

Katharine Van Dusen

Partner

San Francisco

Details

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Katharine Van Dusen is an experienced litigator who focuses on complex business and commercial disputes in state and federal courts. Her representations include land use and real estate disputes, employment matters, and complex commercial cases.

Katharine focuses on solving the problems her clients face. She has tried multiple matters to verdict and has successfully defended trial court decisions on appeal. Katharine's clients come from a variety of industries, and her practice takes into account the scope of the dispute and the needs of the client to tailor an appropriate litigation strategy.

Katharine is co-chair of the firm's Litigation practice.

Prior to joining the firm, she clerked for the Honorable Vaughn R. Walker of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California.

Katharine received her A.B. with high distinction in political science and German from the University of Michigan. She earned her J.D. cum laude from Northwestern University School of Law, where she was an editor of the Northwestern University Law Review. While in law school, Katharine served as a judicial extern for the Honorable Mark R. Filip of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Notable Representations

Lead trial counsel for the City of Oakland in high-profile whistleblower retaliation litigation; matter settled on favorable terms following jury verdict.

Lead counsel for the City of Lafayette in CEQA challenge to approved housing development, resulting in published opinion at *Save Lafayette v. City of Lafayette*, 85 Cal.App.5th 842 (2022).

Advised and defended companies facing arbitration demands from single and multiple claimants.

Successfully defended developer of landmark mixed-use project approved under SB 35.

Represented public employer and obtained summary judgment defeating whistleblower retaliation claims.

Representing developer of mixed-use project in streamlined CEQA litigation.

Successfully appealed jurisdictional order under the Class Action Fairness Act, resulting in published opinion. See *Ehrman v. Cox Communications Inc.*, 932 F.3d 1223 (9th Cir. 2019) (argued).

Obtained a complete defense verdict in an eight-day trial concerning enforceability of buyout agreement for the minority owner of a privately held company.

Represented iconic San Francisco institution in its efforts to resolve construction and design issues that have arisen in its new building.

Obtained seven-figure verdict in a five-day breach-of-contract trial on behalf of former CEO of a major construction firm.

Obtained a favorable defense verdict in a federal jury trial in a class action against a video satellite broadcaster related to an interruption in services.

Successfully defended Rule 12(b)(6) dismissal of consumer class action complaint before the Second Circuit. See *Heskiaoff v. Sling Media, Inc.*, No. 17-1094-cv, 2017 WL 5632078 (2d Cir. Nov. 22, 2017).

Obtained complete victory in interlocutory appeal before the Eighth Circuit, resulting in published opinion. See *Stokes v. DISH Network, L.L.C.*, 838 F.3d 948 (8th Cir. 2016).

Honors & Awards

Katharine was named to [Benchmark Litigation's](#) 2018, 2019, and 2023 40 & Under List for her general commercial litigation practice. She is frequently recognized as an outstanding volunteer for pro bono services by the Justice and Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco.

Professional Activities

Katharine is a member of the State Bars of California and Illinois and the Bar Association of San Francisco. From 2015-2018, she was a member of the Edward J. McFetridge American Inn of Court. Katharine co-chairs the Firm's pro bono committee and has an active pro bono practice.

Publications & Speaking Engagements

- Katharine's recent publications include:
 - "[Supreme Court Impact Fee Decision Creates Opportunities for Developers and Property Owners](#)" (June 2024)
 - "[City of Lafayette, Represented by Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass, Prevails in Litigation Clarifying Relationship Between Housing Accountability Act and Permit Streamlining Act](#)" (May 2023)
 - "[Calif. Housing Approval Law Is A Strong Tool For Developers](#)," Law360 (July 2020)
 - "[Court Rulings Demonstrate SB 35's Potential To Obtain Swift, Certain Approval Of Housing Developments](#)" (May 2020)

Education

- J.D., Northwestern University School of Law (2008)
- B.A., University of Michigan (2004)
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