

Donald A. Kessler
OF COUNSEL

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My years of experience on the bench and in private practice have demonstrated the importance of fully understanding personalities and how relevant facts and applicable law impacts the ability to help resolve business and family law disputes.

Judge Kessler focuses his practice on resolving commercial and family law disputes through mediation and arbitration as an alternative to traditional litigation. His experience as a judge of the equity court enables him to deal with business disputes encompassing a broad range of matters, including those related to contracts, real property, construction, employment, unfair competition, intellectual property, corporate and LLC issues, and consumer fraud. In the area of family law, Judge Kessler's experience encompasses issues related to alimony, child support, custody, equitable distribution, relocation, domestic violence and reimbursement of counsel fees.

During his tenure on the bench, Judge Kessler conducted numerous trials, heard a wide variety of matters and settled hundreds of cases in both the Chancery and Family Divisions. In addition, he was frequently asked to lecture before bar and judicial groups on a variety of topics related to his areas of expertise and was also called upon to teach at New Jersey Judicial College and New Judge Orientation.

Prior to his service in the New Jersey Judiciary, Judge Kessler spent 35 years in private practice representing corporate and individual clients on complex litigation and business counseling. He represented clients in such matters as breach and enforcement of contracts, construction, business dissolution, enforcement of restrictive covenants, securities fraud, antitrust disputes, corporate theft, intellectual property,

Departments

Family Law
Litigation

Practice Groups

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Education

New York University School of Law, J.D., 1974
Union College, B.A., 1971

Bar Admissions

New Jersey, 1974
U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, 1974
U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, 1979

Clerkships

Former law secretary to The Honorable Harold Kolovsky, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division

employment and business fraud. He also represented a hospital for 27 years and several physicians, physician practices, lawyers and law firms with respect to a variety of legal matters.

Results may vary depending on your particular facts and legal circumstances.

HONORS & AWARDS

- Inducted as a member of the National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals New Jersey Chapter (2021)
- American Bar Foundation Fellow
- Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Rated AV® Preeminent (a trademark of Internet Brands, Inc.) (1988 – present)
- Phi Beta Kappa Society
- Root-Tilden Scholar, NYU School of Law

Please visit our Award Methodology page for a description of the standard or methodology on which these accolades are based. Attorney Advertising: No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

UNIQUELY NJ

- Qualified by the New Jersey Supreme Court as a R.1:40 mediator
- New Jersey State Bar Association; Dispute Resolution Section; Business and Commercial Litigation Special Committee; Equity Jurisprudence Special Committee; Family Law Section
- New Jersey Supreme Court; Committee on Complementary Dispute Resolution, Vice Chair; Committee on Women in the Courts Subcommittee on Judicial Education, Co-Chair; Family Practice Committee (former Member); Subcommittee on Domestic Violence and Non-Dissolution Matters (past co-Chair)
- Essex County Bar Association
- Justice Marie L. Garibaldi American Inn of Court for Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Barry Croland Family Law American Inn of Court
- New Jersey Board of Bar Examiners (Former Chairman and Member)
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark Board of Trustees (former Member)

MORE ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCE

- American Arbitration Association; Commercial, Employment, Healthcare and Consumer Arbitration Panels; Commercial and Employment Mediation Panels

- American Bar Association, Dispute Resolution Section
- Served as corporate counsel to Chilton Memorial Hospital in Pompton Plains, NJ for over 25 years

PRESENTATIONS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Panelist, 2021 Family Law Summer Institute

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, July 27, 2021

Panelist, Advanced Mediation Training Part 2 – Business Litigation

Sponsor: *Middlesex County Bar Association*, July 22, 2021

Presenter, Hot Topics in Chancery Practice

Sponsor: *Essex County Bar Association*, March 25, 2021

Speaker, 2020 Family Law Summer Institute

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, July 21-22, 2020

Panelist, 2020 Family Law Symposium

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, January 25, 2020

Panelist, Forensic and Litigation Symposium

Sponsor: *Withum*, December 6, 2019

Speaker, Hot Tips in Family Law

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, November 11, 2019

Speaker, Roundtable Discussion of NJ LLC Issues

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association Business Law Section*, November 4, 2019

Panelist, When and How to Use Experts in Family Law Cases

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 16, 2019

Panelist, Dealing with LLC Disputes 2019

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 16, 2019

Presenter, Is Justice Blind?

