



Spencer P. Hugret

PARTNER

San Francisco

415.875.3193

shugret@grsm.com

RELATED SERVICES

- Product Liability
- Trial Practice
- Aviation
- Business Transactions
- Automotive Litigation & Autonomous Vehicles
- Commercial Litigation
- Securities
- Transportation

OFFICES

- San Francisco
- Fresno
- Los Angeles

OVERVIEW

Spencer P. Hugret is a Partner in GRSM's San Francisco and Los Angeles offices. Spencer is chair of the firm's Automotive Litigation & Autonomous Vehicles practice group and is the chair of the San Francisco Product Liability practice group. He is also a member of the firm's Aviation, Commercial Litigation, Securities, and Business Transactions Practice Groups.

His multifaceted practice focuses on complex litigation involving products liability in a number of industries, including the automotive industry, aviation accidents, commercial litigation, securities litigation, antitrust litigation, consumer warranty and consumer fraud-based litigation. In such litigation

matters, Spencer's experience relates to not only the handling of such claims, but also significant trial experience in numerous trials to verdict in complex products liability matters, mass torts, class actions, multi-district litigation, business torts, unfair competition, "bet the company" litigation, consumer litigation, and breach of fiduciary duty claims. Spencer also regularly handles punitive damages matters and other high exposure claims. Further, Spencer serves as coordinating counsel for a major automotive manufacturer, and he has represented clients throughout the country in defending claims at trial through pro hac vice admissions in other jurisdictions. He has also served as national coordinating counsel for his clients for high exposure defect claims throughout the country on both an individual basis and judicial coordination proceedings in Multi-District Litigation and state court equivalents.

Spencer is also lead trial counsel for two of the "Big Three" automotive manufacturers in high exposure complex automotive product liability matters. In the automotive industry, specifically, Spencer has extensive experience in litigation arising out of numerous injury claims stemming from alleged failure of vehicle safety systems, such as airbag litigation, seatbelt litigation, in addition to experience related to seatback performance, roll overs, roof crush, vehicle dynamics, vehicle fires, crashworthiness and breach of warranty litigation. Spener is also a strategic business partner, assisting his clients with not only litigation matters, but also business operations, corporate strategy, and strategic integration of operations. Towards that end, Spencer frequently assists clients with implementation of new or evolving strategic initiatives, operations and overall strategy to help businesses grow and adapt in the ever-changing legal landscape. His clients include numerous Fortune 100 companies in industries such as automotive, consumer products and aviation, as well as in the financial sector.

Sitting first chair, Spencer has tried to verdict numerous complex and high stakes matters in various jurisdictions. His extensive experience includes not only lead trial counsel work, but also pretrial motions, discovery preparation, depositions, electronic discovery, mediations and expert witness discovery. Spencer has drafted and argued numerous successful dispositive motions on behalf of clients. In addition to his trial experience, he handles the collection, management, production and preservation of electronically stored information for clients engaged in high-stakes litigation, and he is skilled in using many e-discovery software platforms.

Spencer has also represented clients in arbitration proceedings involving banking, financial and securities matters before the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA"), formerly known as the National Association of Securities Dealers ("NASD") arbitrations. Spencer also represents his clients in AAA arbitrations. In addition, he successfully handled an appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit involving a large international banking corporation.

Prior to becoming a Partner at GRSM, Spencer served as one of the associate representatives to the partnership for both the Los Angeles and San Francisco offices. Every year since 2012, Southern California Super Lawyers magazine has recognized him as a Rising Star in aviation law and business

