

Local litigation firms

Highly recommended

Butzel Long

Bodman

Dickinson Wright

Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone

Recommended

Barris Sott Denn & Driker

Dykema Gossett

Miller Johnson

Varnum Riddering Schmidt & Howlett

Warner Norcross & Judd

Michigan

Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick found himself in trouble when reports surfaced that he lied under oath about a relationship stemming from text messages with former Chief of Staff Christine Beatty. The court charged Kilpatrick with perjury and obstruction of justice, among several other felony charges. The situation remains complicated after additional texts to other women on his phone also surfaced, and he took a brief trip to Canada, without telling authorities of his plans.

Highly recommended firms

Butzel Long has a strong team of more than 240 attorneys, with many focusing on litigation and dispute resolution. The firm covers a range of client industries such as real estate, transportation, pharmaceuticals, media, insurance and construction. The firm takes pride in its client relationships by “gaining a substantial understanding of each of our clients through industry-focused research and knowledge management,” and creating a “personalized attorney-client relationship to satisfy each client’s unique situation, concerns and requirements.” With offices throughout Michigan, the firm has satellite locations in China and Mexico. The firm recently added lawyers to the intellectual property and business litigation group and continues to expand services in New York through the addition of several lawyers, a few of whom joined the firm from Nixon Peabody. They are “good litigators with good business practices,” says one client. “They do a great job.”

Clients and peers appreciate the work of **Keefe Brooks** who focuses on securities litigation and medical malpractice defense. One recent client includes the University of Michigan and the Regents of the University of Michigan in a case involving the school’s football stadium and its access to fans with disabilities who may use wheelchairs. Chairman of the firm **Philip Kessler** handles business disputes involving antitrust, distributorship, pharmaceutical, contract, intellectual property and merger and acquisition litigation. Clients depend on him for major “bet the company” matters. **Edward Kronk**, co-chair of the litigation department, dedicates his practice to personal injury and product liability cases. **Richard Rassel** receives recognition for his work on complex business litigation matters with an emphasis on media law and First Amendment cases. **Charlotte Carne** practices in the Ann Arbor office within labor and employment

law. While she has experience handling complex litigation matters, she also often advises clients on how to avoid significant lawsuits that may hurt operations. Senior attorney, **William Kohler** focuses his strengths on the automotive industry, and spent several years in house at DaimlerChrysler. In relation to his automotive work, he has managed product liability lawsuits.

With offices throughout the state of Michigan, **Bodman** describes itself as a “team-oriented” atmosphere set on “providing the highest quality legal services to clients” across the nation. One client admits to switching from another firm to Bodman because “they came highly recommended,” and notes that they provide “excellent services.” More than 40 attorneys dedicate their time to litigation, with practice areas including commercial, intellectual property, international arbitration, internal investigations and employment law. Naturally, the Michigan automotive industry is a key player in the market at the firm. Clients include Chrysler, the Detroit Medical Center, Lear Corporation and The Ann Arbor News. Another client notes that the firm is “knowledgeable, skilled and very practical, which is important to business litigation.” Recent case work includes successful representation of LaBrecque, Jackson, Price & Roehl in a suit involving portfolio mismanagement. After a two-day trial, Bodman lawyers received a complete victory for the client when the plaintiff actually admitted “to being reckless in not pulling the plug” on the investments earlier.

George Kemsley receives praise for his work in business litigation representing banks and other financial institutions, and works heavily within product liability cases. Clients praise the work of **Dennis Levasseur** in his securities, First Amendment, employment and intellectual property litigation. “He’s gone to court [for us] on

“Another client notes that the firm is ‘knowledgeable, skilled and very practical, which is important to business litigation.’”

- *Bodman*

Local litigation stars

Stephen Afendoulis
Varnum Riddering Schmidt & Howlett

Peter Alter
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

Joseph Aviv
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

Keefe Brooks
Butzel Long

Lawrence Campbell
Dickinson Wright

Michael Cooney
Dykema Gossett

Thomas Cranmer
Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone

Eugene Driker
Barris Sott Denn & Driker

James Feeney
Dykema Gossett

Dennis Haffey
Dykema Gossett

Michael Hartmann
Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone

Raymond Henney
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

William Holmes
Warner Norcross & Judd

George Kemsley
Bodman

Philip Kessler
Butzel Long

Edward Kronk
Butzel Long

Kathy Lang
Dickinson Wright

John Muth
Miller Johnson

Edward Pappas
Dickinson Wright

Clarence Pozza
Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone

Richard Rassel
Butzel Long

John Scott
Dickinson Wright

Joseph Shannon
Bodman

Mark Stern
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

Douglas Wagner
Warner Norcross & Judd

Sharon Woods
Barris Sott Denn & Driker

Carl von Ende
Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone

Richard Zuckerman
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

several matters, and we've always won," says one client. Recent case work includes successfully representing the Detroit Medical Center in a high-profile lawsuit resulting in a victory for the client. **Joseph Shannon** also receives high praise, with one client saying, "[He was] excellent in the courtroom," and even established "a rapport with the opposing witnesses." Shannon focuses his time on commercial, construction and employment law. **Thomas Bruetsch** focuses his litigation work on troubled automotive suppliers. One recent client includes the Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line Corporation. **Alan Harris** spends much of his time with intellectual property involving copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets and technology.

With more than 70 first-chair trial lawyers, **Dickinson Wright** has a strong litigation team with loyal clients. Michigan offices include

Michelle Alamo a "very competent" lawyer. Her skills include litigation in commercial, construction and patent issues. **Geoffrey Fields** spends much of his time in commercial litigation with past clients including Caterpillar Financial Services and JP Morgan Chase.

Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn has offices throughout the state with more than 200 lawyers. Peers recognize the litigation work of the firm in areas of commercial litigation, securities and white-collar criminal defense. The firm describes its approach as "aggressive," and believes that a "strong correlation exists between the degree of proactiveness in defense and the results obtained." Clients for the firm include Consumers Power Company, Target, The Detroit River Tunnel Partnership and Sorenson Capital Partners.

"They're good at just calling up and bouncing ideas off of you. The long term relationship is very important to them."

- *Dickinson Wright*

Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Bloomfield Hills and Lansing. One client says, "They have state-wide coverage of our litigation disputes, and broad based litigation experience." The firm has several practice areas including commercial, business, securities, insurance, product liability, intellectual property and alternative dispute resolution. Recent case work involves successful representation of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan in putative national class actions and the Ford Motor Company in contract, trade secret and Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act matters. "They take the time to understand the business. They understand the automotive industry," says one client. "They're good at just calling up and bouncing ideas off of you. The long-term relationship is very important to them."

Lawrence Campbell represents clients within commercial, business, securities and employment litigation. A few notable clients include Deloitte & Touche, Ernst & Young and Enterprise Rent-a-Car. Clients often recognized the work of **Kathleen Lang**. One client says, "I find her exceptionally responsive," and notes that she often "thinks of the common sense approach," rather than complicate an issue. Lang works on lawsuits developing within the automotive sector with clients including the Ford Motors and Magna International. **Edward Pappas** has significant experience with commercial, business, trade secret and real estate litigation. He spends much of that time in the automotive industry and recently represented a manufacturer in a contractual and business dispute. Clients call

Peter Alter focuses his litigation work on matters of insurance and intellectual property, and also involves himself in community matters including the National Anti-Defamation League. **Joseph Aviv** assists clients with class action litigation and matrimonial matters that involve the "valuation of family businesses" after divorces, and recently involve stockholder and international securities fraud disputes. **Raymond Henney** spends his time litigating cases for clients in corporate and securities matters. Representation includes a university's endowment managers to technology companies. Clients and peers praise the securities and trademark litigation strengths of **Mark Stern**. He handles complex commercial cases including defending "claims against a computer manufacturer for breach of a software license agreement." **Richard Zuckerman** handles both securities and white-collar criminal defense litigation matters. One recent client includes the Detroit Free Press. Associate **Michael Hindelang** serves as co-head of the e-discovery group at the firm. He focuses his work on corporate litigation matters and has significant first-chair trial experience in Michigan courts. Also an associate, **Andrew Lievens** focuses his time on representing clients in commercial, securities and e-discovery.

