



2012 IN REVIEW

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Friends and Colleagues:

We are pleased to share with you our Year in Review for 2012 – another outstanding year with 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 continued expanding our work to help our clients keep their homes, take home the wages they are rightfully owed, and blow the whistle when fraud is perpetrated against the government.

We couldn't be prouder of the work our talented attorneys are doing to advance justice.

Very truly yours,

Cyrus Mehri

Steve Skalet

NOTABLE RESULTS

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."

- *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 March 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 provides direct payments to class members. In addition, the defendant ended several of the practices that formed the basis for the complaint.

- *MIA, Ex Rel D.S. v. Coventry Health Care of Delaware, Inc., MIA No. 2010-01-008*

M&S secured a groundbreaking win against Coventry Health Care, with potentially lasting implications for the relationship between doctors, patients and insurance carriers in the state of Maryland. M&S believes that many insurers may use the practice of underpaying out-of-network health providers, in order to deprive patients of their right to use such providers.

We brought suit against Coventry Health Care, and in a hearing before the

Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA), the Deputy Commissioner found that Coventry had arbitrarily and capriciously underpaid our client, an out-of-network mental health provider. The Deputy Commissioner ordered reimbursement and assessed administrative penalties against the company. Critically, the Deputy Commissioner also referred the matter to the Compliance and Enforcement Unit of the MIA, to determine whether the failures brought to light by this case are isolated circumstances or more broadly indicative of Coventry's business practices. We continue our own investigation of these practices as we await the results of Maryland Insurance Administration's investigation.

- *Yanqiu Ke v. Enlightened Wealth Institute, No. 10-02036 (D.D.C.)*

M&S filed a class action complaint with co-counsel in November 2010 on behalf of Plaintiff Yanqiu Ke against Enlightened Wealth Institute ("EWI") and several of its officers. Plaintiff claimed that defendants perpetuated a fraudulent scheme to enroll participants in real estate investment seminars, promising that they would teach "no money down" methods of investing that would yield large profits. The case settled on an individual basis in 2012.

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 a 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 further indicated that plaintiffs should prevail on the merits of their challenge. The case is currently pending in federal district court.

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, a 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. 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. Cornerstone is one of the largest multifamily housing developers in Florida. The agreement settles claims by NFHA and CILO that Cornerstone Group discriminated 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 more than 55 developments to make apartments and common areas accessible. It also agreed 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. In addition, Cornerstone will 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.

- *Waterside Towers Resident Association, Inc. v. Trilon Plaza Company, L.P., No. 2006 CA 008620 (D.C. Super.)*

M&S filed a lawsuit in 2004 on behalf of the Waterside Towers Resident Association, claiming that the owners of Waterside had sold the property, but did not furnish an Offer of Sale to the tenants as required by District of Columbia law. The case was dismissed in the lower court, but in August 2010, D.C. Court of Appeals vindicated the tenants' position in ruling that the transfer of the townhomes portion of the project was a sale that requires notice to the tenants, a right to negotiate, and a right of first refusal to purchase the property. The case was remanded to the Superior Court and, after 10 years of litigation, successfully concluded in late 2012.

Employment Discrimination

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

M&S continues to administer a \$32 million settlement for female financial advisors who faced gender discrimination while working at Wachovia and Wells Fargo Advisors. The settlement requires the company to make significant changes to internal policies that affect the distribution of business opportunities for women, and to appoint an independent monitor and a jointly selected expert. The Honorable Richard A. Levie (Ret. D.C. Super. Ct.) serves as the settlement monitor overseeing the implementation of the settlement.

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 that 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*, in the Eastern District of New York federal court, in 2012 the class settled part of their claims for \$5.525 million, preserving their right to appeal other claims. M&S and co-counsel have filed similar cases against SimplexGrinnell in New Jersey and California, which are in the discovery stages: *Hioutakos v. Simplex Grinnell LP, No. 2:10-cv-4505 (D.N.J.)*; *Bennett v. SimplexGrinnell LP, No. C11-01854 (N.D. Cal.)*. M&S is also investigating possible violations by SimplexGrinnell LP and other companies of other states' prevailing wage laws.

- *FLSA Cases against the Bureau of Prisons*

In 2012, Mehri & Skalet achieved a series of major victories for federal correctional officers on behalf of the Council of Prison Locals 33 against the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The cases involved violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), contractual violations, and overturning discipline decisions. In Oakdale, Louisiana (FCC Oakdale) and Florence, Colorado (USP Florence), M&S recovered a combined \$7,000,000 on behalf of over 550 employees for the Agency's failure to compensate employees for performing work before and after their shifts. In Raybrook, New York (FCI Raybrook) and Florence, Colorado (ADX Florence), M&S recovered a combined \$940,000 on behalf of more than 200 employees. The bureau had failed to assign overtime fairly and equitably and insisted that employees receive compensatory time off rather than time and one-half overtime compensation for overtime work performed.

