

Michelle Thurber Czapski

Member

Troy

T 248-743-6056

F 248-743-6002

mzczapski@bodmanlaw.com



Michelle Thurber Czapski serves as Co-Chair of the Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Practice Group and Chair of the Insurance Practice Group. She has over three decades of experience representing major corporate clients in litigation and alternative dispute resolution proceedings and counseling clients with regard to business disputes, claims, decisions, and risk management issues.

She has successfully represented insurance and financial service companies, automotive and other product manufacturers, Tier-1 automotive suppliers, telecommunications companies, and pharmaceutical companies in matters involving product liability claims, consumer protection claims, insurance and ERISA disputes, contract matters, and a broad range of other commercial and business disputes.

Ms. Czapski serves as lead trial counsel and regional counsel for AIG/American General and its family of financial

practices & industries

Litigation and Alternative
Dispute Resolution
Employee Benefits and
Executive Compensation
Insurance
Automotive and Industrial

education

University of Michigan Law
School, J.D., *cum laude*
University of Michigan, B.A.,
with *high distinction*

admissions

Michigan

services companies with responsibility for insurance and related litigation throughout the Midwest. She also leads Bodman's representation MetLife as its Michigan ERISA litigation counsel. She is a certified mediator and serves in that capacity for private civil disputes. She is also listed as an approved case evaluator and mediator on several Michigan circuit courts.

In 2023, *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* selected Ms. Czapski as a "Michigan Go To Lawyer Power List" member for Business Litigation and in 2020 as a "Leader in the Law." *Crain's Detroit Business* honored her as one of Southeast Michigan's "Notable Women Lawyers" in 2017. *Michigan Super Lawyers 2024* lists her as one of the Top 50 Women Attorneys in Michigan. For many years, she has been listed in *Michigan Super Lawyers* under Business Litigation, Class Action/Mass Torts, and Insurance Coverage; *DBusiness* Top Lawyers under Insurance Law and Litigation-Insurance; and *Benchmark Litigation* as a Litigation Star. She is AV® Preeminent Peer Rated by Martindale-Hubbell.

HONORS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

- *Crain's Detroit Business* "Notable Litigators and Trial Attorneys" 2025
- *Chambers USA 2024*, Insurance, Litigation: General Commercial
- *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* "Go-To Lawyer Power List" for Business Litigation, 2023
- *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* "Leader in the Law," 2020
- *Crain's Detroit Business* "Notable Women Lawyers in Michigan," 2017
- *The Best Lawyers in America® 2021-2025*, Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, Litigation-Insurance
- *The Best Lawyers in America® 2025* Litigation – Insurance "Lawyer of the Year," Troy, Michigan
- *DBusiness* Magazine "Top Lawyers" 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018-2025, Insurance Law and Litigation-Insurance
- *Michigan Super Lawyers 2020-2024*, Top 50 Women
- *Michigan Super Lawyers 2023*, Top 100 Attorneys

- *Michigan Super Lawyers 2009-2024*, Business Litigation, Class Action/Mass Torts, and Insurance Coverage
- *Benchmark Litigation 2022-2025*, “Litigation Star”
- *Benchmark Litigation* Top 250 Women in Litigation, 2016-2017
- Martindale-Hubbell® AV Preeminent® Peer Rated for Highest Level of Professional Excellence; Endorsed for High Ethical Standing

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- State Bar of Michigan
- Fellow, Michigan State Bar Foundation
- American Inns of Court
 - Detroit Bar Association Chapter, Master of the Bench
- National Foundation for Judicial Excellence
 - Member, Board of Directors
- DRI
 - National Director, Board of Directors
 - Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Committee
 - Chair (2022-2024)
 - Vice Chair (2020-2022)
 - Seminar Chair (2016)
 - Commercial Litigation Committee
 - Chair (2017-2019)
 - Vice Chair (2015-2017)
 - Center for Law and Public Policy, Class Action Task Force
 - Class Action Seminar Chair (2015)

PUBLICATIONS

- *ABA ERISA Survey of Federal Circuits*, 2012, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024 editions, author and editor of chapter on the Sixth Circuit
- Co-author, “Originals, Copies, and Compilations,” *Introducing Evidence at Trial, Fourth Edition*, ICLE (2024)
- Co-author, “Arbitration of Business Ownership Disputes: Great in Theory, Not Always So in Practice,” Bodman Litigation Law Update (April 25, 2023)

