






50 Most Trustworthy Companies of the Year 2018

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Earning the Trust of Clients, Legal Professionals, Jurists, & Nonprofit Organizations Nationwide: Sanford Heisler Sharp LLP

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Sanford Heisler Sharp is a nationwide law firm representing individuals against corporate interests. From day one, its sole focus has been litigating public interest and social justice cases that add significant value to individuals' lives, as well as taking on legal disputes whose resolution will improve the economic and social balance in America.

Sanford Heisler Sharp's Trajectory of Growth and Impact

The firm has grown from three attorneys in two offices in 2004, the year it was founded, to nearly 50 attorneys in 6 offices: New York, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, San Diego, Nashville, and Baltimore.

Its attorneys earn accolades in a range of practices, including employment discrimination based on gender, race, and age; Title IX matters against colleges and universities on behalf of students and faculty; sexual harassment; wage and hour violations, whistleblower/qui tam matters; and fraud in financial services and ERISA matters.



The firm's first important victory came in 2004 in a race discrimination class action against Cracker Barrel, the only civil rights matter in which the George W. Bush Department of Justice intervened. David Sanford represented the NAACP, Cracker Barrel employees, and the restaurant's customers in an \$8 million settlement with the popular food chain. Sanford Heisler Sharp's highest-profile case came in 2010 when David Sanford, as lead trial counsel, secured a jury verdict of \$253 million for some 7,000 female sales representatives of Novartis in *Velez v. Novartis* – the largest employment gender discrimination verdict in U.S. history.

Two years later, as co-counsel, the firm reached a \$762 million global qui tam settlement with Thousand Oaks, CA-based Amgen, Inc., which was one of the largest fraud settlements in U.S. history.

Recent Settlements

The verdicts and settlements achieved by Sanford Heisler Sharp's attorneys have provided monetary awards to the firm's clients as well as systemic programmatic changes in their clients' places of work. These systemic changes have increased opportunities for equal pay, leadership roles, and advancement for women and minorities; and a heightened respect for the role of whistleblowers in promoting corporate transparency and combatting fraud and waste. Among the industry sectors where the firm is especially active are technology, pharmaceuticals, BigLaw (comprising the nation's largest and most prestigious law firms), and higher education.

For example, in August 2017, the firm gained the final approval of a \$23.5 million gender discrimination class and collective action settlement by female employees working in the STEM fields against tech giant Qualcomm. It is believed to be the largest pre-suit settlement ever and included significant changes in Qualcomm's policies and practices to help eliminate gender disparities and foster equal employment opportunities for female employees working in STEM.

Other recent matters include a \$5.5 million settlement for claims of unpaid overtime wages against Google; and a classwide settlement for unpaid wages against MA Labs Inc., a multi-national computer parts distributor based in San Jose, California.

TRIAL VICTORIES

The firm has also had great success at trial. In addition to the \$253 million gender discrimination verdict against Novartis, in July 2018, the firm won a \$1.25 million jury verdict against Columbia University. It represented Business School Professor Enrichetta Ravina in her sexual harassment and retaliation case against the University. The verdict sent a clear message that workplace retaliation and abuse of power in academia will not be tolerated.

In another recent trial, Beth Burns, the winningest women's basketball coach in San Diego State University history (SDSU), scored a huge victory totaling \$3.3 million, a trial verdict that was later affirmed on appeal. SDSU terminated Burns in April 2013 after Burns had 16 years of success as head coach of the Aztecs women's team.

Building and Sustaining Trust

Sanford Heisler recognizes the importance of building a culture of trust to help achieve these outcomes. The strategies Sanford Heisler Sharp employs are straightforward:

- The firm only represents plaintiffs. Its loyalty is never divided between employees and corporations or other entities.
- Clients receive the same legal advice and representation the firm would give a close family member or best friend.
- The firm practices what it preaches in terms of fairness and equity, within the firm as a whole and as individual lawyers.
- The firm invests whatever time and effort it takes to prevail in cases they believe can be won.
- All firm attorneys are rigorously candid in discussing the likely outcome of potential cases.
- Everyone at Sanford Heisler communicates consistently and honestly so that clients are always “*in the loop*” as their litigations progress.

Throughout the firm’s 15-year history, these strategies have earned it the trust not only of clients, but also from members of the plaintiff and defense bar, and judges at every level in state and federal courts.

The trust is evident because clients, as well as opposing counsel, frequently refer their friends and family members to the firm, and judges often comment on the high quality of the work and the ethical principles embraced in resolving the most complex and contentious disputes.

Sanford Heisler Sharp’s Reputation & Assets

Sanford Heisler Sharp’s reputation has been earned over the past decade and rests with the many assets of the firm. First among these assets are the team – including lawyers, legal assistants and support staff – in every office. The lawyers are graduates of the nation’s top law schools. They are highly trained and experienced as well as deeply invested in the pursuit of social justice and the protection of human rights, both individually and collectively.

Another asset is the firm’s reputation for and record of success in achieving desirable litigation outcomes for clients, as well for promoting programmatic changes in corporations —changes that improve work environments and protect employees from future discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other abusive and illegal workplace behaviors.

A third asset is the willingness to go the distance in litigating good cases to achieve the desired conclusion, matched only by total honesty with clients when the case they have is neither good nor likely winnable.

A fourth asset is the firm’s ability to “*outgun*” defense counsel by strategically investing its human capital and other resources in ways that shift the advantage to their clients, even when facing the most prestigious legal opponents in the highest profile matters.

Sanford Heisler Sharp’s Community Service Commitment

The firm’s lawyers are notable for the voluntary contributions made to their communities, the legal profession, and to the attainment of civil rights and social justice nationwide. Their participation includes membership on the governing and advisory boards of many nonprofit and governmental organizations including the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem; CorpsAfrica; the Foundation for Advocacy Inclusion and Resources; the Employee Rights Advocacy Institute for Law & Policy; the Fredrick B. Abramson Memorial Foundation; City Lights School; Goucher College, and Voices for Children.

The professional organizations to which the firm's lawyers contribute include the San Diego and California Chapters of the American Board of Trial Advocates, the National Employment Lawyers Association, the District of Columbia Women's Bar Association, the Public Investors Arbitration Bar Association, National Employment Lawyers Association, the American Bar Association's Center for Professional Responsibility, the Equal Justice Society, the Chinese American Lawyers Association of the Bay Area, the American Trial Lawyers Association, the District of Columbia Bar Foundation.

In addition, the firm's lawyers have authored amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of women's rights organizations and individuals in *Mach Mining v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*; on behalf of LGBTQ student organizations in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, on behalf of civil rights organizations in *Lawrence v. Texas*; and on behalf of professors of legal history in the Alien Tort Statute case; as well as to the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., on behalf of the Public Investors Bar. Others have provided pro bono advocacy for sex trafficking victims seeking U.S. citizenship.

Sanford Heisler Sharp Looks Ahead

In the next several years, Sanford Heisler Sharp is committed to devoting its considerable legal expertise and skills to addressing the opioid crisis plaguing many U.S. communities. Currently, the firm represents numerous California, Texas and Virginia cities and counties fighting the opioid industry and is poised to expand these efforts nationwide.

Sanford Heisler also will continue to represent female partners in BigLaw firms, C-suite executives and non-managerial hourly employees in a variety of industry sectors, faculty and staff members in institutions of higher education, and other clients discriminated against by their employers –areas in which we have achieved positive results and promoted lasting change.



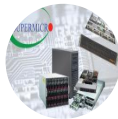
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