

# *Women* 2018 IN LAW

Welcome to our annual Women in Law issue. We are pleased to feature several prominent Minnesota lawyers. These female attorneys not only excel in their profession, they are leaders in the legal community.



ARTHUR, CHAPMAN, KETTERING  
SMETAK & PIKALA, P.A.

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

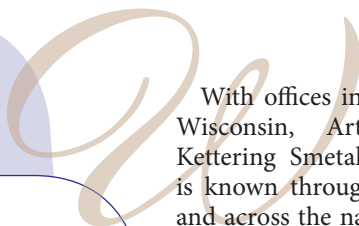
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# ARTHUR CHAPMAN KETTERING SMETAK & PIKALA P.A.

*Good People Giving Good Counsel*

WRITTEN BY HALEY WILSON FREEMAN



With offices in Minnesota and Wisconsin, Arthur Chapman Kettering Smetak & Pikala P.A. is known throughout the region and across the nation for top-tier legal expertise delivered by people of outstanding character. The firm exemplifies its motto: “Good Litigators. Good People. Good Counsel.”

Since 1974, the firm’s experienced trial lawyers have worked purposefully to achieve favorable results for their clients in civil and business matters across a variety of practice areas. With over 50 attorneys, Arthur Chapman brings big-firm assets to bear on clients’ problems, while maintaining the agility and high-touch service of a smaller practice.

Arthur Chapman’s well-defined core values reflect its commitment to legal excellence by acknowledging that success begins with an environment of respect, creativity and growth. The firm celebrates people’s differences and sees those variations of talents and perspectives as vital to its collective success. As a result, it embraces a robust diversity plan that extends beyond its own walls to include clients and community.

Arthur Chapman is a 2018 Minnesota Women Lawyers (MWL) partner, demonstrating the firm’s commitment to MWL’s mission to advance the success of women lawyers and strive for a just society.

In a firm where nearly half of the attorneys are women, nine are shareholders. Each took a moment to reflect on why she chooses to practice at Arthur Chapman, how the firm is fulfilling its commitment to diversity and inclusion, and how the firm supports her in achieving work/life balance.

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### **Sally J. Ferguson**

Ferguson has been practicing law for more than 30 years. She has tried and arbitrated more than 100 cases and devotes her practice to litigation. Her extensive experience includes

defending hospitals, clinics, medical professionals, railroads, schools, clergy and attorneys.

“As a young lawyer, Arthur Chapman provided excellent teachers, mentors and supporters to advance my career. In addition to that support and the opportunity to try cases which continues today, I was provided ample opportunities for leadership positions. These positions included membership on the board of directors, compensation committee, and chair of the professional liability group. The firm continues to support my involvement in various professional organizations outside the firm such as the American College of Trial Lawyers, American Board of Trial Advocates, International Society of Barristers and International Academy of Trial Lawyers.

“My legal career at Arthur Chapman began 30 years ago at a time when women did not have as many opportunities as they do today. The firm provided then and continues to provide ample opportunities for young associates to work with clients and try cases. My partners and I work hard to ‘pay forward’ to associates, law school students and others the opportunities which we received at Arthur Chapman over the years.”



### **Christine L. Tuft**

Tuft’s practice focuses around assisting both insured and self-insured clients with matters related to workers’ compensation law. Her clients know her as an aggressive advocate who

understands their businesses and will help them reach their desired resolution, whether through settlement or by taking a case to trial.

“I have been practicing at Arthur Chapman for more than 25 years. Any litigation-based practice is difficult and time consuming. It is hard to find the proverbial ‘work-life balance’ when your calendar is dependent upon the court’s calendar. My practice requires not only time spent on cases and responding to client needs, but also significant time marketing and maintaining client relationships. The firm supports these efforts through providing resources for marketing and being a leader in providing technology to work from home or other locations. Ultimately, however, the reason I have stayed in this practice and at Arthur Chapman for so long is my colleagues, including my mentors, my partners and my fabulous team. The firm has grown and changed significantly over the last 25 years. However, we have worked hard to maintain our collegial culture and commitment to our core values which include being fully engaged as professionals and respecting and accommodating flexible work styles.”



