



Joseph J. Morford

Managing Partner

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Joe Morford is the firmwide Managing Partner of Tucker Ellis LLP, a role he has held since 2010.

In addition to his firm leadership role, Joe maintains an active practice focused on the representation of major corporations in complex mass tort, business litigation, and product liability matters both in Ohio and in courtrooms throughout the United States.

A true believer in (and frequent commentator on) non-hourly fee arrangements, Joe's results-driven approach provides clients with predictability and cost savings by reducing needless motion practice, discovery, and work on client files. His focus is always on understanding how the litigation at hand impacts the client's business as a whole and on preparing his matters efficiently for trial, which interestingly often leads to more prompt and favorable settlements for our clients. This approach has twice led him to be named Best Lawyers® "Lawyer of the Year" in Cleveland, Ohio – once for Mass Tort Litigation and once for Class Action Litigation – as well as regularly named a "Local Litigation Star" by Benchmark Litigation and included on the list of Ohio Super Lawyers® and The Best Lawyers in America®.

For 18 years, Joe served as a volunteer magistrate judge for the City of Shaker Heights Juvenile Court Diversion Program. He has served on numerous community Boards of Directors and has been active in many community organizations.

Joe and his wife are the proud parents of four children – all of whom are likely too old to continue to warrant mention in his firm bio. That said, they are noteworthy, as their escapades have been the source of decades of his material (mostly intended to be humorous, but still illustrative) on leadership, accomplishment, and focusing on what's important in work and in life. While they are fast approaching adulthood, he remains their biggest fan, and he enjoys watching them slowly become a driving force for good in their communities. This will (he hopes) ultimately be his proudest life accomplishment.

Education

- Loyola University Chicago School of Law (J.D., 1991)
- University of Notre Dame (B.A., 1988)

State Admissions

- Ohio, 1996
- Illinois, 1991

Federal Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit
- United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio
- United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio

Service Areas

- Mass Tort & Product Liability
- Class Action Litigation
- Business Litigation
- Financial Services
- Financial Services Litigation

Publications & Events

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- “The Quandary of the Challenging Partner,” 2024 PilotLegis Annual Member Conference, San Diego, California (November 2024)
- “Pulling It All Together: Growth Strategies that Link Economic Performance and Strategic Success in Challenging Economic Times,” Inside Practice (June 2023)
- “Maximizing Efficiency and Profitability in Mid-Sized Law Firms,” ARK National Summit, New York, New York (May 2023)
- “Into the Minds of National Legal Innovators,” Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (December 2021)
- “How to Reward Law Firm Profitability ... Particularly in a Non-Hourly Fee Environment,” Law Firm Compensation Strategy: A Virtual Think-Tank, Ark Group (January 2021)
- “Legal Disruptors: Ideas Shaking Up the Legal Industry,” Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (December 2020)
- “Alternative Fee Arrangements: How Law Firm Structure Can Make or Break Them,” 2020 In-House Counsel Summit Webinar, Tucker Ellis LLP (October 2020)
- “A Candid Discussion About Alternative Fee Arrangements in a COVID-19 World,” Tucker Ellis Webinar (May 2020)
- “Finding the Win-Win in Alternative Fee Arrangements,” 2019 In-House Counsel Summit, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (November 2019)
- “Mid-Sized Law Firms: Start the Revolution in the Middle,” Ark Group, Chicago, Illinois (May 2019)
- “Aligning Law Firm Compensation with Profitability,” Ark Group 8th Annual The Mechanics of Law Firm Profitability: People, Process & Technology, Chicago, Illinois (March 2019)
- “Law Firm Leaders Pursuing & Pioneering Change,” The Law Firm Innovation Summit, Suffolk University Law School, Boston, Massachusetts (November 2018)
- “Diversity: It’s Complicated,” Ark Group 11th Annual Women Legal 2018, San Francisco, California (February 2018)
- “Alternative Fee Arrangements,” 2017 In-House Counsel Summit, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (October 2017)
- “Time to Better Serve Our Clients – An Open Discussion Between Law Firm and In-House Counsel,” Ark Group 2nd Annual Client Growth Strategies for Legal Services (November 2016)
- “Improving the Future of Legal Service & Practice for Women: How Men and Women Can Work Together to Change the Outdated Pyramid Structure in Law Firms,” Ark Group & Managing Partner’s East Coast Women Legal 2015 (May 2015)
- “Practice Innovation and the Profitability Equation: What is Invested in KM?,” Ark Group/Managing Partner 9th Annual Conference on Knowledge Management in the Legal Profession (October 2013)
- “Law Firm Pricing & Profitability,” Ark Group 2nd Annual Seminar (September 2013)
- “Emerging Trends in Buying Legal Services – Sourcing Legal Providers in a Changing Business

Environment,” LegalVIEW Forum (July 2013)

- “Different and Better – One Law Firm’s Experience to Date,” Ark Group Seminar on the Future of the Legal Industry (October 2012)
- “Vastly Improving the Manner in which Legal Services are Provided,” presented to McMillan LLP (August 2012)
- “Alternative Fee Arrangements,” presented to MAPI Risk Counsel (May 2009)

PUBLICATIONS

- “Distinguishing the Sophisticated User from the Sophisticated Intermediary Defense,” *Inter Alia* (February 2011)

MEDIA QUOTES

- “‘Fake Partners’: These Holdout Law Firms Are Sticking With Single-Tier Partnerships,” *The American Lawyer* (July 2024)
- “Region’s Law Firms See Trends Toward Higher Revenues, More Flexibility Continuing in 2022,” *Crain’s Cleveland Business* (January 2022)
- “Facing Economic Uncertainties, Law Firms Claim Several Millions of Dollars in PPP Funds,” *Crain’s Cleveland Business* (July 2020)
- “What GCs Want From Outside Counsel As Virus Rages On,” *Law360* (May 2020)
- “Cutting Legal Aid is Major Concern in NEO,” *Crain’s Cleveland Business* (April 2017)
- “Do Big Law Firms Have Too Many Committees?“, *Bloomberg Law* (August 2016)
- “The Evolution of Local Law Firms,” *Crain’s Cleveland Business* (November 2015)
- “Employees Want to Be Part of Something Meaningful: Top Workplaces 2015,” *The Plain Dealer* (June 2015)
- “Newcomers to the 350,” *The National Law Journal* (June 2013)
- “10 Years Later: A Look Back and Ahead a Decade after the ABA Commission on Billable Hours Report,” *Legal Management* (October/November 2012)

Honors

- Benchmark Litigation
 - » Litigation Star (Product Liability and Recall)
- The Cleveland 500, *Cleveland Magazine* (2021, 2022, 2024)
- Ohio Super Lawyers® (2008, 2010–2018, 2021, 2022)
- The Best Lawyers in America® (2011–2025)
 - » 2014 Cleveland Lawyer of the Year (Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions – Defendants)
 - » 2012 Cleveland Lawyer of the Year (Mass Tort Litigation)
- American Lawyer Media
 - » 2013 Top Rated Lawyer in Mass Torts

In the Community

- Cleveland-Marshall College of Law
 - » Hall of Fame (2022)
 - » Board of Visitors, Executive Committee
- College Now Greater Cleveland, Board of Directors
- Greater Cleveland Partnership, Board of Directors
- West Side Catholic Center, Board of Directors, Past President