

Alesia S. Sulock

Shareholder

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Alesia is a member of the Professional Liability Department where she focuses her practice on the defense of claims made and suits brought against a variety of professionals. She regularly defends attorneys in legal malpractice claims, wrongful use of civil proceedings claims, abuse of process claims and disciplinary matters. Alesia handles a wide variety of real estate matters, including defending real estate agents, appraisers and title agents in litigation and disciplinary matters, and advising corporate clients on real estate and property matters. Additionally, she defends other professionals, including accountants, non-profit organizations and directors and officers, and provides representation in commercial litigation matters.

Alesia regularly presents on risk management and legal malpractice avoidance topics for attorneys throughout Pennsylvania. She publishes extensively in this area as well, including co-authoring a recurring column in *The Legal Intelligencer* on professional liability themes. She is an active member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Professional Liability Committee and Ethics Committee. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Professional Liability Defense Federation.

In 2012, Alesia earned her *juris doctor* from the Villanova University School of Law where she graduated *cum laude*. While in law school, she was on the executive board of the Villanova Law Moot Court Board and ran the annual Theodore L. Reimel Moot Court Competition. Prior to attending law school, Alesia worked as a corporate underwriter for a mortgage company in Philadelphia, PA.

Alesia attended St. Joseph's University as an undergraduate, and she graduated *magna cum laude* in 2006. She received several academic honors including the Presidential Scholarship and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

Practices

- Lawyers' Professional Liability
- Disciplinary Board Representation
- Real Estate E&O Liability
- Miscellaneous Professional Liability
- Commercial Litigation
- Accountants' Professional Liability

Education

- Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2012)
- Saint Joseph's University (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 2006)

Admissions

- New Jersey, 2012
- Pennsylvania, 2012
- U.S. District Court District of New Jersey, 2012
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 2014
- U.S. District Court Middle District of Pennsylvania, 2016

Honors & Awards

- AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®
- The Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch®, Commercial Litigation (2024-2025)
- Pennsylvania Super Lawyers Rising Star (2021-2023)

Associations & Memberships

- International Association of Defense Counsel
- Pennsylvania Bar Association, Professional Liability Committee, Ethics Committee
- Philadelphia Bar Association, Professional Responsibility Committee
- Professional Liability Defense Federation, Board of Directors
- Professional Liability Defense Federation, Professional Liability Committee

Classes/Seminars Taught

- *Attorney Well-Being as a Matter of Professional Competence*, Professional Liability Defense Federation Annual Meeting, September 26, 2024
- *The Defense of Appellate Counsel in Legal Malpractice Actions*, Client Seminar, June 4, 2024
- *Avoiding Legal Malpractice*, Monroe County Bar Association, June 25, 2024
- *The Assessment of Damages in Professional Liability Claims*, ILG Live Webinar, May 29, 2024
- *Socially Responsible: How to Ethically Use Social Media in Your Practice*, Attorney Protective, CLE Webinar, May 22, 2024
- *The Business of Law*, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, April 9, 2024
- *The Business and Ethics Basics of Law Firm Management 2024*, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, January 26, 2024
- *Defending and Avoiding Disciplinary Complaints*, Professional Liability Defense Federation Annual Meeting, September 2023
- *Avoiding Legal Malpractice*, Dauphin County Bar Association, August 2023
- *Avoiding Legal Malpractice*, Pennsylvania Bar Association, June 2023
- *Malpractice Avoidance*, Pennsylvania Association of Elder Law Attorneys Winter Conference, February 2023
- *Legal Malpractice Avoidance*, Monroe County Bar Association, June 16, 2021
- *Avoiding Legal Malpractice*, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, June 9, 2021

