barrett's Nomination](#)," Quoted, The Washington Times (September 27, 2020)
- "[In Email Atty-Client Privilege Battle, House Sides With Inmates](#)," Quoted, Law360 (September 27, 2020)
- "[Constitution Series: Equality And Justice For All "A More Or Less Perfect Union"](#)," Guest Moderator, The O'Connor Institute Webinar (September 24, 2020)
- "[Facing a Possible Shortage, Connecticut Wants Lawyers to Work as Poll Workers For Presidential Election on Nov. 3](#)," Quoted, Hartford Courant (September 23, 2020)
- "[What Ruth Bader Ginsburg Meant to Us](#)," Speaker, Legal Talk Network Podcast (September 21, 2020)
- "'The Best of the Best' - Lawyers Pay Tribute to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg," Quoted, The Global Legal Post (September 21, 2020)
- "[Lawyers, It's Time to Step Up to the Plate and Be Poll Workers](#)," Author, The Daily Journal (September 11, 2020)
- "[CLE Available For Work on Election Day](#)," Quoted, Virginia Lawyers Weekly (September 7, 2020)
- Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, Keynote Speaker (August 29, 2020)
- "Back to School in the Time of COVID-19: Civil Rights Implications as Children Return to School," Welcome Remarks, ABA Section on Civil Rights and Social Justice Webinar (August 28, 2020)
- "[Outstanding Women in Business 2020: Patricia Lee Refo, Snell & Wilmer](#)," Featured, Phoenix Business Journal (August 27, 2020)
- "Access to Counsel in Immigration Detention in the Time of COVID-19," Welcome Remarks, Commission on Immigration Webinar (August 26, 2020)
- "[The Great Unfinished Fight: A Conversation with Judge M. Margaret McKeown and Elaine Weiss](#)," Opening Remarks, ABA Commission on the 19th Amendment Webinar (August 24, 2020)
- "[Gavel Passes to New President of ABA](#)," Featured, Minnesota Lawyer (August 10, 2020)
- "[Legal Deserts Threaten Justice In Rural America](#)," Author, Law360 (August 9, 2020)
- "Women In Law Dialogue Series: Is COVID-19 Taking Women Lawyers' Careers Back to the 1950's?" Speaker, In-House Community Webinar (August 6, 2020)
- "[Snell & Wilmer's Refo Becomes President of the American Bar Association](#)," Featured, Arizona Business Magazine (August 5, 2020)
- "[Valley Attorney Elected President of American Bar Association](#)," Featured, Phoenix Business Journal (August 5, 2020)
- "[Forum on Increasing Access to Justice](#)," Speaker, Legal Services Corporation Webinar (August 5, 2020)

- ["Meet ABA's New President: Patricia Refo,"](#) Featured, Law360 (August 4, 2020)
- ["Outgoing ABA President Passes Gavel; New Leadership Outlines Priorities,"](#) Featured, American Bar Association News (August 3, 2020)
- ["Building a Better Legal Profession: Diversity, Inclusion, Technology, and the Teams of Tomorrow,"](#) Co-Presented as Panelist, Center for Women in Law Webinar (June 3, 2020)
- ["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

- AzBusiness Leaders 2021, AZ Big Media
- Outstanding Women in Business Award, Phoenix Business Journal (2020)
- The Best Lawyers in America<sup>®</sup>, Commercial Litigation, Legal Malpractice Law - Defendants (2003-2022), Bet-the-Company Litigation (2003-2015), Corporate Law (2003-2013)
  - Phoenix Lawyer of the Year, Legal Malpractice Law (2012)
- Southwest Super Lawyers<sup>®</sup>, Business Litigation (2007-2021)
- 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)

## Previous 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