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## Howard Pikel

### PARTNER

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Howard Pikel has focused his practice on the asbestos product and premises liability defense. He oversees hundreds of asbestos lawsuits filed in Madison, Cook, and St. Clair Counties in Illinois, and in St. Louis City Court in Missouri. He has taken hundreds of depositions and is responsible for case evaluations, fact and expert discovery, dispositive motions, settlement negotiations, and obtaining hundreds of dismissals for clients without payment.

In addition to asbestos defense, Howard has substantial experience with investigating and preparing catastrophic injury and wrongful death cases for trial, which includes medical malpractice, pharmacy malpractice, legal malpractice, premises liability, auto/trucking liability, construction liability, lead poisoning and contamination, and product liability. He has tried numerous jury trials, as well as resolved many cases through mediations and judicial settlement conferences.

Howard has defended clients insured by ISMIE, Preferred Physicians Mutual Risk Retention Group, Lawrenceville Property & Casualty Co., Darwin, Fireman's Fund Insurance Co., Liberty Mutual, Hiscox, AIG/Chartis, Markel Southwest, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, Travelers, Allstate, Great-West, Church Mutual Insurance Co. and Zurich. He has defended BP, Atlantic Richfield Company, Keeler Dorr Oliver, Pfizer, Interline Products and others in asbestos lawsuits.

Before joining Pretzel & Stouffer, Howard practiced at another firm where he defended cases involving fires, explosions, power tool injuries, construction negligence claims, church liability, and trucking injuries.

Howard began his career as a trial attorney with the Cook County State's Attorney. He served as an assistant state's attorney for fourteen years investigating and prosecuting hundreds of criminal defendants. He served as the supervisor for the Narcotics Felony Trial Unit, and as a member of the Juvenile and Felony Trial Divisions where he tried numerous jury and bench trials. He also taught search and seizure to local police departments and narcotics task force groups.

## Education

- The John Marshall Law School, J.D. 1981
- University of Illinois at Chicago, B.A. 1977

## Bar Admissions

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois - Trial Bar
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Maryland
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

## Professional Experience

### Professional Affiliations

- Missouri Bar Association
- Illinois Association of Defense Counsel
- DRI

## Recognition and Awards

Highest Martindale-Hubbell rating, AV

Representative cases

Howard served as either lead or second-chair counsel for the defendants in these cases:

- Denial of plaintiff's motion to compel in an asbestos wrongful death lawsuit where the plaintiff sought to compel physical inspection and photographing of one of the largest oil refineries in the United States.
- Dismissal pursuant to a defense summary judgment motion in an asbestos lawsuit where the defendant employer was accused of negligently causing the plaintiff office worker's exposure to asbestos-bearing pipe insulation and plaster.
- Summary judgment granted in a wrongful death lawsuit based on the lack of duty to maintain a public sidewalk immediately next to the defendant gas station where a bicyclist was crushed by a passing truck after the bicyclist drove his bicycle from the public sidewalk into the street to avoid broken concrete.
- Court dismissal for a pulmonologist accused of negligently placing a catheter in a patient's hand, forcing the patient's hand to be amputated.
- Court dismissal for a critical care physician accused of failing to promptly resuscitate a patient who suffered a pulmonary embolism and severe brain damage.
- Voluntary dismissal for an anesthesiologist accused of failing to promptly arrive for an emergent C-section which allegedly caused the death of the newborn.
- Defense verdict for a critical care physician whose decision not to order thrombolytic therapy for a patient which allegedly caused the patient to suffer a fatal pulmonary embolism.

- Defense verdict for a hematologist faced with a lawsuit in which it was alleged that the consulting hematologist negligently ordered Heparin for a patient with suspected deep-vein thrombosis, which caused a rare allergic reaction, worsening deep-vein thrombosis, necrosis and the plaintiff's bilateral leg amputations above the knee.
- Voluntary dismissal for a urologist during a wrongful death trial. The urologist was accused of failing to obtain a proper cardiac history and clearance for a prostatectomy, which allegedly resulted in the elderly patient's fatal myocardial infarction seven days after prostate surgery.
- Defense verdict for an obstetrician who was accused of negligently causing a brachial plexus birth injury.
- Defense verdict for a nephrologist accused of causing a patient's arterial-venous fistula and fatal bowel infection by negligently placing the patient's femoral hemodialysis catheter.
- Defense verdict for a defendant propane supply company where the decedent was fatally injured in a residential furnace explosion and fire.
- Case dismissals for many physicians and a surgical center before the Indiana Department of Insurance.

## **Related News**

- Pretzel & Stouffer Attorneys Recognized as Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell