


Sarah E. Bell

Counsel

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Sarah Bell is a co-chair of Pryor Cashman's Public Place Discrimination Group, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Defense + Consulting Practice, and a member of the Litigation and Labor + Employment Groups. A highly regarded civil rights attorney, her diverse clientele encompasses small to mid-size to Fortune 500 companies.

Sarah's litigation experience spans over two decades. She handles complex commercial litigation as well as discrimination claims which occur in public places. Sarah frequently consults with businesses of all sizes concerning their anti-discrimination practices and policies. Clients involved in discrimination claims from customers and/or visitors to their public business benefit from Sarah's prior experience with plaintiff's attorneys, governmental entities and Courts. Sarah's creative problem solving and commitment to thinking outside the box help her achieve favorable outcomes that have a lasting impact on the businesses she represents.

Sarah represents corporations, family-owned businesses, and individuals in federal and state trial and appellate courts, as well as in arbitrations and mediations. Her clients come from a cross-section of industries, including the food and beverage, banking, supermarket, fashion, publishing, and entertainment sectors.

In her defense work, Sarah brings broad experience and a deep understanding of issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. This knowledge helps her develop effective defense strategies in litigation related to accessibility matters and discrimination claims. She also counsels clients on ADA mandates to ensure regulatory compliance and provides guidance on actions they can take to avoid potential lawsuits. Her recent ADA representations include the following:

- Represented Fortune 500 worldwide hotel conglomerate in discrimination litigation;
- Represented Starbucks Corporation in several ADA accessibility litigations regarding the accessibility of their coffee shops to wheelchair users;
- Represented Starbucks in deaf discrimination litigation where deaf customers complained that they were discriminated against by Starbucks employees.
- Represented The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company (A&P) in ADA accessibility litigation.
- Represented several small family-owned businesses in ADA litigation.
- Successfully defended arcade/restaurant in ADA accessibility litigation that involved accessibility of the video games and restaurant.
- Defending a nationwide nursing home chain in deaf discrimination litigation.
- Persuaded an SDNY District Court Judge and Magistrate Judge to sanction Plaintiff's attorneys for bad faith behavior in ADA accessibility litigation concerning a Westchester shopping center.

- Defended and advise one of the largest owners, managers, and developers of first-class office properties in the US on disability discrimination issues, including the use of service dogs, provision of accessible office building restrooms, accessibility of tenant restaurant spaces, and accessibility of their wheelchair lifts.
- Represented one of the top ten largest banks in the US in negotiations with the NYC Commission on Human Rights regarding service of wheelchair-bound customers and accessibility of teller counters.

A Persuasive Advocate

Detail-oriented and conscientious, Sarah identifies the issues at stake and crafts persuasive strategies and arguments that advance her clients' interests. That same dedication applies to her work on pro bono cases which include civil rights actions, criminal appeals, and domestic disputes involving protective orders and child custody proceedings.

Academic Achievements

Sarah is a 2004 graduate of Duke University School of Law, where she was a Public Interest Law Foundation Fellowship Recipient.

Services

- ADA Defense + Consulting
- Family Law
- Labor + Employment
- Litigation

Education

- Duke University School of Law (J.D., 2004)
- Duke University (B.A., 2001)
 - Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society

Recognition

- Named to the *Super Lawyers – New York Metro* list in Civil Rights Litigation (2024-25);
- **New York State Women of Distinction Awards**, Assembly member Amy Paulin (2023).
- Named to the *Super Lawyers – New York Metro* list as a “Rising Star” in general litigation (2013-20).
- **New York State Bar Association President’s Pro Bono Service Award** – Young Lawyer (2008)

Community

- Co-Chair, Duke University School of Law 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th Reunion Committees
- Duke Law Club of New York
 - Duke University Annual Fund Executive Committee (2010-13)

Admissions

- New York, 2005
- U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York

Pro Bono

Sarah has devoted time to many pro bono matters, including:

- Representing New York City in a federal civil rights action
- Writing and arguing a criminal appeal before the N.Y. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department

- Successfully representing a client at trial before Judge Martinez-Perez of the Bronx Family Court in a protective order and child custody proceeding
- Representing a client before Chief Judge Knipps of the Manhattan Family Court in a child custody proceeding

Publications

January 1, 2024

Bell Comments on 2024 Impact of SCOTUS ADA Decision

Law360

December 5, 2023

Bell Comments on SCOTUS Decision in Key ADA Case

Law360

October 4, 2023

Bell Comments on SCOTUS ADA Case Acheson Hotels v. Laufer

Law360

November 14, 2019

The Next Wave of ADA Lawsuits is Here: Braille Gift Cards

October 9, 2019

Key Takeaways from the Domino's Supreme Court Ruling: What's Changed (and What Hasn't)

April 10, 2017

Bell Shares 5 Things Retailers Must Know to Avoid ADA Lawsuits

April 6, 2017

Bell Examines Federal Laws Governing Women's Right to Breastfeed in the Workplace

December 9, 2016

Bell Guest Blogs for Modern Mom About Breastfeeding in the Workplace

November 14, 2016

Bell Pens Article on Rise in ADA Litigation for Hotels Magazine

February 25, 2016

Sarah Bell Authors "ADA Litigation: Hotels, Resorts and Inns – Beware" Law360 Article

August 5, 2015

Pryor Cashman's Sarah Bell Authors Law 360 Article "ADA Litigation: Are The Courts Finally Getting It Right?"

July 12, 2012

The ADA and Access to Pools and Other Recreational Facilities