



CHRISTOPHER A. KEELE
PARTNER

Chris Keele is a veteran trial lawyer with over 25 years experience in the courtroom. He has represented business, industry, state agencies, not-for-profits and individuals in all types of civil litigation. His practice covers a broad spectrum of areas, including environmental, product liability, toxic tort, securities and accounting fraud, unfair business practices, breach of contract, and real estate, partnership and other complex business disputes.

Mr. Keele joined Thomas Whitelaw as the managing partner of the San Francisco office in 2007. Prior to joining the firm, he was the managing partner of Stoel Rives LLP's California offices. He practiced at Stoel Rives and its California predecessor, Washburn Briscoe & McCarthy, beginning in 1993. Prior to that, he was an associate at Morrison & Foerster in its Palo Alto office.

Mr. Keele began his career as an intern in the felony and capital crimes division of the Marion County prosecutors office in Indianapolis. He has practiced in small and large firms, in both Chicago and the Bay Area.

Representative Cases

- *Karis v. Entelos, Inc.* (Cal. Sup. Ct., San Mateo County): Represent Entelos against claims of wrongful termination and labor code violations.
- *Menlo Business Park, et al. v. PharmChem, et al.* (Cal. Sup. Ct., San Mateo County): Represented owners of a business park in an action arising out of tenant's alleged waste and misuse of real property and breach of lease from operation of a chemical analysis laboratory on client property. On the eve of trial, the case resolved on terms favorable to the client, with client receiving a substantial settlement.
- *State of California v. Anna Ayala, et al.* (Cal. Sup. Ct., Santa Clara County): Represented fast food purveyor Wendy's in food contamination case where customer planted severed finger in a bowl of chili as part of a scheme to blackmail Wendy's. Worked with law enforcement authorities and district attorney to gather facts to establish conspiracy on part of customer and husband, resulting in criminal action, guilty pleas and significant jail

sentences for both. Helped client mitigate financial losses from adverse publicity through design and implementation of sophisticated public relations plan.

- *Wall Street Network, Ltd. v. Clickbank* (C.D. Cal.): Represented Internet retailer of digital products that developed web-based system for online advertising. Defended client in breach of contract and fraud action, under which plaintiff claimed to have marketed products via client's online advertising network. Case settled on terms favorable to client on eve of trial.
- *Tera Power Company, et al. v. State of California (Department of Water Resources)* (Cal. Sup. Ct., San Francisco County): Lead trial counsel for defendant State of California Department of Water Resources. Case arose out of DWR's termination of a thirty-year contract for wind energy from a facility in Altamont Pass. After a nine-week trial, jury returned defense verdicts on all claims.
- *Perry Wells v. Rockwell Automation, Inc.* (Cal. Sup. Ct., San Francisco County): Lead trial counsel for defendant in product liability litigation. After a four-week trial and one day of deliberation, the jury returned a defense verdict.
- *John Wells v. Rockwell Automation, Inc.* (Cal. Sup. Ct., San Francisco County): Lead trial counsel for defendant in product liability litigation. After a four-week trial and one day of deliberation, the jury returned a defense verdict.
- *United States v. Clark Equipment Company* (M.D. N. Car.): Represented forklift truck manufacturer in CERCLA enforcement action. Defended claims brought by U.S. Department of Justice and EPA that client generated oils with heavy metals that were disposed of at North Carolina oil reclamation facility. Case settled on terms favorable to client on eve of trial.
- *Siltec Corporation v. General Instrument Corporation* (N.D. Cal.): Represented silicon wafer manufacturer in environmental cost recovery action against previous owner-operator of facility in Silicon Valley. Solvent contamination of groundwater was primary injury. After discovery, parties reached settlement favorable to client.
- *Fairchild, et al. v. Siltec Corporation, et al.* (N.D. Cal.): Defended silicon wafer manufacturer in environmental cost recovery action by downgradient property owners for alleged groundwater contamination. After discovery and mediation, parties settled on terms favorable to client.
- *West County Landfill v. Mitsubishi Silicon America* (N.D. Cal.): Defended silicon wafer manufacturer in private cost recovery action. Owner-operator of sanitary landfill brought contribution claims against generators of hazardous waste disposed of at the landfill. Established that client was *de minimis* generator and, on that basis, negotiated favorable settlement for client.
- *State of California (Department of Toxic Substances Control) v. Hyampom Lumber Company, et al.* (E.D. Cal.): Represented major bank, which held security interest in

property contaminated with lumber operations waste. Obtained summary judgment for client based on statute of limitations defense.

- *State of California (Department of Water Resources) v. Pacific Gas & Electric, et al.* (E.D. Cal.): Represented California Department of Water Resources in environmental action against entities that previously owned and operated a power plant (and later a metal recycling facility) on the Sacramento River. Action included claims against railroad, which operated rail yard adjacent to power plant. After discovery and mediation, matter settled on terms very favorable to the State.
- *Calcot, Ltd. v. Insurance Companies* (Cal. Sup. Ct., Fresno County): Represented cotton cooperative in coverage litigation seeking recovery of defense costs for lawsuit claiming client owned property that was source of groundwater contamination and degradation of drinking water source. After discovery and mediation, matter settled on terms very favorable to client.

Practice Areas

Trials, Product Liability, Environmental Litigation, Complex Business Litigation

Honors

Mr. Keele is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America, a Trial Lawyer Honorary Society

He has been selected for inclusion in both the Northern California and Corporate Counsel editions of *Super Lawyers* the past several years.

Speaking Engagements

Mr. Keele is a frequent lecturer on trial strategies and courtroom advocacy.

Admissions

State Bar of California
All United States District Courts in California.

Education

Mr. Keele graduated with honors from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. In 1984 he received his JD from Indiana University School of Law in Bloomington, where he was Executive Editor of the *Indiana Law Journal*.