



MELISSA L. ROMERO

Partner

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Melissa Romero focuses on complex commercial litigation for sophisticated clients across various practice areas. She represents clients in a wide range of disputes and industries, including franchise, telecommunications, automotive, oil & gas, and energy matters. She has substantial experience developing and implementing national litigation, trial, and settlement strategies, taking and defending depositions, managing complex discovery and motions practice, and handling hearings and trials.

EDUCATION

University of Denver Sturm College of Law, J.D., 2014, *Denver University Law Review*, Executive Board Articles Editor

University of Denver, 2014, Masters of Social Work

Colorado College, B.A., 2006, Philosophy; Minor, Spanish

GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Law Clerk to The Honorable Christine M. Arguello of the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado

Appellate Law Clerk to The Honorable Terry Fox of the Colorado Court of Appeals

Judicial Intern to The Honorable David Furman of the Colorado Court of Appeals

Judicial Intern to The Honorable Angela Arkin, 18th Judicial District (retired)

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Fluent Spanish speaker
Civil Litigation Clinic, Student Attorney

Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center

Bilingual Legal and Social Work Intern

Jefferson County Office of the Public Defender, Social Work Intern
Colorado Succeeds, Education Policy Intern

ADMISSIONS

Colorado

HIGHLIGHTS

- Won partial summary judgment and dismissal of product liability claims brought against a national automobile manufacturer based on unsupported allegations of a design defect in the vehicle's occupant restraint system.
- Won an arbitration for one of the nation's largest beauty and wellness franchisors.
- Won a directed verdict for a regional bank in a Colorado Wage Claim Act trial.
- Won complete summary judgment of all seven claims brought against WTO's commercial client in an employment matter involving unsupported allegations of wrongful termination, retaliation, and age discrimination.
- Won a preliminary injunction for a national fitness franchisor against three competing fitness and nutrition studios that had stolen our client's trade secrets, infringed on its trademarks, committed fraud, and breached non-compete obligations.
- Serves as counsel in numerous high-stakes commercial and franchise proceedings involving allegations of wrongful termination, franchise disclosure violations, breach of supplier requirements, fraud, breach of contract, trademark infringement, trade secret misappropriation, and more.
- Won multiple injunctions in various states in arbitration, state court, and federal court, including matters involving varied commercial issues, including theft of trade secrets, trademark infringement, non-compete violations, and breach of contract.

INDUSTRIES

- Real Estate
- Professional Services
- Consumer Products & Services
- Telecommunications
- Oil & Gas
- Energy

PRACTICE AREAS

- Commercial Litigation
- Antitrust & Competition
- Franchise & Distribution
- Product Liability
- Employment
- Legal Professional Liability

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- Appellate

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BIOGRAPHY

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Before joining WTO, Melissa worked as a law clerk to The Honorable Christine M. Arguello of the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado and The Honorable Terry Fox of the Colorado Court of Appeals.

Melissa graduated from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law where she received a full-tuition Chancellor's Scholarship and served as the Executive Board Articles Editor of the Denver University Law Review. She also received numerous honors and awards during law school, including the Reese Persuasive Writing Award, the Hartje Objective Writing Award, and several Scholastic Excellence Awards, which are given to the top law student in each class.

CASES

Commercial, Franchise, and Employment

- Won a complete victory following a four-day arbitration for the nation's largest beauty and wellness franchisor, which was accused of franchise disclosure violations, violations of unfair competition laws, and breach of contract. WTO also successfully countersued for breach of contract and trade secret misappropriation, obtained preliminary and permanent injunctions, recovered liquidated damages, and secured an award of attorneys' fees and costs.
- Won a directed verdict on a Colorado Wage Claim Act claim and secured voluntary dismissal of defamation and punitive damages claims for a large regional bank the night before closing arguments in a five-day trial after four-plus years of litigation.
- Won complete summary judgment of all seven claims brought against WTO's commercial client in an employment matter involving unsupported allegations of wrongful termination, retaliation, and age discrimination.
- Won a preliminary injunction for a national fitness franchisor against three competing fitness and nutrition studios that had stolen our client's trade secrets, infringed on its trademarks, committed fraud, and breached non-compete obligations.

