



COOPER S. ASHLEY

Retired Partner

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OVERVIEW

Retired Partner Cooper Ashley is a highly accomplished trial lawyer and a revered former leader of the firm. His successful practice focused primarily on product liability and business litigation matters on behalf of both plaintiffs and defendants as well as complex class action and tort cases, including medical device, environmental toxic tort, and fire/explosion cases. He first-chaired numerous jury and bench trials in state and federal courts; argued appeals before the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals (en banc), the Minnesota Supreme Court, and the Minnesota Court of Appeals; and conducted all manner of related fact and expert discovery and motion practice. Cooper appeared on behalf of clients in multiple state and federal jurisdictions.

Throughout his career, Cooper was dedicated to supporting and advancing both the profession and the community through board leadership, pro bono service, and volunteer efforts. Most recently, he served as a volunteer coach for Maslon UPLIFT: Legal Institute for Teens, a legal pipeline program created to serve middle school students who reflect the diversity of the Twin Cities. He plans to continue his participation.

Cooper's extraordinary service to the firm included more than a decade of leadership. From 2003 – 2015, he played a critical role as part of Maslon's three-person Governance Committee, and was appointed to serve as Committee Chair from 2007-2011 and in 2015.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

- *State of Minnesota et al. v. 3M Company*, 27-CV-10-28862 (Hennepin County District Court, Minnesota). Defended 3M in a pending natural resources damages claim brought by State of Minnesota relating to presence of perfluorinated chemicals in certain environmental media.
- *Braswell v. Polaris Industries*, No. 09-02919 (D. Colo.). Worked in conjunction with Colorado counsel to obtain early resolution of a nationwide putative class action where it was alleged that Polaris overstated snowmobile engine horsepower and durability; participated in case and settlement strategy and was charged with the management of Polaris documents and e-discovery.

BAR ADMISSIONS

Minnesota, 1980 (inactive)

U.S. District Court

- Minnesota, 1980 (inactive)
- Colorado, 2009 (inactive)

U.S. Court of Appeals

- Eighth Circuit, 1989 (inactive)

U.S. Supreme Court, 2001 (inactive)

EDUCATION

Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law

J.D., 1980

Colorado College

B.A., 1976

- *In re American Medical Systems, Inc.*, CV-11-3933 (Hennepin County District Court, Minnesota). Defended pending consolidated state court actions alleging multiple tort theories against American Medical Systems related to female mesh products.
- *Paulson et al. v. 3M Company*, C2-04-6309 (Washington County District Court, Minnesota). Defeated motion seeking class certification of a 67,000 member putative class claiming chemical exposure via drinking water contamination (2007) and obtained a defense verdict on the merits after a seven-week jury trial (2009).
- *G&K Services, Inc. v. Syswa, Inc., et al.* (D. Minn. 2006). Obtained multimillion-dollar jury verdict in a breach of contract case in favor of plaintiff uniform supplier against industrial detergent supplier.
- *Brooks v. Howmedica*, 273 F.3d 785 (8th Cir. 2001). Obtained summary judgment for defendant medical device manufacturer in precedent-setting Eighth Circuit federal preemption case after en banc argument.
- *In re St. Cloud Gas Explosion Cases*, C3-99-2293, et al. (Stearns County District Court, Minnesota). Defended and successfully mediated multiple death, burn, injury, and property damage claims against cable company arising from natural gas explosion.
- *In re 3rd and Maria Gas Explosion Cases*, C9-95-6556 (Ramsey County District Court, Minnesota). Defended and successfully mediated multiple death, burn, injury, and property damage claims against local utility arising from natural gas explosion.
- *Association for Better Living v. Federal Reserve Bank*, 1994 WL 323412 (Minn. Ct. App. 1994). Obtained defense verdict for the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank against organization seeking to block construction of new bank facility in Minneapolis.
- *GT & MC, Inc. v. Texas City Refining, Inc.*, 822 S.W.2d 252 (Tex. 1991). Obtained seven-figure verdict for plaintiff refinery in a crude oil storage tank design defect case.

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY

- The Fund for Legal Aid Society: Board Member
- Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) Minnesota: Board Member
- Maslon UPLIFT: Legal Institute for Teens: Attorney Volunteer
- Maslon LLP: Governance Committee Member 2003-2015; Chair 2007-2011, 2015

SELECTED HONORS

- **Fellow**, International Society of Barristers
- **Who's Who Legal: Product Liability Defence**, 2016-2018 *is a designation given to only 5 percent of Minnesota attorneys each year, based on a selection process that includes the recommendation of peers in the legal profession.*)
- **Recognized on Minnesota Super Lawyers® list**, 2007-2020 *(Minnesota Super Lawyers® is a designation given to only 5 percent of Minnesota attorneys each year, based on a selection process that includes the recommendation of peers in the legal profession.)*
- **Selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America®**, 2013-2021
- **Attorney of the Year**, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2009
- **North Star Lawyer**, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2017 *(North Star Lawyer is a designation that recognizes members who provide 50 hours or more of pro bono legal services in a calendar year.)*
- **Distinguished Service Award**, Maslon LLP, 2016
- **AV Preeminent**, Martindale-Hubbell®
- **Please note: Honors received in 2020 recognize achievements prior to retiring practice.*

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- "Write Smart: Helping Employees Avoid Creating the Document from Hell," *Litigation: Management or Mayhem? You Choose*, The Network of Trial Law Firms, 2014
- "Managing Your Case from Product Failure Through Trial," *In-House Counsel Blazing New Trails - Protect and Defend in 2012 and Beyond*, The Network of Trial Law Firms, 2012

- "Defending Environmental Class Actions," Emerging Responsibilities of In-House Counsel to Advise, Protect and Defend, The Network of Trial Law Firms, 2009
- "*Paulson v. 3M*: The Jury's Verdict—3M Groundwater Litigation," Hennepin County Bar Association, 2009