- Co-Author (with Michael G. Costello), "COVID-10 Impact on the Insurance Industry," Bodman COVID-19 Response Team Update, March and May 2020
- "From the Chair" (final column as chair of the DRI Commercial Litigation Committee), *The Business Suit*, December 5, 2019
- "21st Century Issues in the Life Insurance World," DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar Manuscript, April 2018
- "Insurance Policy Recission Compendium," Michigan chapter, DRI, 2018
- "Defending Psychiatric Disability Claims: Distinguishing the Truly Disabled from the Malingerer," DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar Manuscript, April 2015
- "Mentoring" *The Business Suit*, November 2013
- "Managing Mental/Nervous Disability Claims-Current Trends," DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar Manuscript, April 2013
- "Who Pressed 'Enter' Anyway? Enforcing Contracts in an Electronic World," *For the Defense*, October 2012, Vol. 54, No. 10
- "Class Actions: Issues and Ethics in the Use of Offshore Vendors for Document Review," Manuscript, DRI Annual Meeting, October 2011
- "Beneficiary Jeopardy: Understanding the Answers to Conflicting and Bizarre Beneficiary Issues," DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Claims Seminar Manuscript, April 2010
- "The Sometimes Rocky Relationship Between 'Lead' and 'Local' Counsel: How to Make it Work," *The Business Suit* (DRI Commercial Litigation Committee Newsletter), February/March 2009
- *Insurance Law Settlements and Negotiations*, Aspatore Books, author of chapter entitled, "Helping The Client Make Smart Decisions," 2008
- *Introducing Evidence at Trial*, (ICLE), contributing author of chapters on Spoliation of Evidence, Entire Statement,

and Compilations and Summaries, 2007 (and periodic updates to present)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- “Don’t Fear the 30(b)(6)! Best Practices for Company Witness Depositions,” International Claim Association (ICA) Annual Educational Conference, October 3, 2023
- “Virtual Depositions: Best Practices Instead of Epic Fails,” Eastern Claims Conference, March 2021
- Moderator, “In-House Counsel Panel: Keeping Your Clients Happy,” DRI Commercial Litigation Seminar, May 2019
- “Insurance Law Basics,” Business Law Bootcamp Workshop, Michigan Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Nov. 2016 and Jan. 2017
- “Defending Psychiatric Disability Claims: Distinguishing the Truly Disabled from the Malingerer,” DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar, April 2015
- “Disability Insurance Basics,” DRI Boot Camp for New Life, Health and Disability Lawyers, November 2013
- “Deposition Techniques: The Purpose and Plan for Every Deposition,” Presenter and faculty member, ICLE Deposition Skills Workshop, June 9 – 11, 2013
- “Managing Mental/Nervous Disability Claims-Current Trends,” DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar, April 2013
- “Class Actions: Issues and Ethics in the Use of Offshore Vendors for Document Review,” DRI Annual Meeting, October 2011
- “Conducting Effective Jury Voir Dire,” MDTC Annual Meeting, May 2011
- “Beneficiary Jeopardy: Understanding the Answers to Conflicting and Bizarre Beneficiary Issues,” DRI Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar, April 2010
- Panelist, Arbitration Advocate, ICLE Advanced Negotiation and Dispute Resolution Workshop, March 2010

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Lead counsel representing a charitable foundation against securities fraud and conspiracy claims pending in Jefferson County, Colorado.
- Won summary judgement and subsequent appeal to the Michigan Court of Appeals on behalf of a global insurance company in a case challenging the company's electronic transaction processes.
- Lead counsel representing appliance manufacturer in purported class action alleging defect in 44 million microwave ovens nationwide.
- Won a defense verdict in a jury trial in an action claiming negligence, breach of warranty, and breach of contract for injuries sustained on the lift gate of a leased delivery truck.
- Obtained a defense jury verdict in a product liability case against an automotive company, involving claimed defects in a wheel/axle assembly on a light duty truck. The jury specifically found that no defect existed.
- Obtained judgment in favor of insurer of ERISA plan, affirming denial of long term disability benefits and obtained a rare award of overpaid benefits in favor of the insurer.
- Won reversal of summary judgment before the Michigan Court of Appeals based on a finding of no duty of care on the part of a financial institution for the benefit of the relative of its customer and owner of collateral.
- Represented major pharmaceutical company before Congress and Executive Branch in effort to obtain fair treatment in matter before the Food and Drug Administration.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a Tier 1 automotive supplier in a lawsuit brought by a supplier of metal fabricated parts claiming the breach of a multi-million dollar oral requirements contract.
- Obtained summary judgment prior to consideration of class certification in a putative class action against a

telecommunications company challenging the way calling zones are configured for billing purposes.

- Obtained summary judgment for a Tier 1 automotive supplier in an opinion that clarified the application of the U.C.C. to commercial transactions made with requirements purchase orders.

Successfully defended automotive supplier and sole shareholder in a “bet the business” lawsuit alleging fraudulent trade practices and veil-piercing claims for the sale of a plastics company.

- Successfully represented telecommunications company in an action alleging antitrust violations, breach of contract, and business torts brought by an internet service provider claiming the right to be the exclusive provider of internet services in Mid-Michigan.
- Prevailed on a motion to defeat class certification in a purported class action brought in Wayne County Circuit Court against a telecommunications company alleging improper billing practices for the use of voicemail.