- *Trends in Claims Against Lawyers*, Client Seminar, July 2018 and January 2019

Published Works

- "Ethical Remote Practice of Law in a Post-Pandemic World," *The Legal Intelligencer*, September 15, 2026
- "Whither the Private Reprimand," *The Legal Intelligencer*, July 22, 2026
- "What's the Gist of the Gist of the Action in Pennsylvania?" *The Legal Intelligencer*, May 14, 2026
- "The Distinction Between Abuse of Process and Wrongful Use of Civil Proceedings," *The Legal Intelligencer*, March 16, 2026
- "Your Engagement Agreement as a Defense Against Fee Disputes," *The Legal Intelligencer*, November 17, 2025
- "The Barrier to Legal Malpractice Cases Arising Out of Class Action Settlements," *The Legal Intelligencer*, May 19, 2025
- "'Clear and Convincing' Is the New Standard for Attorney Disciplinary Matters" *The Legal Intelligencer*, March 17, 2025
- "What Are Forbidden Sexual Relations With Clients?" *The Legal Intelligencer*, November 18, 2024
- "Attorney Well-Being Doesn't Have to Be Spooky: Steps Attorneys Can Take to Support Mental, Emotional and Physical Health," *PLUS Blog*, October 29, 2024
- "Socially Responsible Lawyers: Why You Need to Understand Social Media to Competently Represent Your Clients (Part 1)," *The Legal Intelligencer*, September 18, 2024
- "'But I Could Have Gotten More!' Damages Speculation in Legal Malpractice Cases," *The Legal Intelligencer*, July 15, 2024
- "Your Well-Being Matters: Attorney Mental Health and Professional Competence," *The Legal Intelligencer*, May 15, 2024
- "Relevancy and Its Limits," "General Admissibility of Relevant Evidence," "Exclusion of Relevant Evidence," "Character Evidence; Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts," and "Methods of Proving Character," *Ohlbaum on the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence*, 2024, Contributing Author
- "Restricting Restrictions: When Attorney Employment Agreements Run Afoul of the Rules of Professional Conduct," *The Legal Intelligencer*, March 21, 2024
- "Risk Management in the Practice of Law," *AttPro Ally*, Attorney Protective newsletter, February 27, 2024
- "Probable Cause as a Matter of Law in Dragonetti Cases," *The Legal Intelligencer*, November 17, 2023
- "You Diligently Protect Your Clients; What About You? Part 2 (The Middle and the End)," *The Legal Intelligencer*, September 15, 2023
- "You Diligently Protect Your Clients; What About You? Part 1 (The Beginning)," *The Legal Intelligencer*, July 14, 2023
- "Why Your Mental Health Matters to the Disciplinary Board," *The Legal Intelligencer*, May 16, 2023
- "When Disciplinary Counsel Knocks on Your Door, How Do You Respond?" *The Legal Intelligencer*, March 20, 2023
- "The Attorney-Client Relationship: Keeping the Lines of Communication Open," *PLUS Blog*, May 9, 2022
- "Engagement Agreements As A Legal Malpractice Avoidance Tool," *The Pennsylvania Lawyer*, March/April 2022 Edition
- "Reinstating the Two-Year Statute of Limitations for Legal Malpractice Claims," *The*

Legal Intelligencer, April 15, 2021

- "Ten Ways to Avoid Committing Legal Malpractice in a Pandemic," *PLUS Blog*, January 18, 2021
- "Responsive Pleadings," *Pennsylvania Civil Pre-Trial Practice*, 2018 - present, Reviewing Author
- "Common Evidentiary Issues at Trial," *Pennsylvania Civil Trial Practice*, 2018, Reviewing Author, 2019 - present, Contributing Author
- "Pennsylvania Legal Malpractice Claims: Moving Away From a (Nearly) Automatic Four-Year Statute of Limitations," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2018
- *Pennsylvania Legal Malpractice Handbook*, 2017 Edition, 2019 Edition, Published by Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin, Co-author
- *Case Law Alerts*, regular contributor, 2015-present

Significant Representative Matters

- Obtained summary judgment in numerous complex legal malpractice matters on the basis that plaintiffs' claims were barred by the statute of limitations following application of the discovery rule.
- Obtained a defense verdict following a three week jury trial in a complex legal malpractice action, arising from allegations of an attorney's failure to provide competent representation resulting in the loss of an underlying claim against a car dealership auditing company, purportedly causing twenty million dollars in damages.
- Obtained a defense verdict on behalf of an attorney accused of inadequately representing a police officer in a grievance proceeding following his dismissal from the police force.
- Obtained summary judgment in a complex legal malpractice matter arising from an underlying telecommunications litigation which spanned thirteen years and included two appeals.
- Obtained dismissal of plaintiff's legal malpractice claims arising from an underlying release and medical malpractice claim, on the eve of trial, based on arguments made in a dispositive motion in limine.
- Obtained affirmance on appeal of the dismissal of claims against an attorney pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure 233.1.
- Successfully represented clients in numerous disciplinary matters, resulting in findings of no discipline.

