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Rick Paul and Ashlea Schwarz founded Paul LLP after years of litigating high stakes commercial cases together. We have fought against some of the biggest companies in the country, including Syngenta, Dow Chemical, Monsanto, Corteva, JPMorgan Chase, Phillips 66, and General Motors. And we have won big. We founded the firm on two overriding principles: (1) a strong passion for litigating cases on behalf of our clients; and (2) a desire to make meaningful, industry-wide changes that create reshaped markets and improved lives.

We have recovered nearly three billion dollars for our clients through trial, arbitration, and settlement. We have handled some of the largest cases in the country against the largest, most well-funded and well-represented companies. And, we do not just litigate—we prepare cases for trial and take cases to trial.

### ***The Work We Do***

Agriculture: The agricultural industry is rapidly consolidating and launching new biotechnology products every year. Located in the Midwest, we have a deep knowledge of how law and agriculture intersect, including the areas of negligence, chemical-drift, trespass, antitrust, food safety, trade, marketing, and resource management. The agricultural and biotechnology industries are highly regulated with a complex web of state and federal regulations, many of which give rise to preemption issues. Our lawyers have handled a wide variety of cases in this area of the law and are well-versed in the statutory and regulatory issues that arise in litigation related to agriculture in individual, mass, and class actions.

Antitrust: Antitrust laws were enacted to ensure that businesses play by the rules to ensure that a free market prevails. Our lawyers have both prosecuted and defended antitrust actions in the agriculture, technology, and health care industries. We handle both antitrust class actions as well as individual cases. We make sure that companies who engage in unfair business practices are kept in check, allowing other businesses the opportunity to compete in a fair marketplace.

Class Actions: We know how difficult it is for a single person to bring a case against a large corporation or entity. The enormity of this task prevents many people from pursuing legitimate claims, which allows companies to continue with unsafe, unlawful, or unfair practices. These are often pervasive, industry-wide violations. Our attorneys have the skill set necessary to bring about meaningful change through class litigation.

Commercial Litigation: Partnerships within or between businesses often lead to disputes. When partnerships are exploited, or contracts are not followed through on, we help pick up the pieces.

Commodities: Being a Midwest law firm, we know commodities litigation. From grains, farm animals, oil and gas, precious metals, we have handled a broad spectrum of commodities-related litigation. We are familiar with the commodities exchanges, the statutory and regulatory environment, and the jargon of these industries.

Products Liability: We have a breadth of experience in ensuring manufacturers take responsibility for products that cause harm or injury to consumers. Injury and financial harm can result from products with faulty design or improper manufacturing, as well as a company's failure to warn consumers of possible injury or unwanted side effects from use of that product.

### ***The Results We Have Achieved***

*In re Syngenta MIR162 Corn Litigation* (U.S. District Court, District of Kansas) and *In re Syngenta Litigation* (Minnesota Fourth Judicial District) (appointed to Plaintiffs' Executive Committee in both federal and state MDLs; trial counsel for individual bellwethers and Minnesota class leading to \$1.51 billion settlement)

*In re Dicamba Herbicides Litigation* (U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri) (appointed to Plaintiffs' Executive Committee and Settlement Committee leading to \$400 million settlement)



*Robinson, et al., v. Jackson Hewitt, Inc., and Tax Services of America, Inc.* (U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey) (appointed Interim Co-Lead Class Counsel challenging Jackson Hewitt's "No-Poach Provision," leading to a \$10.8 million class settlement)

*Jones and Lorenzen v. Varsity Brands, LLC, et al.*, (U.S. District Court, Western District of Tennessee) (appointed Interim Class Counsel, Executive Committee Counsel, and Co-Lead Settlement Counsel and served as trial counsel in anti-trust action involving a monopoly, conspiring to raise, fix, and stabilize the prices charge for Varsity competitions, camps, and apparel (i.e., price-fixing) within the cheerleading industry; leading to a \$82.5 million settlement on behalf of indirect purchasers)

*Confidential Settlement* (California state court) (lead trial counsel on behalf of approximately 1,100 migrant farmworkers who were exposed to pesticides causing brain damage in children; leading to a \$300 million settlement)

*Wells Fargo Loan Modification Litigations* (U.S. District Court, Northern District of California; U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio) (appointed Class Counsel across multiple litigations regarding improper foreclosure of thousands of people's homes, resulting in cumulative settlements of \$53.5 million)

*In re P&G Aerosol Products Marketing and Sales Practices Litigation* (U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio) (Settlement Class Counsel in action over benzene exposure in aerosol products such as deodorant; negotiated an \$8 million settlement)

*Fuentes v. Jiffy Lube International, Inc.* (U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania) (appointed Class Counsel in action on behalf of hourly franchise employees in Pennsylvania over Jiffy Lube's "No Poach Provision," leading to a \$2 million settlement)

