

Melissa Mills

PARTNER

Litigation

Los Angeles

Washington, D.C.

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FOCUS AREAS

Board and Internal Investigations
Environmental, Social, and Governance
FCPA and Anti-Corruption
Government Investigations
Litigation
State Attorneys General
Strategic Risk and Crisis Management
Supreme Court and Appellate
Trial
White Collar Crime

HIGHLIGHTS

- Diverse Legal Experience**
Melissa's deep legal experience spans many environments, including the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the private sector.
- Commitment to Community**
Melissa has a longstanding commitment to public service, community engagement, and pro bono and volunteer efforts.

EXPERIENCE

Melissa Mills is a litigation partner in the Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., offices of Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, where she is a member of the firm's national team of trial lawyers known for its success in litigating cutting-edge disputes in technology, intellectual property, and other areas. She is a co-chair of the firm's complex litigation practice and a member of the board of directors of the Wilson Sonsini Foundation.

Since joining the firm in 2022, Melissa has worked on a broad variety of complex litigation matters. She obtained a complete victory on behalf of a large public technology company sued by its former CEO, who sought over \$100 million in damages and was awarded nothing following a contested proceeding wherein the arbitrator rejected every claim. Melissa served as part of the trial team representing Vanessa Bryant in her historic victory on federal civil rights claims against Los Angeles County for sharing photos from the helicopter crash that killed her husband, Kobe Bryant, and their daughter, Gianna. Melissa's other work at the firm has included favorably resolving, shortly before trial, a multidistrict antitrust case on behalf of a major international corporation; defending a former technology executive against a variety of tort claims; and litigating a complex anti-monopolization action on behalf of an insulin manufacturer.

Prior to joining the firm, Melissa was an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California, where she investigated and prosecuted a wide array of sophisticated corruption and national security crimes for over a decade. She led a sweeping criminal investigation into bribery and corruption at the highest levels of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, and she prosecuted a sophisticated web of racketeering and corruption-related offenses involving local politicians, lobbyists, and developers—all work that resulted in numerous convictions, including of several senior officials. Following a complicated and sensitive cross-border investigation, she also obtained the trial conviction of a high-level international arms dealer for conspiring to transfer and to use anti-aircraft missiles, among other arms-trafficking offenses. Melissa's many other criminal cases included the capital murder of a Transportation Security Administration officer, domestic and international terrorism, espionage, trade-secret theft, and other serious crimes against the United States.

Before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2010, Melissa was an associate in the Los Angeles office of Gibson Dunn focused on white collar crime, anti-corruption, and compliance matters. Previously, she was an active-duty officer in the U.S. Marine Corps stationed in Quantico, Camp Pendleton, and Fallujah, Iraq. During her service in the Marine Corps, she prosecuted and defended hundreds of criminal cases, trying numerous jury trials to verdict. Over a seven-month deployment, she traveled throughout Iraq investigating and prosecuting crimes by U.S. servicemembers. In Iraq, she prosecuted the first two U.S. jury trials in a combat theater since the Vietnam War, one of which was interrupted by incoming rocket fire. She completed her military service in 2006 at the rank of Captain.

After graduating from law school, Melissa clerked for the Honorable A.S. Efron of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. She began her legal career in The Hague, where she served on a team investigating and prosecuting genocide and other war crimes before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Melissa is a member of the board of directors of Free to Run. She has completed an Ironman triathlon and more than two dozen marathons.

CREDENTIALS

Education

- J.D., Columbia Law School, 2000
- B.A., Environmental Law and Policy, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1996

Associations and Memberships

- Chair, USAO Veterans Affairs Committee, 2017-present
- Board Member, National Institute of Military Justice, 2010-2017
- Security Fellow, Truman National Security Project, 2007-2016
- Weekly Volunteer, Community Childhood Literacy Program, 2013-present
- Envoy to Guantanamo Bay, National Institute of Military Justice, 2013

Honors

- Named among Lawdragon's "500 Leading Litigators in America," 2025-2026
- Named among the "Women of Influence: Attorneys 2024" by *Los Angeles Business Journal*
- Honored among *Los Angeles Business Journal's* "Leaders of Influence: Thriving in Their 40s 2023"

Admissions

- Bar of the District of Columbia
- State Bar of California
- State Bar of New York
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces
- U.S. Supreme Court

INSIGHTS

Select Publications

- Contributing author, "NIMJ Reports from Guantanamo, Vol. 4," *National Institute of Military Justice*, November 2018
- "Brass Collar Crime: A Corporate Model For Command Responsibility," *Willamette Law Review*, Fall 2010
- Co-author, "The Customary Origins and Elements of Select Conduct of Hostilities Charges Before the ICTY: A Potential Model for Use by Military Commissions," 179 *Military Law Review* 68, Spring 2004
- Principal co-author, "Inter Arma Silent Leges: In Times of War, Should the Laws Be Silent?" Report on the President's Executive Order Establishing Military Commissions in the War Against Terrorism, Association of the Bar of the City of New York, 2001

Select Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "War Crimes: From the Battlefield to the Courtroom," Appellate Judges Education Institute Annual Summit, November 2021
- Presenter, "View from the Prosecution," ABA White Collar Crimes Committee Annual Meeting, June 2020

- Presenter, “Hamdaniyah: Case Study of an American War Crimes Prosecution,” University of London, February 2009