

Sara Alpert Lawson

Partner

A third-generation lawyer, Sara Alpert Lawson has established a diverse practice representing businesses and individuals in high-stakes government investigations and commercial disputes.

Sara focuses on client goals and how to achieve them efficiently, approaching issues with creativity and attention to detail. Her broad experience handling litigation and investigations in a wide range of industries, including health care, real estate, pensions, and construction, makes her particularly equipped to help clients navigate issues across the board. Her clients include a major health system, health care organizations and providers, Chief Executive Officers and other senior leaders from a diverse range of businesses, large corporations, and entrepreneurs.

Sara is a determined advocate with substantial experience litigating nuanced cases and defending her clients in government investigations conducted by both federal and state agencies, including the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Industry & Security, the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Health and Human Services, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Florida Medicaid Fraud Control unit.

Sara has been recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* for White-Collar Criminal Defense every year since 2017.

Before entering private practice, Sara was in-house general Corporate Counsel for a multinational chemical distributor and manufacturer. In this capacity, she worked directly with the CEO and CFO, advising the business on corporate matters and managing litigation for the company.

In addition to her practice, Sara is active in the community and is committed to pro bono efforts, particularly those involving foster youth. Sara served on the Board of Directors for Bay Area Legal Services from 2011-2018, and is currently a member of the Bay Area Legal Services Development Council.

In 2015, Sara received the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Pro Bono Service Award. Sara is a member of the firm's Professional Development Committee, the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Criminal Law Committee, the University of Maryland Carey Law Alumni Board, the Florida Bar Leadership Academy Committee, the Women's White Collar Defense Association, the National



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Practice focus

- Business Litigation
- White Collar Defense
- False Claims Act
- Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA)
- Health Care
- Investigations

Education

- The University of Maryland School of Law, J.D., 2007
 - Articles Editor, *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class*
 - Professionalism and Diversity Committee
- The Johns Hopkins University, B.A., 2003
 - Vice President of Operations, Alpha Phi



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Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Hillsborough County Bar Association.

Sara earned her J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law, where she served as an Editor for the *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender, and Class*. She received her B.A. from the Johns Hopkins University.

Languages

- Brazilian-Portuguese

Professional leadership

- Member, Law360 2023 Florida Editorial Advisory Board
- Chair, Bay Area Legal Services Development Council
- University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law Alumni Board, 2018-present
- Member and Thought Leadership Committee, Women's White Collar Defense Association
- Wm. Reece Smith Jr. Leadership Academy Committee, The Florida Bar, 2018-2020
- Board of Directors, Bay Area Legal Services, 2011-2018
- Alumnus, Wm. Reece Smith Jr. Florida Bar Leadership Academy, Class I
- Barrister, Goldburg-Cacciatore Criminal Law Inn of Court
- Attorney Ad Litem, Crossroads for Florida Kids
- Member, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL)
- Member, Federal Bar Association
- Member, Hillsborough County Bar Association
- Member, American Bar Association
- Member and Reporter, ABA Task Force for Prosecutorial Independence

Community involvement

- Chairwoman and Founder, Foster Care Ministry Mentor Program, Sacred Heart Church
- Lector, Sacred Heart Church

Recognitions

- The Best Lawyers in America, Commercial Litigation;



Criminal Defense: White-Collar; Litigation - Health Care

- Super Lawyers Rising Star (Florida)
- Daily Business Review, Best Mentor, 2023
- DC Courts, Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll, 2022
- Daily Business Review, On the Rise Award, 2021
- Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division, Pro Bono Service Award, 2015
- Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Service Award, Outstanding Service by a Young Lawyer, 2014

Bar admissions

- Florida
- District of Columbia
- Maryland

Court admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida

Representative matters

- Represented a large health system in connection with a civil False Claims Act investigation.
- Represented a Taft-Hartley pension plan in litigation filed against the plan's former actuarial service provider for professional negligence and breach of contract.
- Represented a large health system in civil litigation brought against a provider of actuarial services. The case alleged that the defendant understated the pension plans' liabilities of a smaller health system acquired by our client by more than \$130 million, saddling our client with that liability after the acquisition closed. After an 18-day federal jury trial, the case settled on terms satisfactory to the client.
- Represented a business owner in connection with a criminal investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office involving allegations of pandemic-related fraud. No charges were brought against our client.



- Obtained dismissal of a False Claims Act lawsuit alleging that our client, a health care system, failed to properly obtain informed consent from patients undergoing surgeries, resulting in purportedly false submissions for payment to Medicare, Medicaid and Tricare.
- Represented a physician in connection with an investigation conducted by the HHS Office of the Inspector General.
- Represented a large, national retailer in litigation in the Middle District of Florida involving an alleged breach of contract. The matter settled on favorable terms for the client.
- Represented a certified class of individuals who were denied coverage for residential treatment, intensive outpatient, and outpatient services by United Behavioral Health.
- Represented co-owners of a home health provider in a civil False Claims Act investigation.
- Represented owners of a Medicare managed care provider in a civil False Claims Act investigation.
- Conducted an internal investigation for a home health provider in connection with internal allegations of possible Stark Law and Anti-Kickback Statute violations.
- Represented a physician in connection with a False Claims Act investigation in the Middle District of Florida.
- Represented former executives of a health maintenance organization in connection with a government investigation in the Middle District of Florida.
- Represented several employees of a homebuilder in connection with a mortgage fraud investigation arising out of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California. Due to diligent efforts to understand the clients and their business, was able to keep all clients from being prosecuted.
- Represented a freight forwarding company in connection with a joint investigation in the Middle District of Florida by the Department of Commerce and Department of Homeland Security resulting in a non-prosecution agreement.

