

Rising Star: Covington's Alexis Dyschkant

By Jennifer Mandato

Law360 (July 30, 2024, 2:02 PM EDT) -- Alexis Dyschkant of Covington & Burling LLP is an emerging leading expert on PFAS-related coverage issues, taking point on litigation strategy, summary judgment briefing and oral arguments, all earning her a spot among the insurance attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

The biggest case of her career:

Dyschkant represents Tyco Fire Products LP and Kidde-Fenwal Inc. in coverage litigation pertaining to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, pollution claims over the historical sale and manufacture of aqueous film-forming foam.

The cases are difficult partly in a traditional sense, as they involve dozens of insurers and decades of policies, she said.

The litigation also adds a challenge in that the PFAS-related claims are a developing tort and an emerging issue in insurance coverage, Dyschkant said.

"It's been a real privilege to be feeding on this at the ground level and be involved in some of the earliest coverage cases, especially on the coverage side, where we've gotten favorable rulings in this area of coverage law really for the first time," she said.

Her proudest moment as an attorney:

"If I'm being honest, anytime I get to call my clients with good news, that's the best," Dyschkant said.

As a policyholder attorney, she respects that her clients come to her in some of their toughest moments.

"They're dealing with a big loss or liability, and then, on top of that, their insurers have refused to step up and help them in this time of

2024



Alexis Dyschkant
Covington

Age: 36

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Illinois College of Law

First job after law school: Teaching philosophy at the University of Illinois

need," Dyschkant said, "So I really view part of our job as trying to make sure that the insurers live up to the promises they've made in their policies and hopefully lighten the load for our clients so that they can focus their energies on recovering."

What motivates her:

While her clients remain some of her biggest motivators, Dyschkant said that working for Covington has been a motivator in itself.

Growing up in the firm's insurance recovery practice group has afforded her the opportunity to work with and learn from some of the best insurance recovery lawyers in the industry, she said.

"From the moment I came to the firm it's been a high caliber of work, but there's also the sincere interest, creativity and the intellectualism the firm brings to the practice that's highly motivating for me," Dyschkant said.

Why she's an insurance attorney:

While Dyschkant did not expect to go into the insurance recovery industry, she said she can't imagine herself anywhere else, and she often tells summer associates that insurance is a dark horse.

"There's a surprising amount of intellectually and philosophically stimulating work that we do," she said. "Our job is basically contract interpretation, and oftentimes the cases that we are involved in involve nuances and interpretations that haven't been considered before, and that's highly intellectually stimulating for me."

Practicing in insurance has also introduced her to different types of businesses and industries, as she's had the opportunity to work on cases ranging from cyberevents to environmental claims.

"Each case that I get to work on is different; I learn something new and get to dig into some new science issue or current event and that, I think, is a nice feature of insurance recovery work because insurance permeates everything, all aspects of life and business and commerce," Dyschkant said.

How she thinks her practice or the legal industry will change in the next 10 years:

Looking ahead, Dyschkant said she expects to see PFAS-related actions as a continuing trend along with new coverage-related issues stemming from climate change.

As these events progress, however, she said the core tenets of insurance recovery will largely remain the same in terms of how contracts are interpreted and the agreement reached between insurers and policyholders when a premium is exchanged.

That being said, how those core principles will be applied to emerging trends are the central focus of any change in the industry, Dyschkant added.

"But the exciting thing about insurance is that what I'm doing today is not what I thought I was going to be doing six years ago, so who knows," she said.

--As told to Jennifer Mandato. Editing by Adam LoBelia.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2024 Rising Stars winners after reviewing nearly 1,200 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2024, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.

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