*In re General Motors Dex-Cool Cases* (Alameda County Superior Court, California; Jackson County Circuit Court, Missouri; Southern District of Illinois, MDL 1562) (appointed Co-Lead Counsel in federal MDL and Co-Lead Class Counsel in two state courts; obtained one of the largest automotive defect settlements of all time)

*Holt v. Community America Bank* (U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri) (appointed Class Counsel on behalf customers who were overcharged overdraft fees resulting in a \$2.325 million settlement)

*In re Eclipse Aviation Depositor Litigation* (Bernalillo County, New Mexico) (negotiated settlement of approximately \$49 million on behalf of purchasers of jet aircraft)

*In re: Air Crash of N51RX* (Santa Fe County, New Mexico) (negotiated complex 8-figure settlement in a 5-death air ambulance crash with multiple defendants and insurance companies)

*Malloy v. Pratt & Whitney* (U.S. District Court, Northern District of Oklahoma) (\$2.1 million settlement of product liability claim for defective aircraft engines)

*In re Great Plains Air Lines* (U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Oklahoma) (negotiated confidential settlement with officers and directors of defunct regional airline carrier)

*In re Mountain Energy Corp.* (U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Western District of Missouri) (officer/director liability, negotiated 14-party settlement with more than \$60 million recovery)

*In re Oak Hills Drilling & Operating Co.* (U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of Oklahoma) (obtained judgment after trial for over \$1.5 million on behalf of bankruptcy estate)

*Malloy v. Commerce Bank* (District Court of Tulsa County, Oklahoma) (negotiated settlement for claims alleging aiding and abetting breach of fiduciary duty, fraudulent transfers, and civil conspiracy on behalf of bankruptcy estate)

## ***The Lawyers and Reputation We Enjoy***



### **Rick Paul**

Partner

Rick specializes in complex antitrust, business, product liability, and consumer litigation—typically involving class or mass actions. Rick graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law, where he served as Associate Managing Editor of the Missouri Law Review. After law school, Rick was a judicial law clerk at the Missouri Supreme Court and the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District. In 1996, he began private practice with the firm formerly known as Shughart Thomson & Kilroy, a large Kansas City law firm with offices in Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and Arizona. In 2002, the Board of Directors of Shughart Thomson elected him a Shareholder and Director. In 2008, Rick moved his practice to Stueve Siegel Hanson LLP. In May 2013, Rick started Paul LLP.

Rick has recovered nearly \$3 billion for his clients through trial or settlement. Rick has been appointed by numerous courts across the country to serve as lead counsel in class and mass actions and in MDL proceedings.

Rick enjoys being in the courtroom and has tried and won many types of cases in jury trials, bench trials, and arbitrations. He has repeatedly been brought into a case shortly before trial for just that purpose. Rick served as trial counsel in the *In re Syngenta Litigation* pending in the Minnesota Fourth Judicial District. Rick was co-lead trial counsel for the first individual bellwether trial as well as the Minnesota class action trial. During the third week of the Minnesota class trial, the litigation was settled on behalf of all farmers (individual and classes) across the country. Rick has also argued more than 40 appeals to various state and federal appellate courts and briefed over 100 appeals.

Rick is active in the local bar, including the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association. He has served as Vice-Chair on the Business Torts Committee, where he authored the Chapter on Fiduciary Duties for the Business Torts Handbook. Rick is a frequent speaker and moderator at seminars and presentations on trial-related issues. In 2006, Missouri Lawyers Weekly named Rick as one of eight “Up and Coming Lawyers.” He is annually named a “Missouri/Kansas Super Lawyer” and has an AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating with Martindale-Hubbell.



### *Court Admissions*

Missouri, 1995	U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit
Kansas, 1997	U.S. Court of Appeals, 10th Circuit
U.S. Supreme Court	U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals, 3rd Circuit	U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
U.S. Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit	U.S. District Court, District of Kansas
U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit	U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
U.S. Court of Appeals, 6th Circuit	U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri
U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit	U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit	

### *Education*

University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law, Columbia, Missouri, 1995  
J.D., Assistant Managing Editor, Missouri Law Review

University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, 1992  
B.A., Economics and Political Science, Honors College  
*Honors:* MU Varsity Tennis Team, Letter winner; Academic All Big-8



### **Ashlea Schwarz**

Managing Partner

Ashlea, Managing Partner of Paul LLP, litigates complex business disputes including claims for negligence, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, and misrepresentation. She also represents clients in a range of litigation matters including complex, consumer class actions.

Ashlea has represented thousands of clients from the inception of a case through a verdict and litigated nearly 100 mass and class actions. Ashlea has taken 6 cases to trial, including three collective/class actions where she recovered over \$5 million collectively for her clients. Her practice is nationwide and traditionally includes multi-party and multi-district litigation.

