



## Molly Karlin

Of Counsel

Los Angeles

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### *Overview*

Molly is an experienced appellate and trial attorney who has argued—and won—multiple high-stakes appeals and trials. A writer by nature, Molly has drafted numerous briefs and petitions before the United States Supreme Court and appellate courts and has successfully briefed and argued dispositive motions in both the federal and state courts and in arbitration. Her diverse practice runs the gamut from complex commercial litigation, on behalf of both plaintiffs and defendants, to defense-side criminal appeals. She is adept at finding creative solutions to the toughest problems, identifying novel issues and adopting out-of-the-box approaches to resolve disputes in her clients' favor. Molly's work has even spurred courts, on multiple occasions, to alter their state statutes and court rules to rectify legal defects she raised in her clients' appeals.

#### **LANDMARK WINS**

Prior to joining Susman Godfrey, Molly prevailed for her clients in several high-profile matters.

In a case that captured widespread public attention, Molly represented Marissa Alexander, a young Black mother who had been sentenced to twenty years in prison for firing a warning shot to defend herself against her abusive partner. Molly persuaded the Florida Court of Appeals to reverse Ms. Alexander's conviction; then, on retrial, she convinced the trial court to admit the copious evidence of the "victim's" violent attacks on his prior romantic partners. Rather than attempt to defend this damning pattern of abuse before a jury, the prosecution agreed to a sentence of time served. Ms. Alexander's case led the Florida legislature to amend the state's Stand-Your-Ground law to permit the firing of a warning shot in circumstances like hers. The case was heavily covered by nearly every major news outlet in the United States, several magazines, and publications in other countries, including *The New*

*York Times, USA Today, Reuters, U.S. News and World Report, NPR, The Guardian, The Toronto Star, various cable news channels, and Rolling Stone, Slate, The Nation, Essence, and Salon magazines.*

On behalf of a Berkshire Hathaway subsidiary, Molly drafted the successful summary judgment briefing that eliminated plaintiff Ford Motor Company's claims for hundreds of millions in punitive damages, leading to a favorable settlement for the Berkshire subsidiary. In a related case, Molly prevailed for her insurer client in arbitration and then obtained a federal court's confirmation of the arbitrator's decision denying Ford the hundreds of millions it sought. Both cases received coverage in *Law360*.

Molly obtained the acquittal at trial of a Syrian man on several terrorism-related offenses stemming from the alleged construction of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the Iraq War. On appeal of the remaining convictions, she then argued and obtained reversal—and complete dismissal—of the counts alleging the commission of a crime of violence. She further persuaded the court of appeals to vacate the defendant's life sentence, which included a conviction for conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction. The case was covered by media outlets across the globe, including *The Associated Press, Reuters, FOX News, and The Times of Israel*.

## PRO BONO

Molly is deeply committed to *pro bono* work. Recently, she secured a grant of clemency by the President for a client sentenced to life without parole under a federal three-strikes law. She obtained legal status in immigration court, precluding deportation, for a client who had been sexually assaulted by gang members in El Salvador due to her transgender status. Molly also regularly represents *amici curiae* in the defense of constitutional rights and civil liberties and in opposition to capital punishment.

## BACKGROUND

For a decade prior to joining Susman Godfrey, Molly served as a federal public defender, advocating for indigent defendants convicted of serious federal crimes. Before that, she worked as an associate at other high-powered firms, where she was the primary drafter of important briefing in billion-dollar disputes. Molly holds a J.D. from Columbia Law School, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar, earned the Parker School Certificate of Achievement in International and Comparative Law, and served as an Articles Editor for *The Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*. After graduating, she served as a law clerk on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She earned her B.A., *cum laude* and with distinction in the English major, from Yale University.

## Notable Representations

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### Complex Commercial Litigation

- **HDI-Gerling Industrie Versicherung v. Ford Motor Co. (S.D.N.Y.).** Defeated half-billion dollar claim in arbitration on behalf of insurer against major automobile manufacturer; then obtained confirmation of award in federal court.
- **Ford Motor Co. v. National Indemnity Co. (E.D. Va.).** Obtained favorable settlement in federal court on behalf of defendant reinsurer against major automobile manufacturer after prevailing on summary judgment denying plaintiff's claim for hundreds of millions in punitive damages.
- **Primo Hospitality v. Americana at Brand (Cal. Super. Ct.).** Obtained win at trial on behalf of major developer against restaurant claiming contract violations and seeking millions in damages plus attorneys' fees.

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### Appellate

- **Riddle v. Bank of Am., 588 F. App'x 127 (3d Cir. 2014).** Obtained affirmance of dismissal on behalf of mortgage insurer in class action alleging an illegal kickback scheme in violation of the Real Estate Settlement Practices Act.
- **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau v. United Guaranty Corp. (11th Cir. 2015):** Obtained dismissal of appeal on behalf of mortgage insurer against third party seeking to upset settlement agreement between client and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
- **United States v. Alahmedalabdaloklah, 94 F.4th 782 (9th Cir. 2024).** Argued and obtained reversal and complete dismissal of charges for conspiracy to possess a destructive device in furtherance of a crime of violence and aiding and abetting, and reversal of life sentence for conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction and conspiracy to maliciously destroy government property.
- **United States v. Charley, 1 F.4th 637 (9th Cir. 2021).** Argued and obtained reversal, in published opinion, of federal convictions for assault resulting in serious bodily injury and assault with a dangerous weapon for defendant who had been abused by victim boyfriend, followed by complete dismissal of charges.
- **Camargo v. Ryan, 684 F. App'x 607 (9th Cir. 2017).** Argued and obtained reinstatement of federal habeas corpus petition for defendant serving 25-year sentence for kidnapping and assault.

## Honors & Distinctions

- Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar
- Parker School Certificate of Achievement in International & Comparative Law

- Winner of Notes Competition, *Columbia Journal of Gender & Law*
- Articles Editor, *Columbia Journal of Gender & Law*

## *Clerkships*

Honorable Arthur L. Alarcón, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

## *Education*

**Columbia Law School** (J.D., , 2009)

**Yale University** (B.A., cum laude, 2004)

## *Admissions*

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### **Bar Admissions**

- California
  - New York
  - Arizona
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### **Court Admissions**

- United States Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York
- U.S. District Courts for the District of Arizona
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma