

Snell & Wilmer



Sarah M. Nakamoto

Associate | Orange County

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Main Bio

Sarah Nakamoto focuses her practice in defending companies against product liability, negligence, and general liability claims in state and federal courts, with an emphasis on the following industries: automotive; off-road vehicles and watercraft; amusement parks; appliances; medical devices; and other consumer products. She has defended companies in cases involving catastrophic personal injuries and wrongful death. Her work includes all aspects of the litigation process, including motion practice, witness preparation, discovery, and pretrial preparation. Sarah has deposed hundreds of plaintiffs and fact witnesses and has defended depositions of corporate representatives in various high-stakes litigation.

Representative Experience

- Defended American multinational automotive manufacturer against catastrophic injury, wrongful death, and significant property damage claims related to rollover accidents, crashworthiness, airbag performance, tire aging, seatbelts, seatback performance, post-collision fires, and occupant protection systems
- Defended multinational amusement park in cases involving premises liability claims and alleged personal injury
- Defended an American multinational appliances manufacturer in a water loss subrogation case involving a refrigerator
- Defended leading water heater manufacturer against negligence and product liability claims
- Defended a U.S. based medical device company against personal injury claims related to allegations of electrocution from a surgical suction pump
- Defended a U.S. based medical device company against allegations of personal injury involving cervical spine hardware
- Defended domestic and foreign manufacturers and suppliers of motorcycles and off-road vehicles in consumer warranty litigation
- Defended domestic and foreign manufacturers and suppliers of personal watercraft in consumer warranty litigation
- Defended an American multinational automotive manufacturer in state and federal court, including Judicial Council Coordinated Proceedings (JCCP) and Multidistrict Litigation (MDL), against

allegations of breach of warranty, fraudulent concealment, and Song-Beverly Act (California's Lemon Law) violations

- Defended a manufacturer of fall protection equipment against allegations of personal injury involving a personal fall arrest system
- Defended property owner against allegations of personal injury related to a fireplace on the premises
- Represented an American operator of assisted living communities in defense of a proposed class action involving allegations of insufficient staffing, misrepresentation, and fraud
- Represented individuals applying for a U Visa nonimmigrant status

Education

- University of California, College of the Law, San Francisco (J.D.)
 - CALI Awards for Highest Grade in Negotiations, Trial Advocacy I, Japanese Legal System, and Employment Law Clinic
 - Senior Technology Editor, Hastings Business Law Journal
 - Staff Editor, Hastings Communications and Entertainment Law Journal
 - Evidence Teaching Assistant
 - Legal Writing and Research Teaching Assistant
 - Remedies Research Assistant
- University of Southern California (B.A., Political Science, *cum laude*)
 - Minor in Law and Society
 - Blackstonians Pre-Law Honor Society
 - Staff Writer, Neon Tommy: Annenberg Digital News
 - USC Mock Trial Team

Professional Memberships & Activities

- Leadership Counsel on Legal Diversity (LCLD), Pathfinder Program (2022)
- Orange County Bar Association
- Orange County Women Lawyers Association
- Snell & Wilmer Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (2017-2022)
- Snell & Wilmer Community Involvement Committee

Representative Presentations & Publications

- "[Section 998's Cost-Shifting Provisions May Apply When Case Ends in Settlement](#)," Co-Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update Blog (July 27, 2023)
- "[Component-Part Manufacturers Are Not Required to Indemnify Retail Sellers Under California's Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act Unless Express Warranty Is Provided](#)," Co-Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update Blog (July 25, 2023)
- "[Purchasers of Vehicles from Private Party Sellers Have No Standing Under the Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act](#)," Co-Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update Blog (July 24, 2023)
- "[California Supreme Court Clarifies Possible Lemon Law Damages](#)," Co-Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update Blog (July 19, 2023)

- "[California Supreme Court Limits Consumer Lemon Law Protection to Vehicles Purchased in California](#)," Co-Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update Blog (July 17, 2023)
- "Growing & Nurturing Your Network," Co-Presenter, University of California, Irvine School of Law, Pre-Law Outreach Program (June 25, 2022)
- "[Service Contracts Are Not Express Warranties Under the Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act](#)," Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update (January 2, 2020)
- "[Collateral Source Rule Not Violated by References to Medical Insurance, Medicare and Social Security](#)," Co-Author, Snell & Wilmer Product Liability Update (May 14, 2019)

Professional Recognition & Awards

- [Southern California Super Lawyers, Rising Star, Personal Injury – Products: Defense](#) (2023, 2024)
- [Southern California Super Lawyers, Rising Star, Product Liability](#) (2022)
- [2021 Top Young Diverse Lawyers of OC](#), Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law (2021)

Community Involvement

- Mariposa Women and Family Center, Board Member (2019-2023)
- Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law
 - Firm Representative (2017-Present)
 - Secretary (2019-2020)
 - Board of Directors, Member (2019-2020)
- Orange County United Way - Snell & Wilmer Fundraising Campaign (2020-Present)
- Public Law Center
 - UCI Law Pro Bono Program, U-Visa Pro Bono Attorney (2018-Present)
 - Volunteers for Justice Dinner, Silent Auction Committee Member (2019-2021)
- Orange County Constitutional Rights Foundation, Mock Trial Judge (2018-Present)
- San Francisco District Attorney's Office, Volunteer (2015)
- Homeless Legal Services, Volunteer (2015)
- Elder Abuse Clinic, Volunteer (2015)
- IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Volunteer (2014)
- Public Counsel Cares, Volunteer (2012)
- Homeboy Industries, Volunteer (2012)

Previous Professional Experience

- Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, Law Clerk (2016)
- UC Hastings–Employment Clinic, Certified Law Student (2016)
- The Miller Law Firm, Law Clerk (2015)
- Quest Diagnostics, Intellectual Property Legal Intern (2015)
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, Judicial Extern to Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler (2014)
- Consumers' Law Group, Case Manager/Intern (2011-2013)

Bar Admissions

- California

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of California
- United States District Court, All Districts of California