Nicholas C. Pappas

Partner

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Industries

Industrials

Manufacturing

Mobility

Practice Areas

Business & Commercial Litigation

Fire & Explosion

Litigation

Product Liability

Product, Tort & Insurance Litigation

Trial Work

Bar Memberships

Indiana

Nick, a member of the firm's Executive Committee and Board of Directors, concentrates his practice in product liability and commercial litigation. He is national lead trial counsel for several manufacturers, and defends agricultural, construction, industrial and mining equipment, aircraft, automobiles, hand and power tools, and other consumer products. He represents clients in lawsuits in state and federal courts throughout the United States and has tried cases to successful defense verdicts in Alabama, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Nick has also argued appeals at the Indiana Court of Appeals, Indiana Supreme Court, Arkansas Court of Appeals, and Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 2021, Nick was inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Fellowship in the College is by invitation only, and is limited to one percent of the lawyers in each state, as determined by judges and peers.

Nick is active in DRI – The Voice of the Defense Bar, where he has held several leadership positions, including Chair of the Product Liability Committee, which is DRI's largest substantive law committee and has over 3,300 members. Nick has also held several FBT Gibbons leadership positions. He currently serves on three of the Firm's Committees – Executive, Partner Personnel, and Technology & Innovation – and previously served three terms on the Firm's Compensation Committee. He is a former Practice Group Leader of the Product Liability & Tort Litigation Practice Group.

When Nick is not practicing law, he enjoys weight-lifting, hiking national parks with his wife, Tracy, and cheering for the Notre Dame Fighting Irish. He also actually enjoys yard work, and he loves using power tools.

Other Info About Nick

Experience

Tuttle et. al. v. Reed et. al. – Obtained a defense verdict from a Carroll County, Kentucky jury in a bus crashworthiness design case involving a serious bus accident with multiple Plaintiffs.

Lemler v. CNH Industrial America LLC – Won summary judgement on the economic loss doctrine, and successfully briefed and argued at the Indiana Court of Appeals, resulting in only the third court in the country finding that a combine header is not "other property" for purposes of the Economic Loss Doctrine. See the oral argument here.

Smith v. Joy Mining Technologies – Successfully defended Joy in federal court in London Kentucky in a product liability case involving a below the knee leg amputation. The jury returned a unanimous verdict of no liability on both design defect and failure to warn claims. Successfully argued appeal at the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, which unanimously affirmed the district court's ruling in Joy's favor.

Otieno v. Rolls Royce Corporation, et. al Represented helicopter engine manufacturer in a wrongful death case at trial court, Indiana Court of Appeals, and Indiana Supreme Court. Writing for the first time on the issue of *forum non conveniens*, the Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's order of dismissal in favor of the defendants.

Roebuck v. CNH America LLC Lead Trial and Appellate counsel in product liability wrongful death case in Alabama State Court that resulted in defense verdict and unanimous ruling for CNH by the Alabama Supreme Court.

Barnard v. Saturn Defended General Motors at the trial court and Court of Appeals, wherein the Indiana Court of Appeals affirmed summary judgment for GM, and for the first time, recognized the application of comparative fault in product liability enhanced injury case.

Education

Indiana University Maurer School of Law, J.D., 1991, *cum laude*

University of Notre Dame, B.A., 1988, double major, Accounting and Philosophy

Courts

State of Indiana

United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana

United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana

United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Recognition

Fellow, The American College of Trial Lawyers

BTI Client Service All-Star, Product Liability, 2016, 2018, 2024

The Best Lawyers in America®: Product Liability Litigation—Defendants, 2011-2027; Litigation – Health Care, 2027; Litigation – Labor and Employment, 2027

Selected for inclusion in *Indiana Super Lawyers®* 2011-2026

Chambers USA, Commercial Litigation, 2013-2020; Litigation: General Commercial, 2021-2026; Litigation: Product Liability, 2026

Who's Who Legal: Ranked as Recommended for Product Liability Defense, 2024

DRI Product Liability Conference Chair, 2012

Defense Lawyer of the Year, Defense Trial Counsel of Indiana, 2010

Professional Affiliations

American College of Trial Lawyers — In 2021, Nick was inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Fellowship in the College is by invitation only, and is limited to one percent of the lawyers in each state, as determined by judges and peers.

DRI The Voice of the Defense Bar – Past Chair of Defense Research Institute's Product Liability Committee; previous positions include Membership Committee; Agricultural, Construction, Mining and Industrial Equipment (ACMIE) Specialized Litigation Group Chair, ACMIE Newsletter Editor

Defense Trial Counsel of Indiana

Indianapolis Bar Association (IBA), IBA Bar Leader Series Steering Committee Member

Indianapolis Bar Foundation, Distinguished Fellow; Vice President of the Board of Directors

Civic Activities

Indiana Repertory Theatre, Board of Directors

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Past Parish Council Treasurer, Vice President and President, Member of Building Steering Committee, Sunday school teacher

Spring Knoll Property Owner's Association, past Board Member and President

Homeless Legal Services Project, Volunteer

Kid's Voice, Volunteer Guardian ad Litem

Merciful Help Center Food Bank Volunteer

Firm Committees

Executive Committee, Member

Partner Personnel Committee, Member

Technology & Innovation Committee, Member

Partner Compensation Committee, former Member

Product Liability Litigation Practice Group, former Chair

Presentations

"Lessons from Lincoln: What Every Practicing Lawyer can Learn from Abraham Lincoln," DRI Product Liability Conference, National Harbor, Maryland, and Trial.com Litigation Management Seminar, New York, New York

"Top 10 ACMIE Cases," DRI Product Liability Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana

"Discovery and the In-House Expert: Are Two Hats Better Than One?," DRI Product Liability Seminar, Las Vegas, Nevada

Lorman Educational Services, Expert Witness Seminar, Indianapolis, Indiana

"Getting the ATLA Package: Discovery of Litigation Clearinghouse Materials," DRI Product Liability Seminar, Las Vegas, Nevada

"Cargo Loss Claims in the U.S.," The Harmonie Group, Transportation & Trucking Seminar, Toronto, Canada and Chicago, Illinois

"Discovery of Documents Obtained from Litigation Clearinghouses: It's Not Work Product Anymore," For the Defense

Major Publications

"When Buyers Choose – and Manufacturers Pay: Navigating the Divided Legal Landscape of Optional Safety Features and Manufacturer Liability" *DRI – For The Defense*, April 2026. Read the full article here.

"GCs Name Favorite Product Liability Attorneys," *Law360*, 2016. Read the full article here.

Featured Articles

When Buyers Choose and Manufacturers Pay: Navigating the Divided Legal Landscape of Optional Safety Features and Manufacturer Liability

U.S. Supreme Court Clarifies Personal Jurisdiction (Again)

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