

Kierstan L. Carlson | Associate
Maritime

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Kierstan Carlson helps corporate and individual clients navigate a wide range of white collar and complex civil litigation matters. She has substantial experience as the lead associate coordinating responses to subpoenas and civil investigative demands, and conducting parallel internal investigations. She also is proficient in all aspects of federal civil litigation, particularly pretrial motions and discovery.

Kierstan has significant experience defending clients in maritime environmental criminal cases involving MARPOL and the Clean Water Act, as well as in civil and administrative enforcement actions involving the False Claims Act and other regulatory violations.

Kierstan's practice also involves helping businesses rebound from and improve in the wake of criminal prosecutions and enforcement actions. She advises clients on implementing and auditing compliance programs and managing potential suspension and debarment issues.

Representative Matters

- Lead associate handling responses to grand jury subpoenas and managing parallel internal investigations of alleged environmental crimes for major cruise line and foreign oil tanker company.
- Lead associate in criminal Clean Water Act case involving cargo shipping company.
- Lead associate in FCA investigation involving nutrition supplement company, including response to CID and related Notice of Debarment.

- Lead associate handling responses to subpoenas from the State Department OIG and DOJ relating to alleged FCA and AKA violations by government contractor.
- Lead associate in APA action against DHS and CBP challenging \$15 million penalty, and in CBP enforcement action against large surety company for collection of unpaid duties.
- Lead associate conducting internal investigations and preparing voluntary disclosures of FCPA and OFAC violations by various shipping companies.

Pro Bono

Kierstan devotes a substantial amount of time to pro bono work. She is passionate about representing clients in asylum matters pending before USCIS and federal immigration courts. Several of Kierstan's clients have been granted asylum and are on their way to becoming permanent U.S. residents. And, in 2018, she received a "Pro Bono Star Award" from Human Rights First for her work on behalf of refugees from Central America.

Kierstan also has represented pro bono clients in child custody and landlord-tenant matters, and advocated on behalf of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

Personal Background

Kierstan earned her undergraduate degree from Brown University and graduated *cum laude* from the American University Washington College of Law. During law school, she served as an articles editor for the American University International Law Review, a student attorney in the Criminal Justice Clinic, and a Meyers Distinguished Teaching Fellow for the Legal Rhetoric Program. She also worked as a law clerk at the United States Attorney's Office in Camden, New Jersey. Prior to law school, Kierstan worked as a paralegal and international trade policy analyst.

Outside The Firm

A long-retired D1 lacrosse player, Kierstan is now a SoulCycle enthusiast and enjoys yoga, hiking, and skiing.

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- U.S. Circuit Court - District of Columbia
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Virginia
- United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States Court of Federal Claims
- United States Court of International Trade

- Virginia

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Virginia Bar Association
- Women's International Shipping & Trading Association

Education

- Brown University, AB
- American University, Washington College of Law, JD, cum laude

Recognitions

- 2018–2019, Washington, D.C. “Rising Star” in White Collar Crimes, listed in *Super Lawyers*
- 2018, “Pro Bono Star” award, Human Rights First
- 2017–2018, listed in Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll, High Honors

Professional Activities

Kierstan is participating in a Women’s Initiative through Koch Industries, which is designed to promote the use of women lawyers from law firms on the company’s approved list of outside counsel. She also is a member of the Women's International Shipping and Trade Association (“WISTA”).

Internally, Kierstan is a member of the Firm’s Associates Committee, Pro Bono Committee, and Women’s Forum.