



Representative Experience

Class Actions

From antitrust to copyright, to securities to product liability, Susman Godfrey's trial lawyers have litigated and achieved impressive results for significant nationwide class action lawsuits. While some of these actions are ongoing, others have settled prosperously for our clients. In three cases alone, the firm obtained more than \$1 billion in settlements for plaintiffs. The firm has also represented defendants such as Chevron, Walmart, Texas Brine, The Rawlings Co., and Dean Foods in high stakes class actions.

Defense-Side Litigation

- ***Fitzgerald et. al. v. Apache.*** Secured a complete defensive win for Apache Corporation when Chief Judge H. Lee Rosenthal from the Southern District of Texas granted in full a motion to dismiss a royalty class action brought by a putative class of plaintiffs who alleged – contrary to existing law – that Apache breached thousands of mineral leases by allegedly underpaying royalties. [Read more.](#)
- ***In re Caustic Soda Antitrust.*** Defeated a class certification motion proposed by a group of six plaintiff companies who allege Susman Godfrey client, Westlake Chemical, and other defendant chemical companies colluded to inflate the price of products containing caustic soda.
- ***Walmart Employment Class Actions.*** As National Trial Counsel, represented Walmart in numerous wage and hour class actions in courts across the country, three of which were tried.
- ***Walmart Consumer Class Action.*** Represented Walmart in defense of a Pennsylvania consumer class action regarding how grocery coupons are treated for sales tax purposes
- ***In re Bayou Corne Sinkhole Litigation.*** Represented Texas Brine Corporation in a case pending in Napoleonville, Louisiana, resulting from the Bayou Corne sinkhole that formed in 2012. This case involves complex technical and environmental issues surrounding the collapse of a salt dome. Texas Brine settled with the plaintiff landowners on favorable terms, and then pursued and recovered huge amounts of the costs from other companies responsible for the collapse.
- ***Johnston v. Rawlings.*** Won a defense-side jury verdict on behalf of The Rawlings Company in a certified class action challenging the company's

classification of its employees. After a three-week jury trial in Kentucky state court, the jury decided in favor of the defense.

- **Watts v. Sysco Corp.** Represented Sysco Corp. (SYSCO) and several California subsidiaries in a labor dispute in which the plaintiffs sought to assert class wide claims to recover business expenses and late wage penalties under California law. The firm negotiated a favorable settlement for SYSCO, which was approved months later by the Court.
- **Siebenmorgen v. Hertz.** Represented the Hertz Corporation in a class action case challenging the company's rental car fuel service charges. Susman Godfrey successfully argued and won the appeal in the case. The class consisted of tens of thousands of class members and alleged millions of dollars in damages. The Texas Court of Appeals reversed the trial court's class certification order and decertified the class on all claims.
- **Bates v. Schneider National Carrier.** Defended Georgia-Pacific against claims alleging injuries from exposure to formaldehyde fumes released by various wood products. Of the approximately 200 cases handled by Susman Godfrey, two proceeded to a jury verdict. In one case, the jury returned a verdict for our client and awarded no damages to the plaintiff. In the other, in which the plaintiff was seeking \$5 million in damages, the jury returned a verdict of \$12,500.
- **ASARCO v. Nueces County TX.** Represented ASARCO Incorporated in defending cases filed by approximately 3,000 plaintiffs alleging arsenic contamination in Commerce, Texas.
- **Coleman v. ABB Lummus Crest.** Represented a German chemical company and its subsidiaries in the defense of claims made by soldiers allegedly exposed to chemical and biological warfare agents in the Persian Gulf war. The case is one of the largest toxic tort cases ever filed. The firm was successful in obtaining dismissals of its clients at an early stage of the litigation.
- **In re Rio Piedras Explosion Litigation.** Represented Enron Corporation and San Juan Gas Company in more than 500 cases pending in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The cases, brought by more than 2,000 plaintiffs, arose from a 1996 building explosion. As lead counsel, our team coordinated the activities of the numerous law firms involved in the defense.
- **NYLCare Personal Injury Litigation.** Represented NYLCare, a health maintenance organization, in a number of personal injury claims against NYLCare alleging direct and vicarious liability for medical malpractice by doctors. The plaintiffs in those claims have sued NYLCare alleging theories of negligent credentialing, negligent hiring, and negligent supervision. Susman Godfrey has also represented NYLCare in the defense of various related class action lawsuits.