Ashlea remains involved in the legal community through her work as a former board member for the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and Current Past President of the Kansas City Bar Association's Federal Court Advocates Section, and subcommittee chair for American Women Lawyers. In 2014, she was named one of Missouri Lawyers' Weekly's "Up and Coming Lawyers," an award recognizing litigators under age 40 who demonstrate excellence in the legal profession and in their commitment to their communities. Ashlea continues to be selected yearly as a Kansas City Business Journal Rising Star and is a Missouri/Kansas Super Lawyer. Additionally, in 2022 she was selected to the Missouri Lawyers' Weekly's POWER List of Commercial & Consumer Litigation Attorneys and received their Women's Justice Litigation Practitioner Award.

#### *Court Admissions*

Missouri, 2007

Kansas, 2008

U.S. Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 10th Circuit

U.S. District Court, District of Colorado

U.S. District Court, District of Kansas

U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri

### *Education*

University of Kansas School of Law, Lawrence, Kansas, 2007

J.D., Clerk for Judge Julie Robinson, U.S. District, District of Kansas, 2005-2006

*Honors:* P. Mize Award for Trial Advocacy, Robert F. Bennett Award for Public Service

Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 2004

B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communications and minors in English and German

*Honors:* Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Golden Key, Journalism and Mass Communication Ambassador, K-State Student Foundation Board Member, University Ambassador





## **Laura Fellows**

Partner

Laura Fellows focuses her practice on antitrust litigation, class actions, complex business litigation, and mass actions. She represents plaintiffs in federal and state courts throughout the country. During the past decade, Ms. Fellows has prosecuted cases resulting in more than \$375 million in recovery for matters involving agriculture, pesticides, banking, and healthcare, among others. Most recently, Laura served as first chair in a trial for an individual business owner that resulted in a jury verdict in her client's favor. She has been named a Super Lawyers' Missouri/Kansas Rising Star yearly since 2015.

During law school, Laura was on the national team for the American Bar Association's Negotiation Competition, reaching the semi-final round of the national competition. Laura also served as president of the Association for Women Law Students. Before law school, Laura attended Missouri State University as a Board of Governor's Scholar and member of the honors college.

### *Court Admissions*

Missouri, 2013	U.S. Supreme Court
Kansas, 2014	U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit
Arkansas, 2015	U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit
	U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit
	U.S. Court of Appeals, 10th Circuit
	U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri
	U.S. District Court, District of Kansas
	U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Arkansas
	U.S. District Court, Western District of Arkansas

### *Education*

University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law, 2013 J.D.  
 Missouri State University, 2010  
 B.A. in Communications and minor in German, *Cum Laude* in the Honors College  
*Honors:* Board of Governors Scholar; Commerce Bank Emerging Leader



**Mary Jane Fait**

Attorney

Ms. Fait has decades of experience specializing in plaintiffs' complex antitrust, securities fraud and consumer fraud class actions involving a wide range of industries, appearing before federal district and appellate courts throughout the United States. She has served in leadership positions and has generated millions of dollars in damages for aggrieved class members. Before coming to Paul LLP, she served as a partner in two national class action law firms.

*Court Admissions*

New York

Illinois

U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 3rd Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois

U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York

U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan

*Education*

Cornell Law School, Ithaca, NY, J.D.

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL

B.A., Economics



### **David Bodenheimer**

Associate

David focuses his practice on complex antitrust litigation, class actions, mass torts, pharmaceutical drug and medical device litigation, and medical malpractice. David joined Paul LLP in 2022 after graduating Valedictorian from the University of Missouri-Kansas School of Law. During law school, David was a Research Assistant; worked as a legal research and writing Teaching Assistant; served as Vice-Magister of Phi Delta Phi, an international legal honors society; founded an organization; served on the UMKC Law Review staff; and competed in the Ellison Moot Court Competition, placing second overall. He interned at Copilevitz, Lam & Raney, P.C., a firm specializing in First Amendment law, and Paul LLP. Prior to law school, David participated in Boy Scouts of America and earned the rank of Eagle Scout in 2013.

#### *Court Admissions*

Missouri, 2022

U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 10th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri

#### *Education*

University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law, 2022 J.D.

Valedictorian, *Summa Cum Laude*

Missouri State University, 2019

B.S., Fashion Merchandising & Design, *Cum Laude*



## **Ryan Heffner**

Associate

Ryan focuses his practice on the discovery phase of complex litigation. Ryan joined Paul LLP in 2022 after practicing in the government sector for over five years.

While attending Campbell University, Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, Ryan interned with Mayer Brown in Düsseldorf, Germany. Ryan worked on complex international mergers and acquisitions.

Ryan is a native of Cleveland, Ohio. He enjoys spending time with his Golden Retriever, Regan, in his free time.