Civil Rights

- *Norflet Progress Fund*

In 2012, M&S processed millions of dollars of Norflet Progress Fund grants to numerous non-profit 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, insureds 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 non-profit organizations.

Individual Employment Settlements

In 2012, M&S settled several cases involving race and gender discrimination in employment. 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 involved changes to the employers' policies and practices, in addition to 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. Finally, the firm handled the negotiation of an employment contract for the President of a leading university.

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 in its early stages.

- *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.

- *Somers v. Apple, Inc., Case No. 11-16896 (N.D. Cal.)*

In this putative class action, M&S represents an Apple customer who alleges that she was overcharged, in violation of the antitrust laws, for purchases of downloadable music on a portable music player. The case is on appeal.

- *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 its “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. The case is in the discovery phase.

- *Bowman v. IBM, No. 11-0593 (S.D. Ind.)*

M&S represents individuals and a proposed class of Medicaid recipients in Indiana, whose benefits were terminated or interrupted in violation of their constitutional rights and an existing consent decree requiring the state to determine eligibility under an alternate category of Medicaid before terminating benefits. Plaintiffs allege that IBM and other entities that administer the program on behalf of the state are responsible for these violations. The case is in the discovery phase.

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

- *Geday v. C.U. Employment, Inc., No 1:12-cv-00175 (D.D.C.)*

M&S represents over 130 cable installers and technicians who were not paid for all hours worked at C.U. Employment, Inc. (CUI) in the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland. The workers claim that CUI failed to properly pay overtime and minimum wages, in violation of the FLSA. The workers also allege that the employer made improper deductions from their wages, resulting in additional minimum wage violations.

- *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.

- *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, DC 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.

- *FLSA Cases against the Bureau of Prisons*

M&S is representing the American Federation of Government Employees Council of Prison Locals 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, and general contract violations.

- *ERISA*

M&S attorneys have more than 30 years of litigation experience under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the federal law protecting pension and other employee benefits including healthcare and life insurance benefits.

Recently, M&S settled a group action under ERISA on behalf of salaried oil refinery workers. M&S is currently investigating or involved in cases claiming ERISA violations in the healthcare and life insurance sectors.

Employment Discrimination

- *Claybrooks, et al. v. American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., et al. No. 3:12-cv-00388 (M.D. Tennessee)*

Mehri & Skalet joined Nashville-based law firm Barrett Johnston, LLC and Birmingham-based law firm Perkins-Law, LLC, in a class action discrimination suit against ABC's "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette." Never, over 10 years and a combined total of 23 seasons of the famed reality series, has either show featured a single person of color — whether African American, Latino, Asian, or any other minority race or ethnicity — in the central role of the Bachelor or Bachelorette. The suit drew widespread media attention from the likes of TIME, CNN, CBS, and the entertainment press. Critically, the suit has launched a much-needed conversation on the issue of racial bias in the media.

- *Bush v. Ruth's Chris Steak House, Inc., No. 10-01721 (D.D.C.)*

In October 2010, M&S and co-counsel filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against Ruth's Chris Steak House and its parent company. The suit alleged widespread discrimination against women in pay, promotions, and terminations, as well as a sexually-charged working environment – fostered by an overwhelmingly male leadership team – that routinely engaged in sexual commentary and behavior demeaning to women. In 2011, the court allowed plaintiffs to amend the complaint to pursue class action claims. Class discovery, including expert reports, are completed.

- *White, et al v. Eric Holder, BOP-2011-00528 (EEOC)*

In November, M&S filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment on behalf of a class of approximately 400 female employees 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. The case has just been granted class certification.

Fair Housing and Lending

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

M&S and co-counsel filed this lawsuit against SunTrust Bank in 2011. The complaint alleges that SunTrust had agreements with private mortgage insurance (PMI) companies to receive illegal kickback fees for arranging PMI with these insurers. Typically, when a home is purchased with less than a 20% down payment, which is disproportionately the case for minority and lower-income borrowers, the lender requires the borrower to purchase PMI. PMI protects the lender in case of a default by the borrower. This case alleges a scheme known as “captive reinsurance” by which a SunTrust subsidiary received a portion of the borrower’s monthly PMI premium payments — ostensibly for sharing in the risk of default on the loan — though the deal is structured so that SunTrust actually assumes little or no risk. Thus, the complaint alleges that the payment is essentially an illegal kickback or referral fee prohibited under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA).