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- Serves as counsel in numerous high-stakes commercial and franchise proceedings involving allegations of wrongful termination, franchise disclosure violations, breach of supplier requirements, fraud, breach of contract, trademark infringement, trade secret misappropriation, and more.
- Won multiple injunctions in various states in arbitration, state court, and federal court, including matters involving varied commercial issues, including theft of trade secrets, trademark infringement, non-compete violations, and breach of contract.
- Obtained a favorable settlement for real estate professional in breach of contract and fraudulent misrepresentation action involving over \$50 million in claimed damages.
- Successfully defended a national telecommunications company in high-stakes dispute involving unsupported allegations of trade secret theft and unjust enrichment, including by bringing counterclaims for fraud, breach of contract, civil conspiracy, and tortious interference with contract.
- Representing a nation-leading provider of dialysis services in multi-million-dollar commercial dispute.

Professional Malpractice and Product Liability

- Won partial summary judgment and dismissal of product liability claims brought against a national automobile manufacturer based on unsupported allegations of a design defect in the vehicle's occupant restraint system.
- Obtained a favorable defense settlement in a medical malpractice case following the first few days of a jury trial. Handled numerous aspects of trial including witness preparation, motions in limine, depositions, and jury instructions.
- Drafted pleadings, dispositive motions, and mediation statements for a professional malpractice case that resulted in a favorable settlement for WTO's clients.
- Represented an appliance manufacturer in a product liability class action that settled favorably.

Pro Bono

- Won complete administrative closure of removal proceedings, allowing WTO's asylum client and her minor son to remain in the United States with work authorization, indefinitely.
- Won preliminary injunction for WTO's client under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction, preventing WTO's client's former partner from removing his children from the State of Colorado during the pendency of the Hague matter.

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- Settled a breach of contract case brought by a national bank against WTO's client on favorable terms, reducing the client's payment to under 12% of the plaintiff's original demand.

TEACHING POSITIONS

DU Graduate School of Social Work

Adjunct Professor, The Law of Family and Child, 2015-2018

Allen Elementary School in Austin, TX

Bilingual Third Grade Teacher, 2006-2010

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

Colorado

U.S. District Court, D. Colorado

U.S. District Court, D. New Jersey

U.S. District Court, D. New Mexico

LEGAL MEMBERSHIPS, ACTIVITIES & HONORS

The Best Lawyers in America

Ones to Watch - Commercial Litigation, 2021-2025

Ones to Watch - Litigation - Labor and Employment, 2022-2025

Ones to Watch - Product Liability Litigation, 2023-2025

Colorado Super Lawyers

Rising Stars, Business Litigation, 2023-2024

Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center

Former Board Member

Law Firm Coalition for Racial Equity

Firm Liaison

Law School...Yes We Can!

Program Mentor

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

Fellow, 2023

Spanish Speaking Lawyers' Committee of the Colorado Bar Association

Former Vice Chair, Member

Colorado General Counsel Mentor Program, 2021-2023

Colorado Women's Bar Association, Member

Colorado Hispanic Bar Association, Member

Our Courts Hispanic Outreach Committee

Member and Volunteer Presenter

Project Safeguard Legal Clinics, Former Interpreter

Legal Nights at Mi Casa Legal Resource Center, Former Interpreter

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ARTICLES & PRESENTATIONS

- Co-Author, "The Use of Court Appointed Experts and Masters in Civil Cases," 46 Colo. Law. 1, (January 2017).
- "Making Space for Cultural Differences in Child Welfare," 38 NACC: Guardian 6, (August 2016).
- "Connick v. Thompson: Forsaking Constitutional Due Process for Fear of Flooding Litigation and Loss of Municipal Autonomy," 89 DENV. U.L. REV. 771, (December 2012).