Plaintiff-Side Litigation

- **In re Automotive Parts Antitrust Litigation.** Secured, to date, over \$1.2 billion in settlements to date as co-lead counsel for a class of end payor

plaintiffs in this complex series of antitrust cases brought against dozens of automobile suppliers who engaged in price-fixing and bid-rigging in the multi-billion-dollar automotive parts industry. This massive multi-district litigation is related to a criminal investigation which the US Department of Justice described as the largest price-fixing investigation in history. The litigation continues against the non-settling defendants. [Read more.](#)

- ***In re Libor-based Financial Instruments Antitrust Litigation.*** Secured, to date, \$590 million in settlements for plaintiffs who allege several banks were involved in setting LIBOR and manipulating it to their advantage. Barclays PLC agreed to pay \$120 million, Citigroup agreed to pay \$130 million, Deutsche Bank agreed to pay \$240 million, and HSBC agreed to pay \$100 million. Since that time, a multitude of lawsuits have been consolidated as part of a multidistrict litigation proceeding. These settlements are each combined with breakthrough agreements with the defendant banks to cooperate with plaintiffs in the ongoing litigation.
- ***Flo & Eddie v. Sirius XM* and *Flo & Eddie v. Pandora.*** Serving as co-lead counsel representing Flo & Eddie, founding members of 60's music group, The Turtles, along with a class of owners of pre-1972 sound recordings for copyright violations by music provider Sirius XM. Sirius XM agreed to pay at least \$25.5 million (over \$16 million after fees and expenses) and royalties under a 10-year license that is valued up to \$62 million (over \$41 million after fees and expenses) as compensation for publicly performing without a license Pre-1972 sound recordings. Flo & Eddie have a similar putative class action pending against Pandora.
- ***Leonard et al. v. John Hancock Life Insurance Co. of New York et al.*** Secured a settlement valued at \$143 million, before fees and expenses, including a cash fund of over \$93 million and an agreement by John Hancock Life Insurance Company not to impose a higher cost of insurance rate scale for 5 years (even in the face of a worldwide pandemic), on behalf of a class of approximately 1,200 policyholders who alleged that Hancock breached the terms of their respective life insurance policies and overcharged them for life insurance. When granting final approval, the Court held that the settlement provided an "absolutely extraordinary" recovery rate for the class, and lauded Susman Godfrey's "extraordinary work."
- ***Helen Hanks v. Voya Retirement Insurance and Annuity Company.*** Negotiated settlement worth \$118 million, before fees and expenses, including a cash fund of over \$92 million and an agreement by Voya not to impose a higher rate scale for 5 years, on behalf of a certified class of 46,000+ policyholders over allegations that Voya improperly raised cost-of-insurance charges. Over the course of litigation, the team from Susman Godfrey secured certification of the nationwide class and defeated summary judgment. The Court recognized the quality of the work, stating: "I want to commend you all for the work done on the pretrial order and motions in limine . . . I'm very happy to have you as lawyers appearing before me."

- ***In re Qualcomm Antitrust Litigation.*** Appointed by the Court as co-lead counsel in this multi-district litigation on behalf of purchasers impacted by Qualcomm's anti-competitive conduct. Denying Qualcomm's motion to dismiss, the Court granted class certification in a 66-page order finding "substantial," "strong," and "compelling" evidence to support the certification. The certification order is currently subject to an interlocutory appeal in the Ninth Circuit. With damages topping \$5 billion, Qualcomm has called it "the largest class action in history."
- ***ODonnell v. Harris County.*** Tried, pro bono, on behalf of the plaintiffs, an extraordinary lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Harris County's (Houston) system of secured money bail for the release of misdemeanor arrestees. Harris County jailed tens of thousands of people arrested for minor, non-violent misdemeanors, many of which were financially unable to post cash bail. After an 8-day evidentiary hearing, the Southern District of Texas found that Harris County's bail system violated both the due process clause and equal protection clause of the US Constitution and enjoined the County and its judges from further violations. The Supreme Court denied the County's motion for a stay and the injunction was implemented. The 5th Circuit affirmed the constitutional rulings. After just one year in which the injunction relief was in effect, more than 12,000 people were released from jail.
- **Animal Science Products**
 - ***In re Vitamin C Antitrust Litigation.*** Secured a \$54.1 million jury verdict in an antitrust price-fixing class action brought on behalf of direct purchasers of vitamin C against two Chinese vitamin C manufacturers in the first-ever case in which mainland Chinese companies were successfully sued under US antitrust law. The verdict was tripled as required by law and, after adjusting for \$32.5 million in settlements with other defendants (\$19.5 million net of fees and expenses), a final judgment of \$147 million was entered against the defendants. This antitrust price-fixing class action was later reviewed by the United States Supreme Court, which issued a unanimous 9-0 decision in favor of the plaintiffs. In its ruling, the Supreme Court provided clarification as to how much deference US federal courts must show statements made by foreign governments regarding the application of their domestic laws.
 - ***Animal Science Products v. Chinook Group.*** Obtained a \$1.05 billion settlement in a price-fixing case against leading European vitamin manufacturers, including Hoffman-La Roche, BASEF A.G. and Rhone-Poulenc S.A.
 - ***In re Animators Antitrust Litigation.*** Secured more than \$168 million in settlements (\$147.3 million after fees and expenses) for a class of animation industry employees in this antitrust action against the largest animation companies, including Disney, Pixar, Lucas Films, DreamWorks, and Sony, based on restrictions on their ability to compete against one another for talent.