### *Court Admissions*

Virginia, 2016

District of Columbia, 2018

U.S. Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit, 2019

U.S. Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit, 2019

### *Education*

American University, School of Public Affairs

2020 M.A., Public Administration and Policy

Campbell University, Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law

2016 J.D.

Eckerd College

2013 B.A., Political Science and History



**Sydney Michels**

Associate

Sydney focuses her practice on complex antitrust litigation, class actions, and mass torts. Sydney joined Paul LLP in 2023 after beginning her practice as a staff attorney for

Kansas Legal Services.

*Court Admissions*

Washington, 2021

Kansas, 2021

*Education*

Gonzaga University School of Law  
2021 J.D.

Washington State University  
2017 B.S. Political Science, *cum laude*



**Haley Hawn**

Associate

Haley joined Paul LLP in 2024 following a two-year clerkship for the Hon. Sarah E. Warner at the Kansas Court of Appeals. During law school, Haley received the Latshaw Criminal Law Award for excellence in criminal law; served as a teaching assistant for UMKC's legal research and writing program; was a UMKC Law Review staff member; and competed in the Ellison Moot Court Competition, winning an award for best brief and top overall advocate. Haley has been involved with Big Brothers and Big Sisters Kansas City since 2021. She is excited to advocate for safe and responsible industry practices and will focus her practice on complex antitrust litigation, class actions, and mass torts.

*Court Admissions*

Kansas, 2022

U.S. District Court, District of Kansas

*Education*

William Jewell College

2019, Political Science & Communication

University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law

2022 J.D.



## **Ben Wietharn**

Associate

Ben joined Paul LLP Trial Attorneys in 2025 with a desire to work in an intellectually stimulating environment while making a direct impact on the lives of wronged individuals.

Ben graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law in 2023. While at UMKC, he was a member of the Mock Trial Team and was given the Order of Barristers Award. Ben began his career at a litigation defense firm prior to joining Paul LLP Trial Attorneys. He is active in the community and is a board member of the Young Lawyers Section of the Lawyers Association of Kansas City.

Ben focuses his practice on complex litigation and antitrust matters.

### *Court Admissions*

Missouri, 2023

Kansas, 2025

### *Education*

University of Missouri, Kansas City School of Law, 2023, J.D., *magna cum laude*, *The Order of Barristers Award*

Kansas State University, 2019



**Megan Duffield**

Associate

Megan joined Paul LLP with a desire to represent a wide variety of individuals across the nation and to make positive and impactful change within industries and within people's daily lives.

Megan graduated *summa cum laude* from Tulane University School of Law with Pro Bono Honors. While at Tulane, she was senior editor of the Tulane Journal of Technology and Intellectual Property and completed directed research under Professor Brian L. Frye with a focus on the Theory of Property and Corporate Governance within the Music Streaming Industry. She was active in several organizations including the Tulane Business Law Society, the Tulane First-Generation Law Students Panel, and the Tulane Women in Law organization.

*Court Admissions*

Missouri, 2024

*Education*

Tulane University School of Law, 2024, J.D.

University of Missouri, 2021, *summa cum laude*





**Astrid Reyes Baez**

Associate

Astrid Reyes Baez has extensive experience with legal research, with a specialty regarding the statutes of limitations for personal injury and product liability claims under different state laws. Examining evidence, auditing documents, and refining complex legal information into concise and comprehensible summaries for efficient review and analysis are just a few of Astrid's areas of expertise.

Astrid was born and raised on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico. She completed her undergraduate studies in Psychology at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, and then made the decision to pursue a career in law. Astrid obtained her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Puerto Rico School of Law and has been actively practicing law ever since.

During her law school years, she excelled as a law clerk in the San Juan Judicial Center. Additionally, she actively participated in Proyecto ADN Post-Sentencia and put her many talents to use in the Legal Assistance Clinic for Discrimination for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity of the University of Puerto Rico School of Law.

In 2021, she embarked on her journey as an attorney, dedicating her expertise to mass torts and personal injury law firms. However, driven by a desire for further professional growth, she undertook the notary public exam, successfully obtaining the esteemed title of a Notary Public attorney.

Astrid comes from a background heavily focused on mass torts and multi-district litigations. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Paul LLP Trial Attorneys. She speaks Spanish fluently and is licensed to practice in the United States & Puerto Rico.

*Education*

University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus

Psychology

University of Puerto Rico School of Law, 2020, J.D.



**Natalia Barquet Hornback**

**Associate**

Natalia comes to Paul LLP with several years of experience in mass tort litigation. She earned her J.D. in 2015 and has an extensive background in family law, corporate law, gender inequality, domestic violence, and sexism cases. Natalia is a Notary Public Attorney and is fluent in English and Spanish.