Results

Unanimous Appellate Decision Preserves Defense Win in Legal Malpractice Suit

We successfully defended an appeal from a jury verdict previously secured by members of our Lawyers' Professional Liability Department in favor of the firm's client in a legal malpractice case. The plaintiffs initially asserted multiple tort claims and a claim under the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law, which were dismissed by the trial court upon partial grant of the defense's motion for judgment on the pleadings. The case proceeded to trial on a remaining breach of contract claim, resulting in a defense verdict. On appeal, the plaintiffs challenged the trial court's rulings on both the motion for judgment on the pleadings and a motion *in limine* related to evidentiary exclusions. The Pennsylvania Superior Court unanimously affirmed the trial court's rulings, holding that

the tort claims were time-barred and that the plaintiffs had waived their evidentiary argument by failing to properly develop it in their appellate brief.

Defense Verdict Secured in Legal Malpractice Case

We won a defense verdict in a legal malpractice case arising from an underlying civil rights claim. The plaintiff was arrested in August 2015 following a physical altercation with her daughter and her daughter's friends. The plaintiff alleged that, while she was being searched at the Philadelphia Police Detention Unit, a City employee struck her, causing her to fall into a "split" and suffer a hamstring avulsion. The defendant attorneys represented the plaintiff in a lawsuit against the City. The plaintiff was never able, during the underlying case, to identify the employee who allegedly assaulted her. She did not respond to communications from the defendant attorneys regarding the arbitration award and the appellate deadline; thus, no appeal was filed. During the legal malpractice trial, we presented evidence that the plaintiff could not have won the underlying case-within-the-case because she lacked corroborating evidence of the alleged assault. We also presented evidence that the plaintiff could not prove damages arising from the alleged injury. The court agreed and entered a defense verdict following a bench trial.

Defense Jury Verdict in Philadelphia on a Legal Malpractice Claim

The plaintiffs had hired our attorney client to represent them in a property damage case against contractors and an insurance company after, as they claimed, the roof of their property was left open and water damage was sustained. The plaintiffs argued that their attorney failed to faithfully represent them and caused them to lose their claims against the contractors. After a week-long trial, we successfully proved that our attorney client did not cause the plaintiffs to lose the underlying claims, and we obtained a unanimous defense verdict in favor of the attorney defendant and his law firm.

Unanimous Defense Verdict in Legal Malpractice Case

We secured a unanimous defense verdict in a legal malpractice case stemming from underlying property damage litigation. The plaintiffs rejected a \$350,000 settlement before the jury found for our client.

Claims against real estate agent dismissed.

Our attorneys obtained dismissal of claims against a real estate agent arising from the agent's representation of a buyer in connection with the purchase of a home in Philadelphia. Following the purchase of the property, the buyer discovered numerous undisclosed issues with the home and commenced suit against the seller and the seller's agent. In turn, the seller's agent joined our client, the buyer's agent, alleging it was actually the buyer's agent who should be liable on the buyer's claims for negligence, violation of the Pennsylvania Seller's Disclosure Law, breach of contract, negligent representation and fraud. On preliminary objections, we argued that the plaintiff's conclusory allegations did not give rise to valid claims, that a buyer's agent cannot be liable under the Seller's Disclosure Law without actual knowledge of a material defect which was not disclosed, that the joinder complaint did not adequately allege that the buyer's agent made any misrepresentations, and that there were no allegations adequate to suggest the buyer's agent breached his statutory duties under the law. The

Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas agreed, sustaining the preliminary objections and dismissing the joinder complaint.

Accounting Malpractice Claim Barred by Statute of Limitations

We obtained dismissal of an accounting malpractice claim on preliminary objections in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. The plaintiffs alleged that their accountant improperly prepared their tax returns—as married filing jointly—and failed to claim business losses, that resulted in an unexpected tax liability being owed. Although the plaintiffs attempted to rely on the discovery rule to toll the statute of limitations, the defense successfully argued that the plaintiffs were on notice of the alleged negligence by the time they received the prepared tax returns, and that their failure to investigate potential claims at that time was a failure to exercise due diligence as a matter of law. We further argued that because they were under a duty to investigate earlier, the plaintiffs could not successfully allege that they could not have known of their claims until they hired a tax attorney to investigate. Because the plaintiffs did not bring their negligence claim until more than two years after they received their prepared tax returns, their claims were barred by the Statute of Limitations.