One of Michigan's largest firms, **Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone** earns praise for its reach in various aspects of law. With offices throughout the state, the firm recently opened offices in Chicago, Boston and Ontario, Canada. Litigation practice

Future stars

Michelle Alamo
Dickinson Wright

Laura Baucus
Dykema Gossett

Thomas Bruetsch
Bodman

Jason Byrne
Warner Norcross & Judd

Charlotte Carne
Butzel Long

Catherine Dobrowsky
Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone

Geoffrey Fields
Dickinson Wright

Joseph Gavin
Miller Johnson

Alan Harris
Bodman

Michael Hindelang
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

Monica Inhulsen
Miller Johnson

Kevin Kalczynski
Barris Sott Denn & Driker

William Kohler
Butzel Long

Krista Lenart
Dykema Gossett

Andrew Lievense
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn

Matthew Nelson
Warner Norcross & Judd

Brett Rendeiro
Varnum Riddering Schmidt & Howlett

Robert Roth
Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone

areas include antitrust and trade regulation, aviation, automotive, energy, insurance, securities and telecommunications. The firm handles many cases including one for a large furniture manufacturer in a case “to handle a terminated dealer’s breach of contract and antitrust suit.” The firm continues to expand its health law practice with the addition of new attorneys in Chicago and Ann Arbor.

Thomas Cranmer focuses his work in areas of criminal defense litigation. Clients also use his skills in complex commercial matters. For real estate and construction litigation, clients and peers noted the work of **Michael Hartmann**, the firm’s current CEO. **Clarence Pozza** is often praised for his work in commercial litigation disputes as well as contract, product liability and insurance cases. Once head of the litigation department, **Carl von Ende** emphasizes antitrust, securities and intellectual property. Peers often praise his work in banking law cases. Associate **Catherine Dobrowsky** has extensive experience in intellectual property and is often called upon for her work in trademark and copyright disputes. **Robert Roth** also has significant intellectual property experience with an emphasis on patents.

Recommended firms

Litigation boutique **Barris Sott Denn & Driker** handles cases in both commercial and business law. The firm’s top goal is “to find practical, creative, efficient solutions for our clients,” and also “put matters under direct control of experienced attorneys, not filtered through layers of associates and paralegals.” This successful system has proven well for the firm as it continues to attract business from several industries. Past clients of the firm include Denali Development Group, Dow Chemical Company, United States Steel Corporation and Wayne County Airport Authority.

Founding member **Eugene Driker** focuses his time on complex business litigation. Case work includes “one of the state’s largest utilities in a \$500 million fraud and breach of contract action brought by a major industrial firm.” General Motors and Michigan Consolidated Gas Company are past clients. Senior member of the firm and chairman of the management committee, **Sharon Woods** handles the gamut of litigation, with emphasis in employment and commercial torts. **Kevin Kalczynski** handles an array of litigation and is well regarded for work representing real estate developers and “small companies in general corporate matters.”

Headquartered in Detroit, **Dykema Gossett** has a far reaching practice. With some 400 lawyers, more than half of whom are willing to try cases, the litigation team continues to grow. The firm regularly works in interdisciplinary teams in order to “respond rapidly, efficiently and cost-effectively to the most complex situations.” Practice areas in which the firm focuses include antitrust, toxic

tort, automotive, construction, medical malpractice, product liabilities and securities. One recent case involves the successful representation of American Honda Motor Company against a plaintiff claiming a defective airbag. In the end, the case was dismissed with prejudice and Honda recovered costs associated with the trial. Other notable clients include the Ford Motors, Bank of America, AstraZeneca and Kia Motors.

