

McCarter & English Nabs Gibbons Product Liability Pro In NJ

By Jeannie O'Sullivan

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McCarter & English LLP has added former Gibbons PC litigator Natalie Mantell as a partner in its Newark, New Jersey office, where she'll draw on her defense work in cases over pharmaceutical products and medical devices as a member of the firm's product liability practice.

The recent accomplishments of Mantell — the former product liability board chair and immediate past president of the New Jersey Defense Association — include helping Hoffman-LaRoche Ltd. defeat a long-running mass tort over its acne drug Accutane. Mantell and her colleagues helped convince the New Jersey Supreme Court in August to employ stricter scrutiny, known as the Daubert standard, when evaluating the scientific reliability of evidence.

Courts in the Garden State can likely expect a barrage of product liability cases in the wake of last year's U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. v. Superior Court of California, which limited the ability of state courts to hear claims from out-of-state plaintiffs, according to Mantell.

"Since the Supreme Court's ruling in Bristol-Myers Squibb, more and more product liability cases seem to be filed in New Jersey against the numerous pharmaceutical and medical device companies here, and we are involved in many of those litigations," she told Law360 on Friday.

The 400-attorney firm's "outstanding" practices in product liability and other areas, and its 10 offices ranging from Boston to Washington, D.C., made the move to McCarter & English attractive for Mantell, who looks forward to taking on high-profile matters for clients.

Before joining Gibbons, where Mantell was a director, the Suffolk University Law School graduate served as a law clerk to New Jersey Appellate Division Judge Jack L. Lintner, according to McCarter & English.

She has since handled appeals involving employment, real estate and free speech matters, the firm said.

Mantell also counsels clients in various sectors regarding liability avoidance and risk mitigation, the firm said.



Natalie Mantell

The breadth of Mantell's product liability and appeals practice makes her an "ideal fit" for McCarter & English, which is currently representing a major New Jersey pharmaceutical company fending off litigation over asbestos-related talcum powder, Cathy Mohan, firmwide leader of the product liability practice group, said in a statement.

"Natalie is a hugely valuable addition to our already nationally renowned products practice," Mohan said.

McCarter & English Chairman Michael P. Kelly hailed Mantell as a "world-class lawyer."

"Whether it's pharmaceuticals or medical devices, talc cases or chemicals or power tools, she will fit right in, to the benefit of the firm and, more importantly, our clients," Kelly said in a statement.

--Editing by Dipti Coorg.