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 19, 2018

Panelist, Valuing Closely Held Businesses

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 17, 2018

Panelist, Avoiding and Dealing with LLC Disputes

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 17, 2018

Panelist, Hot Tips in Family Law

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, November 10, 2017

Panelist, Family Law Matters Involving LGBT Litigants

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 18, 2017

Panelist, Valuing Closely Held Businesses

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 18, 2017

Presenter, Orders to Show Cause and Temporary Restraints

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, April 5, 2017

Presenter, Black Lives Matter: Historical and Legal Perspectives

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 21, 2016

Presenter, Valuing Closely Held Businesses

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 21, 2016

Presenter, Promoting Fairness: Diversity/Sexual Harassment/ADA Issues

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, September 9, 2016

Panelist, Valuation Issues in Chancery Matters

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 19, 2016

Panelist, Overcoming Legal and Valuation Issues in Chancery, Business and Family Proceedings

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, December 1, 2015

Presenter, Bias Involving LGBT Litigants and Attorneys

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 23, 2015

Panelist, May It Please (the Family) Court - A view of Family Law & Issues from the Bench

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, September 12, 2015

Presenter, Promoting Fairness: Diversity/Sexual Harassment/ADA Issues

September 11, 2015

Panelist, Family Law Matters Involving LGBT Litigants

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 14, 2015

Presenter, Understanding Micro-Aggression

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 25, 2014

Speaker, Troubled Children in the Family Part

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 24, 2014

Panelist, Les Enfants Terrible - Troubled Children in Family Part

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, November 5, 2014

Presenter, Promoting Fairness: Diversity/Sexual Harassment/ADA Issues

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, September 12, 2014

2014 Family Law Summer Institute

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, 7.29.14 - 7.30.14

Panelist, Family Law Bench Bar Conference

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, May 16, 2014

Panelist, Matrimonial Early Settlement Panel - Training

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, April 12, 2014

Panelist, The Pig Bowl - Interactive Hot Topics in Family Law

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, March 29, 2014

Presenter, Prison Tour

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, March 18, 2014

Panelist, Matrimonial Early Settlement Panel - Training

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, February 22, 2014

Presenter, Recognizing & Addressing LGBT Bias and Its Effect

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 26, 2013

Presenter, Promoting Fairness: Diversity/Sexual Harassment/ADA Issues

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, October 3, 2013

Panelist, Recognizing and Addressing Gender Bias

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 16, 2013

Panelist, Friday Night Flights

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 15, 2013

Panelist, Winning and Losing in Relocation

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 15, 2013

Panelist, Understanding Parental Alienation in Custody Cases

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, April 6, 2013

Presenter, How to Avoid Jeopardy Through Mentoring in Family Court

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, November 20, 2012

Presenter, Promoting Fairness: Diversity/Sexual Harrassment/ADA Issues

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, September 12, 2012

Panelist, 2012 Family Law Retreat - Settlement Techniques

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, March 29, 2012

Presenter, Promoting Fairness: Diversity/Sexual Harrassment/ADA Issues

Sponsor: *New Jersey Judicial College*, September 14, 2011

Panelist, Family Bench Bar - Best Practices

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, May 20, 2011

Panelist, Incivility & Gender Bias - Words & Perceptions

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 19, 2011

Panelist, Removal In Family Law Cases

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, February 11, 2011

Panelist, Other Ways to Skin a Cat

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, November 6, 2010

Panelist, Divorce and the Special Needs Child

Sponsor: *New Jersey State Bar Association*, May 19, 2010

Panelist, Interstate & International Custody Disputes

Sponsor: *New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education*, April 10, 2010