Michael Cooney handles litigation in several matters including product liability, mass tort, intellectual property and construction. One notable consumer product class action case involved the defense of an appliance manufacturer in a suit that arose from the “alleged premature failure of component parts.” **Dennis Haffey**, known for his performance in commercial litigation matters, has significant experience in state and federal courts. Shareholder disputes, business torts, professional malpractice and securities are just a few examples of the cases in which he represents clients. **James Feeney** excels in automotive defense and often handles cases regarding product liability and class actions. Recent litigation involves the successful representation of Findlay Ford Lincoln Mercury in a trial involving the limousine crash of the Detroit Red Wings. Plaintiffs tried to put blame on Findlay Ford for defective seat belt accessibility, but Feeney and others proved that the limousine company was actually at fault. **Laura Baucus’s** litigation work emphasizes consumer financial services and complex commercial matters such as, foreclosures, mortgage fraud and automotive supply disputes. **Krista Lenart** focuses her work on complex litigation matters involving intellectual property, product liability and education matters.

Located in Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, **Miller Johnson** provides an array of litigation services for clients in a “family oriented relationship.” The firm says that clients are treated like family because, “understanding their businesses and/or challenges is essential to providing good counsel.” Aside from strong client relationships, the firm strives to uphold a commitment to the community through programs like Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation and Hospice of Michigan. Recent client representation includes the on-going matter of Judge Steven Servaas, who is trying to keep his position on the District Court bench.

Peers frequently list **Jon Muth** as a top litigator for professional liability, environmental and intellectual property matters. He currently serves as part of a team of lawyers representing Judge Steven Servaas. Associates **Monica Inhulsen** and **Joseph Gavin** operate from the Grand Rapids office, and are part of the ever-growing litigation department.

Varnum Riddering Schmidt & Howlett

serves a range of clients throughout the Midwest. The firm describes itself as one that helps clients to, “identify opportunities, negotiate and close commercial transactions, win lawsuits and benefit from practical legal advice.” Companies as large as one of the “big three” automotive giants, to regional banks and health care organizations often come to the firm for legal advice. The Michigan Supreme Court recently appointed one attorney to a three year term on the Attorney Discipline Board. The committee decides on appeals made when an attorney’s ethical conduct is brought into question. Recent casework includes the owners of the Double JJ Resort in Rothbury trying to reorganize its finances.

Past chair of the trial group, **Stephen Afendoulis**’s work is praised for its focus on complex commercial, personal injury and unfair competition. Associate **Brett Rendeiro** has litigation experience in employment matters, and handles cases of employment-

based immigration and alternative dispute resolution.

Warner Norcross & Judd attorneys pride themselves on the strengths of their litigation team. They serve as counsel for top-name clients such as Consumers Energy, Daewoo North American and Haworth. Whirlpool also recently named the firm as national business litigation counsel for North America. The firm will handle “supplier disputes, distributor conflicts and related issues.” One recent case involved representing Kenneth Ray Adkins, a prisoner at Ionia Maximum Correctional Facility who alleged that a guard assaulted him in his cell and caused serious injuries. The court ruling eventually encouraged all members of the court “to revisit the issue en banc and affirm the power of the federal courts to order spoliation sanctions,” since the state of Michigan does not allow for such things in the present case. The firm continues to expand with recent additions to its litigation

team in areas of complex contract, insurance, tort and commercial litigation.

William Holmes focuses his work on banking, securities, environmental, corporate-control and class action defense litigation. He often represents banks and financial institutions in class actions and through the appeals process. **Douglas Wagner** is well known for his work in product liability defense cases. Past clients include Monsanto, Amway, Georgia-Pacific and Hart & Cooley. Associate **Jason Byrne** focuses his litigation strengths on complex insurance coverage disputes, often called on by policyholders to help resolve disputes with insurance carriers. One case result reached a jury verdict of more than \$2.3 million. With the Grand Rapids office, associate **Matthew Nelson** handles cases in bankruptcy, commercial and employment litigation matters. Representative clients include the Michigan Bankers Association and Defense Research Institute.