



2013 IN REVIEW

1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW, SUITE 300 WASHINGTON, DC 20036

TEL 202.822.5100 | FAX 202.822.4997

WWW.FINDJUSTICE.COM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Cyrus Mehri & Steve Skalet	2
Notable Results	3
Ongoing Litigation	11
Firm News: New Faces	14
Firm News: Press	15



1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW, SUITE 300 • WASHINGTON, DC 20036
TEL 202.822.5100 • FAX 202.822.4997 • WWW.FINDJUSTICE.COM

CYRUS MEHRI (DC, CT)
STEVEN A. SKALET (DC, MD)
JAY ANGOFF (DC, MO, NJ)
CRAIG L. BRISKIN (DC, NY, MA)
JANELL M. BYRD (DC, MD)
HEIDI R. BURAKIEWICZ (DC, MD, VA)
ELLEN L. EARDLEY (DC, IL)
KARLA A. GILBRIDE (DC, CA, NY)
TARYN WILGUS NULL (DC, CA)
STEPHANIE J. BRYANT (DC, PA)
TERESA YEH (DC, MD)
PIA WINSTON (DC, MD)

OF COUNSEL:
N. JEREMI DURU (DC, MD)
MICHAEL D. LIEDER (DC)

Friends and Colleagues:

We are pleased to share with you our Year in Review for 2013—another outstanding year for Mehri & Skalet and the clients we serve.

For more than a decade, we have worked on behalf of those who face injustice across a wide spectrum of issues—securing victories on behalf of women, minorities, and those with disabilities, and protecting consumers from unsafe products. This year we continued that trend and expanded our work to help our clients keep their homes, receive the wages they are rightfully owed, and blow the whistle when fraud is perpetrated against the government.

We also made some exciting changes to our team: In December, Ellen Eardley became a partner in the firm. Ellen joined M&S in 2007 and is active in the civil rights, whistleblower, and wage and hour aspects of the firm's practice. She is currently representing clients in sexual harassment, gender discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, and fair housing matters. Stephanie Bryant joined the firm as an Associate Attorney. Prior to joining Mehri & Skalet, Ms. Bryant was an attorney with Clifford and Garde, LLP, where she handled employment cases under Title VII, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, DC Human Rights Act, and whistleblower retaliation statutes in state and federal courts and before federal agencies.

In the year ahead, we look forward to continuing to grow and, working with you, making important impacts on the world around us. Here's to a great 2014!

Very truly yours,

Cyrus Mehri

Steve Skalet

NOTABLE RESULTS

Employment Discrimination

- *Medicis Pharmaceutical Corporation, Inc.*

In 2013, we settled a class action gender discrimination case against Medicis Pharmaceutical Corporation, Inc. for \$7.15 million on behalf of over 200 women. The settlement is currently pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

- *White, et al. v. Eric Holder, EEOC No. 510-2012-00077x*

M&S is representing a class of over 400 women who work for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Federal Correctional Complex in Coleman, Florida. The women allege that they have been and continue to be subjected to a hostile work environment as a result of inmate misconduct and the Agency's failure to take steps to prevent the harassment from occurring. In a major victory, the EEOC Administrative Judge certified the case as a class action on April 9, 2013, and on May 22, 2013, the Department of Justice denied the Bureau of Prisons request to appeal the class certification decision. Discovery is scheduled to begin shortly.

- *Carter v. Wells Fargo Advisors, No. 09-1752 (D.D.C.)*

M&S continues to administer a \$32 million settlement for approximately 3,060 female financial advisors who faced gender discrimination while working at Wachovia and Wells Fargo Advisors. The settlement resolves claims of gender discrimination in compensation, promotions to branch management positions, and terms and conditions of employment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or any state or local anti-discrimination law. The settlement also requires the company to make significant changes to internal policies that affect the distribution of business opportunities for women and necessitates the appointment of an independent monitor and a jointly selected expert.

Workers' Rights

- *SimplexGrinnell LP Prevailing Wage Litigation*

M&S, along with co-counsel, brought suit on behalf of current and former fire alarm and sprinkler system workers of SimplexGrinnell LP, who claim they were not paid "prevailing wages" as required by many states for work on public projects. Plaintiffs are seeking millions of dollars in damages on behalf of hundreds of workers. After obtaining class certification in 2011 in the largest of the cases, *Ramos v. SimplexGrinnell LP, No. 1:07-cv-981* (Eastern District of New York federal court), the

class settled part of their claims in 2012 for \$5.525 million. Plaintiffs then appealed their remaining claims to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, where those court proceedings are ongoing.

- *FLSA Cases against the Bureau of Prisons*

In 2013, Mehri & Skalet continued to pursue claims on behalf of federal employees against the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The cases involved violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), contractual violations, and overturning disciplinary decisions. In Pekin, Illinois (FCI Pekin), M&S recovered over \$2.4 million on behalf of approximately 150 employees as a result of the Agency's failure to compensate them for performing work before and after their shifts. In Englewood, Colorado (FCI Englewood), M&S overturned the termination of an employee alleging retaliation and lack of just cause—the Agency had conducted an “EEO Background Check” in response to EEO complaints filed by the employee, which ultimately culminated in her termination. The employee was awarded reinstatement with full benefits and back pay for the 30 months she was out of work.

M&S Consulting

Mehri & Skalet recently launched *M&S Consulting* in an effort to continue helping our clients outside of the courtroom. By helping design and execute human resource audits and developing tailored assessment tests that reduce bias while producing the best information about prospective hires, M&S Consulting, led by Cyrus Mehri, Steve Skalet, and Professor N. Jeremi Duru, looks to expand on the mission of Mehri & Skalet PLLC.

NFL Player Assessment Tests

With the help of Dr. Harold Goldstein of Baruch College and Dr. Ken Yusko of Marymount University, founding partner of M&S Cyrus Mehri released an innovative new assessment tool that captures the non-physical attributes of a successful NFL player.

The new test, called the Player Assessment Test (PAT), measures approximately 20 characteristics of a successful football player, including “football smarts,” psychological strengths, motivational keys, and learning styles. Unveiled at the 2013 Scouting Combine in Indianapolis and taken by all athletes at the combine, the 50-minute test is designed to “dramatically level the playing field from a socio-economic point of view.” The new test is structured to augment rather than replace the Wonderlic (the assessment in use since the 1970s), and Mr. Mehri believes that the test will provide coaches and front-office personnel with more comprehensive evaluations of the players, allowing them to make the “best recruiting decisions.”

Fair Housing and Lending

- *Bennett v. HUD, No. 3:11-cv-03831 (D.D.C.)*
- *Chandler v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., and Fannie Mae, No. 11-3831 (N.D. Cal.)*

M&S, in conjunction with the AARP Foundation, filed two cases to enforce the rights of spouses and family members of federally insured reverse mortgage (HECM) borrowers to keep their family homes. In *Bennett v. HUD*, plaintiffs sued HUD to enforce the right of spouses and family members to purchase an HECM-financed property for 95% of the appraised value—a right HUD provides to non-family members. Plaintiffs also sought enforcement of a federal statutory provision that protects spouses of HECM borrowers from displacement.

Shortly after plaintiffs filed their suit and just before a motion for preliminary injunction was to be heard, HUD recanted and revoked its illegal guidance on the 95% rule. HUD now permits spouses and family members to purchase their family homes for 95% of their appraised value, regardless of the amount owed on the reverse mortgage. This is an important victory for reverse mortgage borrowers and their families.

Plaintiffs continue to litigate this case to enforce the spousal anti-displacement provision of the federal statute. In a January 2013 opinion, the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that plaintiffs had standing to pursue this claim, and in September 2013, the district court delivered a stunning victory to plaintiffs, ruling that HUD had violated federal law in failing to protect spouses from foreclosure, and the court ordered HUD to determine an appropriate remedy for the problem. M&S continues to fight to ensure that HUD enforces protection for surviving spouses that the federal law expressly provides.

In the second case, which is ongoing, Defendants Wells Fargo and Fannie Mae refused Plaintiff Robert Chandler's request to purchase his family home for 95% of the appraised value after the death of his mother, an HECM borrower. Defendants stated that Mr. Chandler needed to pay the full mortgage balance if he wanted to keep the home that his family has owned since the 1950s—a position that makes no legal or economic sense given the current housing market. Indeed, Fannie Mae tried and failed to find a buyer for the Chandler property. Mr. Chandler seeks to enforce the rights of all heirs and survivors of HECM borrowers to purchase their family homes under the same terms available to non-family members.

- *National Fair Housing Alliance, Inc. v. Bank of America Corp., No. 04-13-0016-8*

Representing the National Fair Housing Alliance and 11 fair housing centers across the nation, Mehri & Skalet filed an expanded HUD complaint on claims that Bank of America maintains and markets foreclosed homes in majority white neighborhoods significantly better than foreclosed homes in majority black and Latino neighborhoods.

The complaint was initially filed one year ago with NFHA and other organizations. The expanded complaint adds five new cities: Memphis, TN; Denver, CO; Las Vegas, NV; Tucson, AZ; and Philadelphia, PA.

- *National Fair Housing Alliance, Inc. v. Cornerstone Group Development Corp., No. 1:11-cv-21994 (S.D. Fla.)*

M&S and co-counsel secured a settlement on behalf of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and West Palm Beach Coalition for Independent Living Options (CILO) in their federal housing discrimination lawsuit against Cornerstone Group Development Corporation, one of the largest multifamily housing developers in Florida. The agreement settles claims by NFHA and CILO that Cornerstone Group practiced a pattern of discrimination against people with disabilities by designing and constructing multifamily dwellings and common areas without the accessibility features required under the Fair Housing Act. As part of the settlement, Cornerstone agreed to make modifications at over 58 developments to make apartments and common areas accessible, and to create and subsidize a Housing Accessibility Fund of more than \$200,000—managed by NFHA—to help Floridians with disabilities make their homes more accessible; pay \$1.35 million in damages, expenses, and attorneys' fees; and provide training on the Fair Housing Act's accessibility requirements for its executives and on-site construction managers.

- *Thurmond v. SunTrust, No. 11-01352 (E.D. Pa.)*

M&S and co-counsel filed a lawsuit against SunTrust Bank in 2011 on behalf of a class of homeowners. The complaint alleges that SunTrust had agreements with Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) companies to receive illegal kickback fees for arranging PMI with these insurers. The allegations in this case regard a scheme carried out under the guise of so-called “captive reinsurance” by which a SunTrust subsidiary, its “captive reinsurer,” receives a portion of the borrower’s monthly PMI premium payments ostensibly for sharing in the risk of default on loans—a deal that is structured so that SunTrust assumes little to no risk. This scheme disproportionately affects homeowners who put less than 20% as down payment, often minority and lower income borrowers, resulting in millions of dollars of kickback or referral fees returning to SunTrust. Thus, the complaint alleges that SunTrust and its PMI partners attempted to circumvent the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act

("RESPA") prohibition against kickbacks and unearned fees by arranging for PMI providers to pay a portion of borrowers' PMI premiums to SunTrust through its subsidiary captive reinsurer and through other agreements with PMI insurers. Parties are currently awaiting the resolution of Defendants' Motion to Dismiss.

- *Moses v. Suntrust Mortgage Corporation, No. 2011 CA 002439 B (D.C. Superior Court)*

M&S filed suit in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia on behalf of a class of D.C. borrowers who obtained a home loan from SunTrust Mortgage, Inc., where SunTrust did not clearly or fully disclose the requirement for private mortgage insurance (PMI) in a timely manner.

Plaintiffs allege a "bait and switch" scheme whereby SunTrust does not clearly or fully disclose the PMI until shortly before closing, effectively denying the borrower the ability to shop around for a better loan. The named plaintiffs in this case were informed of the PMI requirements on their loan, totaling \$305 per month, as they were driving to the loan closing. The case is in the discovery phase.

Improving the Landscape for Homeowners

Based on our experience and review of private mortgage insurance (PMI) issues in the *Moses* and *Thurmond* cases, it became clear that there was a need for significantly improved disclosure to consumers seeking home mortgage loans of a lender's PMI requirements and of the true cost of PMI to the borrower. In May 2012, M&S submitted extensive comments to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau regarding needed improvements in the PMI disclosure requirements on the Bureau's new model disclosure forms for residential mortgages. The CFPB is in the process of finalizing new disclosure forms and requirements following recent changes to the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act.

Consumer Protection

- *In re: MagSafe Apple Power Adapter Litigation, No. 09-1911 (N.D. Cal.)*

Nearly 10 million Apple MacBook and MacBook Pro owners could be entitled to cash reimbursements and free replacement adapters, thanks to a 2012 settlement with Apple, Inc. secured by M&S and co-counsel.

Plaintiffs alleged that the first-generation "T" model of Apple's "MagSafe" adapter—the transformer and power cord that come with the laptop—was defectively designed and manufactured, causing the adapter to fray, spark, overheat, melt, or otherwise prematurely fail. The settlement will provide cash payments for class members who had to purchase replacement adapters within three years of the original purchase and will provide redesigned replacement adapters to anyone whose earlier model adapter shows signs of such damage.

"This settlement provides an excellent result for consumers," said M&S Partner Craig Briskin. "Apple prides itself on innovative design and demands its customers pay a premium for that design. But here, a potentially serious defect impacted millions of consumers, and we were able to bring the needs of those consumers to Apple and find a solution."

Two professional objectors filed appeals after final approval of the settlement, and the case is set for hearing before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

- *Sonoda, et al. v. Amerisave Mortgage Corp., No. C 11-01803 (N.D. Cal.)*

M&S and co-counsel filed a class action lawsuit in 2011 against Amerisave Mortgage Corporation for violating the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) and state consumer protection statutes. Plaintiffs alleged that prior to providing a Good Faith Estimate of closing costs, as required by TILA, Amerisave promised customers they could "lock in" a low interest rate if they paid appraisal and underwriting fees. In February 2013, the district court approved a \$3.1 million settlement, which provided direct payments to class members, without the necessity of filing a claim form. In addition, the defendant ended several of the practices that formed the basis for the complaint.

- *David Scull v. Grover, Christie & Merritt, No. 325698-V*

M&S filed this action to protect patients from illegal balance billing by HMO providers, i.e., charging HMO members for amounts beyond those provided in their plans—in violation of Maryland state law. In September 2013, the Court of Appeals of Maryland issued a pivotal decision, holding that a doctor's billings, as opposed to furnishing medical services, are not exempt from the Consumer Protection Act. As a result, when a healthcare provider's billing practices are unfair or deceptive, the provider may be subject to a private action brought pursuant the Consumer Protection Act. The case has been remanded to the Circuit Court for further proceedings consistent with the Court of Appeals' decision.

- *Enerson v. Verizon New Jersey Inc., No. L-344-13 (Superior Court, Bergen County, NJ)*

In January 2013, M&S and co-counsel filed a consumer class action against Verizon New Jersey for its practice of routinely and deliberately charging customers for the installation of a network interface jack that is either not expressly requested or not actually installed. This practice violates a New Jersey Board of Public Utilities tariff, which prohibits Verizon from charging customers under these circumstances. In December 2013, M&S moved to certify the class.

- *Ladas v. Exelis Inc., No. 3:10-CV-1132 (D. Conn.)*

In November 2013, M&S and co-counsel filed an action against the leading manufacturers of night vision goggles. The suit alleges that the manufacturers schemed to defraud the United States by producing and shipping defective night vision goggles to the military for over three years. They further engaged in a campaign to misrepresent and withhold critical information regarding the defective night vision goggles, endangering the lives of thousands of troops fighting abroad in darkness. Pending before the court is the defendants' motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

Civil Rights

- *Norflet Progress Fund*

In 2013, M&S processed millions of dollars of Norflet Progress Fund grants to numerous nonprofit organizations to benefit African-American communities. The Norflet Progress Fund is the *cy pres* fund named in honor of Ms. Merle Norflet, the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit filed against John Hancock Life Insurance Company in 2004. M&S, along with co-counsel, represented a class of African Americans who were purchasers, owners, insurers, and beneficiaries of insurance policies issued by the John Hancock Life Insurance Company in the 1940s and 1950s. The plaintiffs alleged that for decades, John Hancock engaged in discriminatory practices in the sale and marketing of life insurance policies to African Americans.

M&S and co-counsel secured a settlement in 2009 for \$24.4 million, a portion of which was distributed to class members. Approximately \$15 million was committed to the Norflet Progress Fund to be distributed to organizations that benefit African-American communities. The Court appointed a *cy pres* committee chaired by law professor John Brittain to make recommendations on the distribution from the fund. The Committee recently recommended that the Court approve \$3.7 million in grants to 21 nonprofit organizations.

Individual Employment Settlements

In 2013, M&S settled several cases involving race and gender discrimination in employment, including cases involving sexual assault or rape in the workplace. M&S also negotiated a number of severance agreements for African-American and female executives as well as employees who faced retaliation for making or supporting a complaint of discrimination. M&S is continuing to monitor employment discrimination settlements that require employers to make systemic changes to their policies and practices, in addition to the individual monetary relief for our clients.

M&S also negotiated back pay for several individual employees who were improperly denied overtime wages by various employers, the terms of employment for an executive vice president of a leading healthcare organization, and the acquisition and merger of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana with the Health Care Service Corporation.

- *Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana and Health Care Services Corp.*

Mehri & Skalet helped negotiate the acquisition by and merger of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana with Health Care Service Corp., the fourth largest health insurance firm in the country. The merger gives Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana access to advanced technology, enhanced customer service systems, important economies of scale, and new jobs in the state, as well as adding 250,000 new Blue Cross customers. The \$40 million purchase price was more than double the original offer and will be used to fund a new public interest healthcare foundation in Montana. The merger became official after the companies received regulatory approval in June from the Montana Commissioner of Insurance and Attorney General.

- *Missouri Navigator – St. Louis Effort for AIDS v. Huff, No. 2:13-CV-4246 (W.D. Mo)*

In 2013, more than a dozen states—including Missouri—enacted laws that impose auxiliary licensing standards on healthcare consumer assisters (including “navigators”) and limited the activities they were permitted to engage in following the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In the first case of its kind, Mehri & Skalet challenged the Missouri law in federal court on behalf of two federally certified consumer assistance counselors—the St. Louis Effort for AIDS and Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri—and six other plaintiffs, claiming that states that opt to have the federal government run their health insurance exchange cannot impose additional state requirements or limitations on that exchange.

ONGOING LITIGATION

Consumer Protection

- *Mackmin v. Visa Inc., et al., No. 1:11-cv-01831 (D.D.C.)*

In October 2011, M&S and co-counsel filed a suit in federal court in the District of Columbia on behalf of a proposed nationwide class of ATM customers. The complaint alleges that the major banks, in concert with Visa and MasterCard, collude, in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, to inflate the ATM “service fees” that customers pay to ATM owners when they withdraw money. The case is on appeal before the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

- *In re: Automotive Wire Harness Systems Antitrust Litigation, MDL No. 2311*

M&S represents a consumer alleging that the manufacturers of “auto wire harnesses,” the electrical systems of modern automobiles, fixed prices for their products, which caused automobile prices to be inflated. One defendant in the case has already pleaded guilty to a criminal charge for participation in the conspiracy. The case is in its early stages.

- *Hensley-Maclean v. Safeway, Inc., No. 11-01230 (Superior Court, Alameda County, CA)*

M&S, in conjunction with the Center for Science in the Public Interest and other co-counsel, filed a class action lawsuit in February 2011 against Safeway for its failure to notify loyalty card holders about recalls of Class 1 dangerous or unsafe products. Products are classified as Class 1 when there is a reasonable probability that consuming the products will cause health problems or death.

Safeway collects phone numbers and other contact information for every customer who uses their “Club Card,” but fails to contact customers to inform them of product recalls, as other stores do. Plaintiffs seek an injunction requiring Safeway to use the information in its possession to notify customers of a recalled product and to furnish an automatic refund through the loyalty card. Oral argument on plaintiffs’ claims was scheduled for April 2014.

Whistleblower Rights

M&S regularly represents and consults with employees and non-employees who have knowledge of fraud or wrongdoing and who are considering blowing the whistle. M&S has filed several *qui tam* or False Claims Act cases on behalf of individuals who are aware of corporate fraud against the federal government.

Workers' Rights

- *Martin, et al v. United States, No. 13-834C (Federal Claims)*

In November 2013, M&S filed suit in the United States Court of Federal Claims on behalf of the approximately 1.3 million “essential” employees of the United States government. The lawsuit claims that the U.S. government violated the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) by failing to pay essential employees minimum wage and overtime compensation when due during the October 2013 government shutdown. M&S’s motion requesting that the case be conditionally certified as a collective action is pending before the court.

- *FLSA Cases against the Bureau of Prisons*

M&S is representing American Federation of Government Employees local Unions against the Federal Bureau of Prisons in numerous arbitrations on behalf of correctional officers and other bargaining unit employees for a variety of wage and hour violations. These violations include failing to compensate employees for performing work before and after scheduled shifts (portal to portal violations), failing to pay shift differentials, failing to pay employees for performing work during their meal periods, failing to pay employees on time, and general contract violations.

- *King v. United States Border Patrol, No. 12-175 C (Ct. Fed. Cl.)*

M&S is representing 225 Supervisory Border Patrol Agents in federal claims court in Washington, D.C., to recover millions of dollars in claimed unpaid overtime in violation of the FLSA. The case, filed in March 2012, is proceeding as a collective action on behalf of current and former supervisors who act as course instructors at the Border Patrol Academies in New Mexico, Texas, and West Virginia.

- *Hawkins v. Hooters of America, Inc., No. 09-1475 (D.D.C.)*

M&S is litigating a case on behalf of server employees of Hooters of America, Inc. Plaintiffs allege that Hooters failed to compensate them properly in several respects, including requiring plaintiffs to purchase uniforms and failing to pay appropriate minimum wage and overtime compensation pursuant to federal and state laws. The parties are engaged in mediation.

Fritz Pollard Alliance

Ten years after the release of Cyrus Mehri and Johnnie L. Cochran Jr.'s groundbreaking report, "Black Coaches in the National Football League: Superior Performance, Inferior Opportunities," M&S continues to promote the achievements of the Rooney Rule and the Fritz Pollard Alliance (FPA), an affinity group of NFL minority coaches, scouts, and front-office personnel.

Since 2003, the FPA has spearheaded the hiring of a record number of minority personnel in the NFL, including minority head coaches and general managers. The resulting diversity brought success to the teams that embraced it: Eight out of the last 12 Super Bowl championship teams had either an African-American general manager or head coach. In 2013, the Baltimore Ravens, a team assembled by African-American General Manager Ozzie Newsome, won its second Super Bowl.

In November 2013, the FPA called upon NFL players to stop using the "N"-word after incident reports of its usage began increasing. The Fritz Pollard Alliance Executive Director, Harry Carson, and Chair John Wooten, released a statement to all former, current, and future NFL players, asking them to "respect the dignity of your teammates, fellow players, officials, coaches, fans, and yourselves," noting that, "If you tolerate the language being used casually now, at some point in the future, either as a current or former player, you may hear it directed at you." Since the release of the article, awareness of the issue has increased and the topic has been debated by NFL players and personnel, ESPN, *The New York Times*, and CBS Sports, among others.

FIRM NEWS AND NEW FACES

Stephanie J. Bryant joined Mehri & Skalet in November 2013 as an Associate Attorney. Her work focuses in civil rights litigation and Fair Labor Standards Act violations.

Prior to joining Mehri & Skalet, Ms. Bryant was an attorney with Clifford & Garde, LLP in Washington, D.C. She handled employment cases under Title VII, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, DC Human Rights Act, and whistleblower retaliation statutes in state and federal courts and before federal agencies. She also handled general civil litigation, temporary restraining orders, and SEC civil litigation.

Ms. Bryant is a 2007 graduate of Case Western Reserve University School of Law. Prior to law school, Ms. Bryant worked as a Conditional Release Specialist for the Department of Corrections in Milwaukee, WI. She graduated from Marquette University with Bachelor's degrees in Criminology and Political Science.

Ms. Bryant is licensed to practice in the District of Columbia and Pennsylvania, as well as in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. She is a member of the National Employment Lawyers Association, Metropolitan Washington Employment Lawyers Association, D.C. Bar Association, and is an Employment Law Mentor for the D.C. Bar Advice & Referral Clinic.

Ellen Eardley, who joined Mehri & Skalet in 2007, is now a partner in the firm. Ellen is active in the civil rights, whistleblower and wage and hour aspects of the firm's practice. She is currently representing clients in sexual harassment, gender discrimination and pregnancy discrimination matters. Ellen teaches a course on Sex-Based Discrimination at American University Washington College of Law and previously worked at the National Women's Law Center. Read her complete bio [here](#).

FIRM NEWS: PRESS

Even as our cases make an impact for our clients, we hope that our work is advancing justice for society as a whole. One indication that we are making progress on a broader level: the impressive attention we receive in the media. However you prefer to consume your news, you may have stumbled across an interview with one of Mehri & Skalet's attorneys this year. If you're a cable news viewer, you might have seen Jay Angoff's regular commentary on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act on MSNBC, CNBC, and Fox News. If you're more of a local news aficionado, you might have heard Heidi Burakiewicz making the case for "essential" government employees to receive their fair pay on D.C.'s WJLA, WUSA, or Fox5. Even if you're one of those who prefers to read news on your computer screen, you were in luck this year—M&S's Craig Briskin was making the rounds with [Bloomberg](#), [Law360](#), and [The Wall Street Journal](#) to discuss the latest in his fight for seniors with reverse mortgages.

This year, Mehri & Skalet found our cases and our attorneys in the news literally hundreds of times—approximately once per *day*. Every story that hit the stands or airwaves reminded people that M&S is finding justice and achieving results for its clients.

[The Washington Post](#) took note of Janell Byrd's case with the National Fair Housing Alliance when they filed an expanded HUD complaint, adding five new cities on claims that Bank of America maintains and markets foreclosed homes in majority white neighborhoods significantly better than foreclosed homes in majority black and Latino neighborhoods. [The Wall Street Journal](#), [Huffington Post](#), [HousingWire](#), and [The Atlantic Cities](#) also wrote it up.

Our health insurance practice started off the year right, with a January 1, 2013, [National Public Radio](#) story on "What the Health Law Will Bring in 2013." We engaged in the debate all year long, closing out 2013—and starting 2014—with headlines about our Navigators case win, which enjoined a Missouri law interfering with the ability of consumer assister organizations to do their jobs. [The New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [USA Today](#), [Bloomberg](#) and more reported on the significance of the decision.

Continuing its tradition of fighting for equality in sports, the Mehri & Skalet-backed Fritz Pollard Alliance spearheaded revisions to the Rooney Rule to create more opportunity for coaches of color. In 2013, the revisions captured the attention of [Associated Press](#), [The Washington Post](#), [NBC Sports Pro Football Talk](#), [San Jose Mercury News](#), [Oakland Tribune](#), [Rapid City Journal](#)—even the [South China Morning Post](#). Later in the year, we generated even more attention when we took on the fight against offensive language on the field.

Telling the story of our clients and our work is critical to our mission to advance justice. You can always find our most recent press on our website, [findjustice.com](#), and you can look to our "Latest News" alerts for summaries of current cases. Check out our Twitter feed, @findjustice, for quick updates on our progress, as well as our thoughts on the law, justice, and more.