- *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 DC 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 of 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.

***Pro Bono* Fair Housing and Lending**

In October 2011, M&S provided *pro bono* representation in *First American Financial Corp. v. Edwards* to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc., Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the National Fair Housing Alliance in the preparation of an *amicus* brief filed in the U.S. Supreme Court. The brief addressed the interpretation of the Court's landmark decision in *Havens Realty Corp. v. Coleman*, on the issue of standing for testers under the Fair Housing Act.

M&S also provided *pro bono* services to numerous homeowners who found themselves under water on their home loans and facing default and potential foreclosure. Many of these homeowners had applied for loan modifications from their lenders, but encountered unfair and deceptive practices in the loan modification process. M&S helped these homeowners save their homes.

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, FPA has spearheaded the hiring of a record number of minority personnel at 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 2012, the New York Giants, a team assembled by General Manager Jerry Reese, won its second Super Bowl in four years.

Following a disappointing hiring cycle, the FPA developed a game plan for further reforms in the NFL, including expanding the Rooney Rule for offensive and defensive coordinators, as well as team presidents.

FIRM NEWS: NEW FACES

Meet Our New Attorneys—Jay Angoff, Michael Lieder, Jeremi Duru, Pia Winston and Teresa Yeh



Jay Angoff, who returns to Mehri & Skalet after three years with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has devoted his career to protecting the rights of consumers and holding insurance companies accountable. The only person to have served as the lead federal health insurance regulator, the Director of an HHS Region, and a state Insurance Commissioner, he is one of the nation's leading insurance experts.

In March 2010, Mr. Angoff was appointed as the first Director of the HHS Office of Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight—the office responsible for implementing the insurance reform provisions of President Obama's signature legislation, the Affordable Care Act. In addition, Mr. Angoff served at HHS as the Senior Advisor to the Secretary and as Regional Director of HHS Region VII, headquartered in Kansas City. Before serving at HHS Mr. Angoff was in private practice, first in Jefferson City, MO and most recently in Washington, DC with Mehri & Skalet, where he focused on representing individuals who were overcharged by insurance companies. He has also represented individuals before state insurance departments, and has consulted for and advised governmental entities, consumer groups, the plaintiff's bar, and other interest groups.

Mr. Angoff began his career as an antitrust lawyer with the Federal Trade Commission. He also served as a staff attorney for Congress Watch, a public interest lobbying organization, and as counsel to the National Insurance Consumer Organization. He has written for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among other publications. He is a graduate of Oberlin College and Vanderbilt Law School.



Michael Lieder became of counsel to Mehri & Skalet in April 2012. For 21 years previously he served as of counsel, as a partner and as an owner of Sprenger + Lang, PLLC, a firm with offices in Washington, DC and Minneapolis, MN that concentrated on plaintiffs' employment and consumer class and collective action litigation. At S+L he played a leading role in numerous class actions claiming race, gender and age discrimination, violations of ERISA, wage-and-hour violations, and violations of state consumer laws. He developed an expertise in the statistics associated with employment discrimination class actions, a topic he has addressed in numerous seminars. Mr. Lieder graduated from Georgetown University Law

Center magna cum laude in 1984, where he was a Notes and Comments Editor on the law review. He then joined Foley & Lardner LLP as an associate, and acted as a visiting assistant professor at Toledo University College of Law before joining S+L. Mr. Lieder has also co-authored a book, *Wild Justice: The People of Geronimo vs. the United States*, and published several law review articles on various areas of law.



N. Jeremi Duru, a Professor of Law at American University's Washington College of Law, became of counsel to Mehri & Skalet in July 2012. Before joining American's faculty, Professor Duru was an associate at M&S, where he represented plaintiffs' interests in employment discrimination and other civil rights matters. Much of Professor Duru's work involves challenges to discriminatory employment practices in professional athletics. In recognition of this work, the National Bar Association honored him with its 2005 Entertainment and Sports Lawyer of the Year award. Professor Duru has lectured and written extensively on sports law and employment law topics and, among other publications, is co-author of *Sports Law and Regulation: Cases, Materials, and Problems* and author of *Advancing the Ball: Race, Reformation, and the Quest for Equal Coaching Opportunity in the NFL*. After receiving his undergraduate education at Brown University, Professor Duru completed a joint-degree program at Harvard University, receiving a Master's degree in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government and a Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School. He then served as a law clerk to the Honorable Damon J. Keith of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Find Justice Fellowships



Pia Winston joined Mehri & Skalet, PLLC as a Find Justice Fellow in February 2013. Her work focuses on the civil rights, wage and hour, and consumer protection aspects of the firm's practice. Before joining Mehri & Skalet, Ms. Winston served as a law clerk for the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC). She also completed a fellowship with the National Whistleblower Center where she advocated for the rights of whistleblowers and litigated cases involving employee retaliation within the federal government. Ms. Winston graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2012.

