

Deborah A. Skakel | Partner
Business Litigation

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CO-CHAIR, NEW YORK OFFICE

Debbie Skakel maintains an active litigation and counseling practice in which she couples the street smarts of a business lawyer with the skills of a litigator.

Debbie has significant experience in state and federal courts and arbitration tribunals throughout the country. Business clients have turned to Debbie for more than 25 years when they need a strategically aggressive litigator who will prevail at trial, while providing sound and pragmatic business advice throughout the matter. In addition, Debbie is nationally recognized for her work on behalf of clients in the alcohol beverage industry, and frequently asked to speak on matters affecting that highly regulated industry.

Outside The Firm

An avid fan of the University of Alabama Crimson Tide, the New York Yankees, the New York Rangers, and the New England Patriots, Debbie manages our New York Office's Softball Team. She and her husband (who is also a litigator) live in Harlem and have three grown children.

Select Engagements

- Representing a European company in a multibillion-dollar money laundering case.
- Represented wine and spirits wholesalers across the country in cross-border shipping cases, including those in the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, and Ninth Circuits as well as the groundbreaking SCOTUS *Granholm* case.

- Represented the U.S. distributor of a brand of cycling apparel in a partnership dispute.
- Representing alcohol beverage distributors in a Sherman Act preemption action challenging several pricing statutes.
- Represented a fine and rare wine auction company in a multimillion-dollar counterfeit wine case.
- Represented a major shopping center developer and obtained an historic injunction ordering a bank to continue funding the billion-dollar development project of a private-public partnership.
- Represented America's oldest, continuously operating real estate company in a lengthy arbitration in which control of the management of several iconic buildings in New York City was at stake.
- Represented a U.S. company in its successful lawsuit against Yassar Arafat and the PLO regarding the issuance of a telecommunications franchise in the West Bank and Gaza.

Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court - Western District of New York
- New York
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
- U.S. District Court - Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court - Northern District of New York
- U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- New York City Bar Association
- New York State Bar Association

Education

- Syracuse University, BA, magna cum laude
- Cornell Law School, JD

Recognitions

- 2020, Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award, by the City Bar Justice Center
- 2014–2020, New York “Super Lawyer” in Business Litigation, listed in *Super Lawyers*

- 2014, New York Center for Law and Justice Access to Justice Award

Professional Activities

Debbie is a member of the American Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association, and the Association for the Bar of the City of New York, where she provides pro bono services for the City Bar Justice Center's Elder Law and Cancer Advocacy Project.

In addition to serving as the co-chair of the New York Office, Debbie serves as chair of Blank Rome's Women's Forum, is a member of the Firm's Partner Board, Lateral Recruiting Committee, Nominating Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee, and assists in the Firm's General Counsel's office.