- ***Ferrick v. Spotify USA.*** Secured a settlement worth over \$100 million to resolve a class-action lawsuit against music streaming service, Spotify, brought on behalf of music copyright owners.
- ***In re Allergan Proxy Violation Derivatives Litigation.*** Recovered \$40 million (before fees and expenses)—what is believed to be the largest recovery ever obtained on behalf of derivative securities investors—in an insider trading case. Our team served as co-lead counsel for the plaintiff class, who alleged that Valeant Pharmaceuticals International, Inc. provided non-public information to Pershing Square Capital Management about its impending hostile takeover of Allergan, Inc. so that Pershing Square could secretly buy Allergan stock and commit that stake in support of Valeant's bid. Plaintiffs claimed that Pershing Square then secretly acquired a 10% stake in Allergan and gleaned millions of dollars in profits by selling on the news of the takeover bid. A California federal judge granted final approval of two settlements totaling \$290 million to resolve these insider-trading claims shortly before trial was set to commence in the first of the two actions.
- ***Fleisher v. Phoenix Life Insurance.*** Secured a landmark settlement on behalf of plaintiffs in a case challenging Phoenix Life Insurance Company's and PHL Variable Insurance Company's decision to raise the cost of insurance ("COI") nationwide on life insurance policy owners. The case settled the day of the final Pretrial Conference. Settlement terms included a \$48.5 million cash fund (\$34 million after fees and expenses), COI freeze through 2020, and a covenant by Phoenix not to challenge the policies, worth \$9 billion in face value, when the policies mature on the grounds of lack of insurable interest or misrepresentations in the application. At the final approval hearing, the Court said: "This may be the best settlement pound for pound for the class that I've ever seen."
- ***Behrehnd et al. v. Comcast.*** Represented a class of 800,000 Comcast cable subscribers who alleged that between 2003 and 2008, Comcast and other cable companies entered into subscriber swaps and acquisitions that deterred over-builder competition and enabled Comcast to raise prices to supra-competitive levels, in violation of sections 1 and 2 of the Sherman Act. The parties settled for \$50 million after remand of the case from the Supreme Court. The class received \$35 million after fees and expenses.
- ***In re NYC Bus Tour Antitrust Litigation.*** Secured a \$19 million cash settlement for customers of two New York City tour bus companies (approximately \$12 million after fees and expenses), Coach USA Inc. and City Sights LLC, and their joint venture, Twin America LLC. The settlement ended an antitrust class action against the joint venture, which plaintiffs said eliminated competition between the two bus companies and artificially raised prices for passengers.
- ***In re Korean Air Lines Antitrust Litigation.*** Secured \$86 million in settlements (approximately \$62 million after fees and expenses) in this antitrust litigation involving more than 70 class action cases brought on behalf of airline passengers who alleged that between 2000 and 2007,

Korean Air Lines and Asiana Airlines conspired to fix the price of air travel between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

- ***In re Toyota Unintended Acceleration Marketing, Sales Practices, and Products Liability Litigation.*** Appointed by the Court as co-lead counsel to the plaintiffs, the Susman Godfrey team negotiated a deal with Toyota Motor Corporation in which Toyota agreed to pay benefits worth up to \$1.6 billion (approximately \$1.4 billion after fees and expenses) to settle multi-district class action litigation pending in federal court in Santa Ana, California. Plaintiffs brought the case over allegations of economic losses as a result of recalls for defects causing unintended acceleration in Toyota, Lexus, and Scion vehicles.
- ***Coady v. IndyMac Bancorp et al.*** Appointed as co-lead counsel for investors who were allegedly defrauded into purchasing securities issued by the parent of mortgage lender IndyMac Bank. Plaintiffs alleged that IndyMac had misrepresented its financial health and the quality of its lending practices. After more than five years of intense, hard-fought litigation, the Court granted final approval of a \$6.5 million recovery for the class (approximately \$4 million after fees and expenses).
- ***Google AdWords Class Action*** Obtained a \$20 million settlement (\$14.8 million net of fees and expenses) for a class against Google for breach of contract, unfair competition, and false advertising relating to Google's AdWords billing practices and related disclosures.
- ***White v. NCAA.*** Served as co-lead counsel in an antitrust class action alleging that the NCAA violated the federal antitrust laws by restricting amounts of athletic based financial aid. The NCAA settled and paid, in addition to fees and expenses, \$218 million (\$209.4 million net of fees and expenses) for use by current student-athletes to cover the costs of attending college and paid \$10 million to cover educational and professional development expenses for former student-athletes.
- ***Powell v. Yates Petroleum.*** Obtained a \$27.5 million settlement (\$18.9 million after fees and expenses) with ConocoPhillips for alleged underpayment of royalty on natural gas liquids produced from the San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico and processed at the New Blanco Plant near Bloomfield, New Mexico on behalf of 4,300 royalty and overriding royalty owners across the United States.
- ***Drayton v. Western Auto.*** Obtained class certification from the Middle District of Florida for a class of Black employees of Western Auto Supply Co. (now owned by Advance Stores Company, Inc.) who were suing the former auto parts retailer for racial discrimination. The defendants immediately appealed the certification decision to the 11th Circuit. The Court affirmed the class certification decision—the first such class action decision the 11th Circuit had upheld in decades. The case settled with the defendants making a substantial payment to the class.