While in law school she served on the William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law and served as National Parliamentarian for the National Black Law Students Association. Ms. Winston also competed in national competitions in criminal and employment law as a member of the W&M National Trial Team and Alternative Dispute Resolution Team. Prior to attending law school, Ms. Winston graduated with honors from the University of California, Berkeley with a B.A. in African American Studies and Anthropology. She is licensed to practice in Maryland and Washington, DC.



Teresa Yeh joined Mehri & Skalet in April 2013 as a Find Justice Fellow. Her work focuses on the civil rights, wage and hour, and consumer protection aspects of the firm’s practice. Prior to joining Mehri & Skalet, Ms. Yeh worked for the Honorable Alexander Williams, Jr. on the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland. Ms. Yeh graduated from Cornell Law School in 2011. At Cornell, she served on the Journal of Law and Public Policy, represented disabled individuals through the Cornell Legal Aid Clinic, and contributed to the AVON Global Center for Women & Justice. During law school, Ms. Yeh also completed a full-term externship with the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Appellate Staff, where she drafted briefs submitted to the federal courts of appeals and the Supreme Court. In addition, she served as a law clerk for both Legal Aid DC’s Appellate Advocacy Unit and the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center. Prior to law school, Ms. Yeh spent several years working at women’s advocacy organizations in Washington DC, including Legal Momentum, Break the Cycle, and the Institute for Women’s Policy Research. She graduated with high honors from the University of Maryland, College Park, receiving a B.A. in English and a B.A. in Government & Politics.

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. Flipping through the channels this year, you might have stumbled upon Mr. Mehri discussing high-profile cases on CNN or NPR. Or you may have seen our work in the pages of *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Consumer Reports*. Every story that hit the stands or airwaves reminded people that M&S is finding justice and achieving results for its clients.

In the spring of 2012, our lawsuit against ABC and its television program “The Bachelor” for failing to hire people of color garnered overwhelming media attention from national, entertainment and local press, including “The Today Show,” [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [USA TODAY](#), [Entertainment Weekly](#), [E! News](#), [The Tennessean](#), and others. CNN profiled the case a number of times, including on “[Starting Point with Soledad O’Brien](#).” Renowned reality television critic and *Daily Beast* contributor Jenn Pozner wrote a [feature piece](#) on the suit, quoting Mr. Mehri and the complaint extensively. The news made a remarkable public impact: Several dozen videos of personal reactions to the story were posted to YouTube, and the “Hutchinson Report” radio show launched a “Change the Channel” campaign against the Bachelor in support of the lawsuit.

We were also proud to have the newest member of our team, Jay Angoff, formerly charged with implementing insurance reform under the Affordable Care Act at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, make impressive rounds in the press. He has offered his expertise in interviews on NPR and the “[Melissa Harris-Perry Show](#)” on MSNBC, and was quoted in [USA TODAY](#), [The Huffington Post](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Politico Pro](#), [BillMoyers.com](#) and [CNN.com](#). As the healthcare law continues to be implemented, Mr. Angoff will be on hand to share his insights and expertise.

Our 2011 reverse mortgage suit against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), led by M&S partner Craig Briskin, continued to garner attention when the case was revived on appeal in early 2013, garnering coverage in the [ABA Journal](#), [Law 360](#) and [Bloomberg](#).

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. Early 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](#).

Mehri & Skalet attorneys shared their thoughts on more than just the legal landscape this year. Cyrus is from Newtown, Connecticut. When tragedy struck there in December, he penned an op-ed for [The Danbury News-Times](#) urging Americans to take action to prevent another such tragedy. And when Janell’s mentor and friend John Payton died,

her touching tribute to the civil rights leader was featured in [The Root](#). Our attorneys were also in the spotlight for their excellent work: *Super Lawyers* named Steve Skalet as a “Super Lawyer” and Ellen Eardley as a “Rising Star” in its annual list of the top attorneys in the DC-metro area.

Telling the story of our clients and our work is critical to our mission to advance justice. You can always find press round-ups 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.