Dismissal of All Claims Against Attorney in a Consumer Rights Lawsuit

The plaintiff was named as a defendant in a debt collection action for failing to pay her attorney's legal bills. Judgment was entered against her but never fully enforced. More than five years later, our client filed a Praecipe to Issue Writ of Revival and then mistakenly filed a Praecipe for Writ of Execution before the judgment was revived by the court. Although the Sheriff's Sale of the plaintiff's home never proceeded, she nonetheless sued our client for due process violations, abuse of process, conspiracy, negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the Fair Credit Extension Uniformity Act. Most of the claims were dismissed early in the proceedings. Thereafter, we successfully argued in a summary judgment motion that the plaintiff failed to adduce evidence that our client acted in a manner to harass, oppress or abuse her, or that our client engaged in any other activity in violation of the FDCPA or FCEUA. The court agreed and dismissed the plaintiff's remaining claims.

Successful Outcome in Legal Malpractice Action

We obtained summary judgment in a legal malpractice action in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. The plaintiff, a Philadelphia police officer, was arrested after failing to appear in court following a hit-and-run car accident involving his motor vehicle. After proving that he was not the driver of the vehicle, the charges were dismissed. The plaintiff then sought damages from the township, police department and individual police officers for alleged violations of his civil rights. Our client, an attorney, represented the plaintiff in connection with responding to summary judgment and appealing the dismissal of his civil rights claims. When the dismissal of the plaintiff's claims was affirmed, he sued the attorney for alleged malpractice. We successfully argued on summary judgment that the plaintiff's claims were time-barred and failed as a matter of law because the plaintiff could not have prevailed in the underlying litigation. In fact, the plaintiff brought similar civil rights claims in three separate lawsuits, all of which failed. The court agreed,

dismissing the legal malpractice claims as time-barred and further stating that, even if they were not barred by the Statute of Limitations, the plaintiff's claims failed as a matter of law because he cannot demonstrate that he would have prevailed but for something the attorney did or failed to do.

Successful Defense of Law Firm Against Legal Malpractice Cross Claims Emerging from Underlying Litigation

We obtained summary judgment in a legal malpractice action in Lancaster County. We represented a law firm in the defense of legal malpractice cross-claims arising during underlying litigation. The plaintiff, an environmental consulting company, sued landowners for allegedly withholding information relevant to the clean-up of gasoline spill(s) on the landowners' property. The landowners sued their attorneys, our clients, claiming that any liability on their part was due to malpractice committed in negotiating the contract between the landowners and the consultant. We successfully argued on summary judgment that the consulting company knew or should have known the allegedly withheld information years earlier, based largely on testimony obtained during the plaintiff's deposition. The court agreed, dismissing not only the legal malpractice claims due to lack of causation, but also the consulting company's claims against its former clients on the basis of the statute of limitations.

Thought Leadership

September 16, 2026

Ethical Remote Practice of Law in a Post-Pandemic World

July 29, 2026

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Takes Up the Gist of the Action Doctrine

May 14, 2026

What's the Gist of the Gist of the Action in Pennsylvania?

March 16, 2026

The Distinction Between Abuse of Process and Wrongful Use of Civil Proceedings

March 1, 2026

No Certificate of Merit Requirement in Federal Court

November 17, 2025

Your Engagement Agreement as a Defense Against Fee Disputes

September 19, 2025

Status of 'Gist of the Action' in Legal Malpractice Claims Following 'Swatt v. Nottingham Village'

July 21, 2025

Socially Responsible Lawyers: Why You Need to Understand Social Media to Competently Represent Your Clients, Part 2

July 1, 2025

Legal Updates for Lawyers' Professional Liability - CASE LAW UPDATE

May 19, 2025

The Barrier to Legal Malpractice Cases Arising Out of Class Action Settlements

April 1, 2025

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Clarifies Clear and Convincing Standard in Attorney Disciplinary Cases

March 17, 2025

'Clear and Convincing' Is the New Standard for Attorney Disciplinary Matters

November 18, 2024

What Are Forbidden Sexual Relations with Clients?

November 1, 2024

Sexual Communications Are Sexual Relations, Recent Amendments to RPC 1.8(J)

October 29, 2024

Attorney Well-Being Doesn't Have to Be Spooky: Steps Attorneys Can Take to Support Mental, Emotional and Physical Health