

Kierstan L. Carlson | Partner
Maritime

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Kierstan Carlson helps corporate and individual clients navigate a wide range of white collar enforcement actions and complex civil litigation matters.

A significant portion of Kierstan's practice is focused on the shipping industry. She defends clients in maritime criminal cases involving MARPOL, the Clean Water Act, the Ports and Waterways Safety Act, and the Seaman's Manslaughter Act.

Kierstan also advises clients in criminal and civil enforcement actions involving the False Claims Act, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, customs fraud, and other regulatory violations, as well as in civil fraud litigation in federal and state courts in the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

An important aspect of Kierstan's practice is working with businesses to implement and audit compliance programs in order to rebound from and improve in the wake of criminal prosecutions and civil penalty actions. Where applicable, she works closely with the firm's Government Contracts practice to manage potential suspension and debarment issues.

PRO BONO

Kierstan is passionate about providing pro bono representation within her community. She regularly represents clients in asylum matters pending before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 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 has represented pro bono clients in a variety of other matters, including a federal criminal case, and child custody and landlord-tenant matters. She also has 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 now keeps active through spinning, 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

- 2018–2022, Washington, D.C., “Rising Star” in White Collar Crimes, listed in *Super Lawyers*
- 2018, “Pro Bono Star” award, Human Rights First

- 2017–2021, listed in Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll or High Honor Roll

Professional Activities

Kierstan is a member of Women's International Shipping and Trade Association ("WISTA"), as well as the D.C. Young Lawyers Committee of the Women in Law Empowerment Forum. She also participates in the Koch Industries Women's Initiative, which promotes the use of women lawyers from law firms on the company's approved list of outside counsel.

Internally, Kierstan is a member of the firm's Recruiting and Pro Bono Committees, and its Women's Forum.