

Ronald R. Ragatz Attorney

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Madison

Lawsuits can be stressful and intimidating both for parties who are suing and those who are sued. One may feel like a stranger in a strange land. The best way to deal with the challenges of litigation is to work with an attorney with the experience and know-how to guide you through the process to a successful outcome.

Ron has over 30 years of experience in winning for clients. He regularly handles multi-million dollar litigation involving complex disputes. He believes that a key to success in matters both large and not so large is a relationship of trust with the client that comes from both a high level of legal skill and dedication to working closely together to achieve success.

Clients

- **Environmental** – Ron has represented clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to individual farmers, and everything in between, in disputes involving environmental contamination, government enforcement efforts, administrative hearings and toxic tort litigation.
- **Insurance Coverage** – He has gotten tens of millions of dollars of insurance coverage for companies and individuals whose insurance companies refused to cover their losses.
- **Product Liability** – Ron represents manufacturers, sellers and users of machinery and other products involved in accidents.
- **Real Estate/Lending Disputes** – Ron has handled scores of cases dealing with real estate, mortgages, title defects, lien priority and construction lending, representing title insurers, banks, institutional lenders and landowners.

Client Recommendations

“Our company has worked closely with Ron and his exceptional team for close to seven years on

close to a daily basis. In all areas of litigation – from strategy to closing arguments – we have been genuinely impressed. Ron and his team have a unique ability to take incredibly complex material, consider it carefully, and propose straightforward strategies for achieving a goal. Ron's writing and argument skills are exceptional, and his courtroom presence exemplifies the highest ideals of the trial attorney. We are very fortunate to have Ron and his team working on our behalf.” – *Brian M. Tauscher, Director & General Counsel, Windward Prospects Ltd. (f/k/a Ario Wiggins Appleton Ltd.)*

Notable Representations

- Lead counsel for a paper company against multiple insurers who had denied coverage for hundreds of millions of dollars in exposure from environmental contamination. The case was tried to a jury for five weeks in Brown County Circuit Court and the company won against all of its insurers on all of their policies. The decision was affirmed by the Wisconsin Court of Appeals.
- Lead counsel for a Wisconsin cranberry farmer in litigation alleging that the farmer had polluted a 250-acre bay with phosphorus and seeking millions of dollars in damages. The farmer won the first case when it was dismissed by a federal judge and won in the second case after a two-week trial in state court. The decision was affirmed on appeal and the farmer recovered hundreds of thousands of dollars in defense costs
- Lead counsel for a paper company in federal court litigation over PCB contamination in the Lower Fox River, said to be largest Superfund project in the country. The client was issued a unilateral administrative order by EPA and later sued by the United States and State of Wisconsin and was a target of contribution claims by other PRPs. Obtained judgment that the client was not liable to any party that was affirmed on appeal and also obtained a ruling from the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals authorizing a cost recovery claim by client seeking to recover millions of dollars spent complying with the order – the only ruling of its kind in the history of the Superfund program. All remaining issues were ultimately resolved by settlement.
- Lead counsel for a Fortune 500 company as the major party at a multi-million dollar Superfund site. Reached a consent decree with EPA and DNR and then brought a successful contribution action in federal court against other responsible parties.
- As lead counsel, collected millions of dollars for a Wisconsin city after its insurers had denied coverage for the costs of remediating former city landfills.
- Lead counsel for a city that had installed a failed 4½-mile water discharge pipe system to regulate lake levels. Sued the manufacturer of the pipe, and the designers and installers of the original failed system and recovered the full cost of installing a successful replacement system, plus recovery of all attorney's fees and costs.
- Lead counsel defending two companies in litigation in both state and federal court seeking multi-million dollar costs of re-mediating a leaking landfill. Secured judgments in both federal and state court dismissing all claims against one of the defendants. Reached a settlement of all claims against the other defendant and then successfully represented that client in recovering most of the cost of the settlement from its insurers.

- Lead counsel for a corporation in litigation arising from the company's \$85 million asset purchase where disgruntled former associates of the seller brought tort claims seeking tens of millions of dollars. The case was successfully resolved before trial.
- Lead counsel in an estimated 100 cases over the last 20 years over real estate and title issues.

Articles / Presentations

During his 30-year career, Ron has contributed dozens of articles to varying publications and also has presented to groups, large and small, regarding litigation, environmental and insurance matters.

Expertise

- Environmental Law
- Litigation
- Commercial Litigation
- Tort | Product Liability Defense
- Real Estate Litigation
- Insurance Coverage
- Title Insurance Litigation

Education

- J.D., *cum laude*, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- B.S., *with highest honors*, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

Admissions

- State Bar of Wisconsin

Affiliations

- Dane County Bar Association
- State Bar of Wisconsin (Environmental Law and Litigation Sections)
- Western District of Wisconsin Bar Association

Honors

- *Best Lawyer®* - 2020 Lawyer of the Year - Environmental Law
- *Best Lawyer®* – 2016 Lawyer of the Year - Environmental Law

- *Best Lawyer*® – Best Lawyers in America - Commercial Litigation; Environmental Law – Since 2006
- Martindale-Hubbell AV® rated
- Wisconsin Super Lawyers® – Since 2006