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A SPECIAL REPORT

ELITE TRIAL LAWYERS

The National Law Journal recently honored law firms and lawyers handling cutting-edge work on behalf of plaintiffs in practice areas ranging from mass torts to securities litigation. Here's a look at the winners and the work they did this past year.



ELITE TRIAL LAWYERS

ELITE WOMEN OF THE PLAINTIFFS BAR

EMMY L. LEVENS — COHEN MILSTEIN SELLERS & TOLL

■ **TELL US ABOUT YOUR BIGGEST CLIENT WINS THIS YEAR.** Flint Water Crisis Class Action Litigation is, perhaps, the most high-profile environmental toxic tort class action in the U.S. As interim co-lead class counsel, we are honored to represent over 90,000 Flint residents and businesses against the state of Michigan, the former governor and other bad actors for negligently redirecting good water away from the city of Flint in exchange for toxic, lead-tainted water in 2014. In January 2021, the court granted preliminary approval of a historic \$641.25 million settlement, 80% of which will go to Flint's chil-

dren, because of irreparable, lead poisoning-related health issues. Litigation continues against other defendants.

■ **WHAT'S THE BEST LESSON YOU LEARNED AS A YOUNG LAWYER?** Never write an email if you're upset. Being a good lawyer is about having good judgment.

■ **WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN YOUR PRACTICE AREA, AND HOW HAVE YOU ADJUSTED?** Due to COVID-19, taking depositions by Zoom is a necessity, which means getting your point across with limited body language.



■ **SHARE AN INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOUR FIRM THAT FEW KNOW.** Cohen Milstein has 10 practices, eight of which are led/co-led by women. Two women sit on the five-person executive committee. ■

ELITE WOMEN OF THE PLAINTIFFS BAR

LAURA H. POSNER — COHEN MILSTEIN SELLERS & TOLL

■ **TELL US ABOUT YOUR BIGGEST CLIENT WINS THIS YEAR.** On behalf of the New York State Common Retirement Fund and the NYC Pension Funds, the firm obtained the first demand futility decision in a derivative case involving claims of sexual misconduct and ultimately a groundbreaking \$90 million settlement in the form of cash payments and landmark corporate governance reforms, among the largest derivative settlements of all time. On behalf of IBEW Local 98 Pension Fund, CMST defeated Deloitte's motion to dismiss a securities fraud case alleging that Deloitte permitted SCANA

Corp. to mislead investors about the status of a massive nuclear energy project, the largest civil fraud in South Carolina history.

■ **WHAT'S THE BEST LESSON YOU LEARNED AS A YOUNG LAWYER?** Don't be afraid to voice your opinion and always bring a notepad to a meeting.

■ **WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN YOUR PRACTICE AREA, AND HOW HAVE YOU ADJUSTED?** The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly made it more difficult to bring securities fraud class actions, requiring us to become



significantly more creative.

■ **SHARE AN INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOUR FIRM THAT FEW KNOW.** Nearly half of all CMST associates and partners as well as the majority of our practice group chairs are women. ■