### **Shayne M. Hamann**

Since the inception of her legal career, Hamann has engaged almost exclusively in cases related to automobile and no-fault litigation. Her extensive experience includes automobile cases, insurance coverage and fraud, premise liability, commercial transportation, auto glass claims and the defense of all types of personal injury-related claims.

“I was hired as a lateral attorney more than 12 years ago. I came to the firm with a rich insurance defense background having worked as a litigator at the in-house legal counsel office for Farmers Insurance. I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity immediately upon joining the firm to be able to contribute and steadily grow a solid book of civil litigation work.

“As a shareholder at the firm, I am fortunate to be supported by my colleagues/mentors and also my fabulous team in my professional development both inside and outside of the firm. I am the chair of the firm’s automobile and no-fault law practice group and serve as the firm’s pro bono coordinator. I am the immediate past president of the Twin Cities Claims Association and serve on the Minnesota Women Lawyers leadership council and the Minnesota Supreme Court’s no-fault standing committee. I am also actively involved in the numerous extra-curricular, church and school activities of my three children.”



### **Susan K. Conley**

Working alongside insurers, employers and self-insured entities, Conley works to resolve workers' compensation and general liability cases, and has done so for more than 25 years.

She also represents clients in various liability cases, including motor vehicle accidents, fire litigation, products liability and premises liability. Conley has special expertise in occupational exposure, traumatic brain injury (TBI) and complex medical claims.

"For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be an attorney. Not just an attorney but a litigator. I was drawn to being in court and arguing the merits of a case. Fast forward 30 years, and I am still in litigation, handling workers' compensation defense and still having fun. After working with staff counsel for 20-plus years, I chose to go into private practice. I chose Arthur Chapman because the firm had a great reputation. The firm fit my philosophy: hard work, good litigators and good people. There is just no better place to work.

"I am LGBT and remember my first experience at the firm on this issue. Jim Pikala approached me after I started, saying, 'You are very welcome here. And, if anyone gives you a problem because of your lifestyle, you let me know.' It was a wonderful expression of welcome. In terms of work-life balance, the firm is equally exceptional. My spouse was diagnosed with breast cancer within a few months of my hire. I applauded the firm for allowing modified schedules. This is wonderful for attorneys with young families and those who may need time to deal with aging parents or other life issues."



### **Kafi C. Linville**

Linville is chair of the firm's construction practice group and concentrates her practice in the areas of commercial and residential construction defect litigation. She also represents clients in other areas of defense, including automobile liability, premises liability and general liability.

"After practicing law in a smaller firm, I wanted to move to a place where I could grow and succeed in an environment that would support my professional goals as a litigation attorney. Arthur Chapman has that reputation. In the past 11 years, I have learned invaluable lessons from mentors and colleagues who are now my partners. Though the firm has grown throughout the years, there is still a 'small firm' feel where I have developed strong friendships and have the unique opportunity to work as a team to provide the best legal counsel possible.

"In the years I have been at Arthur Chapman, the firm has always been supportive and encouraging of my own professional goals, including development in leadership. I have been able to build a successful construction defect and personal injury defense litigation practice with the help of many people at the firm. Internally, I have been encouraged and supported in serving as the chair of the construction practice group and on the associate and shareholder compensation committees. The firm also supports and appreciates involvement in a variety of outside organizations."



### **Susan E. Larson**

Assisting insurers, third party administrators and self-insured employers in both Minnesota and Wisconsin, Larson concentrates her practice in the area of workers' compensation.

Her practice is split evenly between Minnesota and Wisconsin, and she regularly advises clients regarding situations involving the nuances of law between the two states.

"I started at Arthur Chapman in 2006, two weeks after I was sworn in. I stayed because of the flexibility and the people. My now partners supported my drive and motivation to work hard and build a successful and self-sufficient workers' compensation practice in Wisconsin (essentially a new firm practice area), as well as a practice in Minnesota. The firm provided resources to grow this practice. An example is our relatively new Hudson, Wisconsin office, which has significantly increased marketing opportunities for me and others interested in pursuing a Wisconsin practice.

"Arthur Chapman provides other resources for those who have initiative and want to build a practice, including the technology needed for flexible work hours. I have two elementary age girls and can leave the office to be at their events whenever my court calendar allows. I can work at home on my laptop in the evening to balance the

time away from the office. Finally, our attorneys are supportive of each other. Many shareholders are willing to be a sounding board, provide ideas and even travel with attorneys new to the firm to aide in marketing opportunities, without any expectation that the shareholder will get the business.”



### **Noelle L. Schubert**

Schubert’s diverse practice includes representing railroad companies, corporations, small businesses and insurance carriers in several areas of law. Clients call on Noelle’s experience for representation and counsel on the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA), the Federal Railroad Safety Act (FRSA), workers’ compensation, employment law, appellate law and commercial litigation.

“I choose to practice at Arthur Chapman because of the people I work with and the clients that we serve. In my 11 years with the firm, I have developed strong friendships and professional relationships with fellow shareholders, associates, paralegals, staff and clients. Having a positive team of people to work with makes practicing law more enjoyable.

“As a lawyer, work/life balance can be an elusive concept. Work is necessarily a large part of your life. The clients we service at Arthur Chapman have needs that require prompt and close attention. As lawyers, our job is to offer superior legal service to protect their interests. Often, this means working after hours and on weekends. Thankfully, Arthur Chapman has a team of smart and experienced lawyers, paralegals and staff that I can rely upon to help address client needs when I am not available. This team approach serves our clients well and allows for a more manageable work/life balance.



### **Sarah E. Bushnell**

Bushnell is chair of the firm’s employment law practice group and focuses on solving a variety of complicated business and employment problems

consistent with her clients’ goals. She takes cases to successful conclusion through both litigation and appeals. Bushnell also defends professionals in regulatory investigations and malpractice actions.

“Arthur Chapman promotes a culture that is affirming and team-oriented. It has drawn and kept many talented professionals and has kept me here despite other opportunities.

“I really enjoy my work, and I have a busy family life. My husband is a lawyer and is in a graduate program, and we have three school-aged children who are all busy with school and activities. It is important to me to be an engaged part of their lives. Arthur Chapman affirmatively encourages work/life balance and flexible scheduling as part of its core values, and it supports those values by treating its lawyers as professionals who manage their own schedules and by promoting shareholders who have contracted for reduced time schedules.”



### **Jennifer K. Eggers**

Eggers represents railroads, rail equipment manufacturers and owners, chemical manufacturers and medical device manufacturers in numerous state and federal courts

on matters surrounding railroad and product litigation. Clients rely on her vast knowledge of the railroad industry and her experience working with the intricacies of product liability matters.

“I left my firm to join Arthur Chapman and it has been one of the best career decisions I have made. Before switching firms, I talked to future clients and they suggested that Arthur Chapman was the place to go to get their work. The Arthur Chapman lawyers were warm and welcoming. They appreciated my knowledge and expertise in the railroad area and gave me great opportunities. The firm is collegial and invites input from all into management and the practice of law on individual cases.

“One thing I definitely wanted was the ability to work from home on an as-needed basis. I have two very busy teen children and wanted to be able to attend school and sporting events without being made to feel too guilty for not being in the office from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., even when bringing in revenue. Both of my prior firms had said they supported that model, but it simply did not play out that way. Arthur Chapman truly supports work/life balance, not only through understanding and approving of working from home, but through providing the right tools and technology to make that work!”