

“ We have litigation teams that involve significant crossover amongst different practices, such as the antitrust, health care, financial markets, intellectual property, and white-collar groups. For each case, we identify our best lawyers for each matter, regardless of practice. ”

Rasha Gerges Shields

Partner
Business & Tort Litigation

ONE CALL FOR FORMIDABLE
MULTIDISCIPLINARY SERVICES

Why Jones Day? Formidable legal talent across specialties and jurisdictions available upon client command.



2500 LAWYERS. 42 LOCATIONS. 5 CONTINENTS. ONE FIRM WORLDWIDE®. JONESDAY.COM

Jones Day

Rasha Gerges Shields, Partner—Business & Tort Litigation

Rasha Gerges Shields is a partner at Jones Day in Los Angeles. She is a former federal prosecutor and an experienced first-chair trial and appellate lawyer. Rasha defends companies and executives in high-stakes civil and criminal cases. She has been the lead trial counsel in federal court and has argued before the California Supreme Court, the Ninth Circuit, and the California Court of Appeal.

Rasha is devoted to public service and pro bono work and has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including California Minority Counsel Program's Law Firm Diversity Leader Award, an honor annually bestowed on a single individual in California.

Rasha received her B.A. degree from UC Irvine in 1997 and her J.D. from UCLA School of Law in 2001. After graduation, she clerked for the Honorable Gary Feess in the Central District of California and the Honorable Ferdinand Fernandez in the Ninth Circuit. Rasha joined Jones Day as an associate in 2003, and after serving as a federal criminal prosecutor from 2007 to 2014, she rejoined Jones Day as a partner.

Describe your practice area and what it entails.

As a litigator with first-chair trial and appellate experience, I am able to assist clients in a variety of industries in pre-trial, trial, and appellate proceedings. Being a general litigator gives me the flexibility to work on a diverse range of cases and adapt my litigation and trial skills to new areas every day. I have litigated a variety of general and complex litigation matters, including commercial contracts, antitrust, fraud, health care, trade secrets, and intellectual property.

What types of clients do you represent?

I have represented a broad range of corporate clients in a variety of industries, including a large privately owned water-bottling company, a medical diagnostic laboratory company, a California oil-refining company, foreign entities based in China and Germany, and financial institutions. I have also represented individuals and entities facing government investigations, including cases involving public corruption and tax evasion. In addition, I have a very active pro bono practice; I have represented asylum seekers, a mother in a child-custody dispute, nonprofit organizations (such as Bet Tzedek Legal Services, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, and California Women's Law Center), and constitutional law professors across the country.

What types of cases/deals do you work on?

I have represented clients on the defense side as well as the plaintiff side. In addition to defending clients in high-stakes

litigation, such as purported class action lawsuits alleging damages in the billions of dollars, I have filed complaints for clients that were defrauded during corporate acquisitions, had their trade secrets stolen and their intellectual property misappropriated, and had contractual arrangements with their suppliers breached. As a generalist and former prosecutor, I am just as comfortable prosecuting cases for clients as I am defending them—though different litigation skills and strategies are required.

I have also represented individuals in pre-indictment criminal investigations, as well as corporate entities in government and internal investigations.

How did you choose this practice area?

I was drawn to litigation throughout law school, and I absolutely loved moot court. My clerkship experience, both at the district court and at the Ninth Circuit, confirmed my interest in pursuing a career as a litigator. It was during my Ninth Circuit clerkship that I learned about Jones Day's Issues & Appeals practice, which combines appellate work with strategic pre-trial and trial work, and I was sold—I joined the practice immediately after completing the clerkship. As an associate, I was able to work on a mix of cases and had the opportunity to argue before the Ninth Circuit, the California Court of Appeal, and the California Supreme Court. After about four years at Jones Day, I joined the U.S. Attorney's Office as a federal criminal prosecutor. In that capacity, I first-chaired trials and argued my own appeals. Following seven

years at the U.S. Attorney's Office, I rejoined Jones Day as a partner in the Business & Tort Litigation ("B&TL") practice. Given my first-chair trial experience, the B&TL practice was a natural fit for me, allowing me the flexibility to work with the other practices at Jones Day that fit with my experience, including White Collar Criminal Defense, Antitrust Litigation, and Appellate Law.

What is a typical day like and/or what are some common tasks you perform?

The great thing about being a litigator is that you never stop learning and you have to continuously adjust to new developments—that leads to many atypical days! But as a general matter, my days usually involve advising clients about ongoing litigation or investigations; participating in tons of conference calls (video calls during the pandemic); meeting and conferring with opposing counsel about discovery disputes; drafting pre-trial motions and briefs; and preparing for depositions or hearings. A large portion of my time also involves conducting fact-finding investigations, such as interviewing current and former employees of corporate entities or analyzing key documents to see how they impact the legal dispute. In addition to my client work, a typical day for me also includes video conferences with law students around the country whom I mentor, as well as meetings and programs for the multiple nonprofit organizations I am involved in, such as the Arab American Lawyers Association of Southern California, California ChangeLawyers, Just The Beginning—A Pipeline Organization, the UCLA Law Alumni Association, and the Women's White Collar Defense Association.

What training, classes, experience, or skills development would you recommend to someone who wishes to enter your practice area?

I would strongly recommend participating in activities that will give you stand-up opportunities, like moot court and legal clinics. I would also recommend paying particular attention during your legal research and writing classes, as well as classes involving civil procedure, evidence, and federal courts. And because writing effectively and concisely is so important to being a good litigator, I would recommend taking advantage of opportunities to become a teaching assistant. Learning how to review and edit the briefs of first-year law students will help strengthen your own writing skills. I also highly recommend applying for federal clerkships. If law school teaches you how to think like a lawyer, clerking teaches you how to think like a judge, which is an amazingly insightful skill for a litigator to develop!

What is the most challenging aspect of practicing in this area?

The most challenging aspect of being a general litigator is the wide variety of subjects that you need to master, often in a short amount of time. However, this challenge is also one of the reasons I love being a general litigator. You never stop learning, and you gain insight into new industries every day. For example, through my cases, I've learned about how airplanes are manufactured, how Swiss bankers do their job, how companies are bought and sold, how the manufacturing of bottled water is automated, how oil is refined and sold, how pharmacists and pharmacies dispense medicine, how financial institutions function, how companies can be victims of computer hacking, and how valuable trade secrets can be stolen.

What misconceptions exist about your practice area?

A common misconception about being a litigator is that all litigators need to fit the same mold—and that you cannot be a successful litigator if you are viewed as being "nice." As a young associate, I was once tasked with taking a portion of the deposition of a very prominent lawyer. During a break in the deposition (and before I had asked any questions), I offered the other side refreshments. In response, the prominent lawyer thanked me, adding, "You're too nice to be a lawyer." Following the break, I had the chance to ask my tough questions, catching the prominent lawyer completely off guard, and I persisted, despite his own lawyer's meritless objections. You can be an effective litigator without being unreasonable, nasty, or discourteous. In fact, you can be much more effective with a smile and a touch of civility, particularly in a jury trial—jurors are always watching you, and they notice your every move.

What is unique about your practice area at your firm?

At Jones Day, our practices are very fluid and versatile. We have litigation teams that involve significant crossover amongst different practices, such as the Antitrust, Health Care, Financial Markets, Intellectual Property, and White Collar groups. For each case, we identify our best lawyers for each matter, regardless of practice. This approach allows us to provide outstanding legal services for our clients. It also broadens the reach of the firm's general litigators, enabling us to work on an increasingly diverse slate of high-stakes cases.

What are some typical tasks that a junior lawyer would perform in this practice area?

Junior lawyers are essential members of any litigation team. Oftentimes, junior lawyers are tasked with mastering the facts

of a case. They review the client documents, as well as the documents received during discovery, to identify key documents and facts that can be used during depositions and trial and that can change the outcome of a case. Junior lawyers participate in witness interviews and help prepare witnesses

for depositions. They also play a crucial role in researching case law that is integrated in important discovery letters and motions. In certain cases, our junior lawyers even have stand-up opportunities, such as arguing pre-trial motions or taking and defending depositions.

JONES DAY

“Being a general litigator gives me the flexibility to work on a diverse range of cases and adapt my litigation and trial skills to new areas every day.”

Rasha Gerges Shields, Partner