litigation, a distinction awarded to only the top 2.5 percent of young lawyers in Southern California.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Represented client in a test case at trial in a Federal Multi-District Litigation (MDL) involving alleged transmission defects resulting in a full dismissal of fraud and punitive damages claims, and a nominal economic Plaintiff's verdict which was significantly below the client's FRCP Rule 68 Offer of Judgment, resulting in the client's costs being paid for the trial.
- Represented client in a test case at trial in a California State Court Judicial Counsel Coordination Proceeding (JCCP) involving alleged transmission defects resulting in a dismissal of the high exposure claims, and a nominal economic Plaintiff's verdict which was significantly below the client's CCP section 998 Offer of Judgment, resulting in the client's costs, exceeding \$100,000 being paid for the trial.
- Represented client in a AAA arbitration arising out of a dispute over the terms of the a vehicle's written warranty resulting in a complete defense verdict on all claims.
- Represented client in Stanislaus County in a multi-week product liability trial alleging a defective airbag system installed in a vehicle involved in a high speed crash. Plaintiff sought more than \$10,000,000 in damages in closing argument and the jury returned a defense verdict.
- Represented client in a five week consumer fraud and punitive damages trial in Sacramento County involving allegations of a defective diesel engine. In closing argument, Plaintiff sought damages in excess of \$1,000,000 and the jury returned a verdict of less than \$120,000.
- Represented client in a three week product liability trial involving allegations of a defective restraint system (decoupling of a seat belt). Plaintiff sought more than \$5,000,000 in damages in closing argument, and after the defense closing, the case resolved very favorably to the client before a verdict was reached by the jury.
- Represented client in a two week consumer fraud and punitive damages trial in Tulare County involving allegations of a defective diesel engine, resulting in a non-suit on Plaintiffs' fraud and punitive damages claims.
- Represented client in a Federal Multi-District Litigation (MDL) involving alleged drivetrain defects resulting in a majority of the claims being dismissed on summary judgment paving the way for a favorable resolution on the remaining claim in the litigation.
- Represented client in Santa Clara County in a product liability action involving an off-road vehicle rollover, resulting in serious injury. The case was dismissed on summary judgment in favor of the client.

- Represented client in a five week catastrophic workplace injury and negligence trial in San Francisco Superior Court. Demanding \$2 million against the client's offer of \$200,000, Plaintiffs eventually sought more than \$1,500,000 in their closing argument. After deliberations, the jury found client only ten percent at fault, for a total judgment of \$369,000.
- Represented client in a three week product liability matter in Los Angeles Superior Court. Plaintiff sought more than \$1,000,000 in damages and the jury awarded Plaintiff a nominal verdict, which was significantly less than the client's offer to compromise resulting in the client recovering costs from Plaintiff of more than six times the amount of the verdict.
- Represented client in an eight week catastrophic injury brain injury case in the San Joaquin County Superior Court resulting in a defense verdict for the client. Plaintiffs sought more than \$20,000,000 in their closing argument as a result of the accident.
- Represented client in a four week fraud and breach of fiduciary duty bench trial in Los Angeles Superior Court that resulted in a complete finding for the defense.
- Represented client in a multi week FINRA arbitration proceeding in San Francisco over claims of the suitability of certain investments and breach of fiduciary duty. After Claimants' case-in-chief, the arbitration resolved favorably to the client.

PRESENTATIONS

- "Examining the Next Generation of Emerging Autonomous Technologies," American Conference Institute 12th Annual Summit on Defending and Managing Automotive Product Liability Litigation, July 18, 2019.
- "Emerging Issues in Products Liability Litigation," GRSM Legal Education Conference, New York and Hartford (May 2018)
- "Latest Nuances in Defending Typical Defect Theories: Belt Restraint, Airbag and Seatback Strengths," American Conference Institute 10th Annual Summit on Defending and Managing Automotive Product Liability Litigation, June 16, 2017.
- "Uncovering Bias During Jury Selection and Developing Cause Challenges," Next Generation Lead Automotive Products Liability Conference, October 24, 2016.
- "Challenging Expert Testimony Through Cross-Examination and *Daubert* Challenges," Next Generation Lead Automotive Products Liability Conference, April 5, 2017.

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- California
- U.S. District Court for the Central, Northern, Eastern and Southern Districts of California

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Supreme Court

Memberships

- California Bar Association
- Los Angeles County Bar Association
- Beverly Hills Bar Association
- Association of Business Trial Lawyers
- Defense Research Institute (member of the Aviation Committee, Product Liability Committee and Commercial Litigation Committee)
- Member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA)

Education

- J.D., Whittier Law School, 2005
- *Whittier Law Review*
- B.A., Political Science, George Washington University, 2002

Honors

- *Rising Stars*® distinction in the fields of Aviation and Business Litigation (2012-2019, *Law & Politics*)
- Honored Listee, Marquis Who's Who (2023)