




Ronald R. Ragatz

Partner

Madison, Wisconsin

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Service Areas:

- Appellate
- Business
- Environmental
- Insurance Coverage
- Litigation
- Title Insurance & Litigation

Education:

- J.D., *cum laude*, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- B.S., *summa cum laude*, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

Admissions:

- Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern and Western Districts of Wisconsin

Ron is a senior litigator with over 30 years of experience successfully representing clients in complex environmental, insurance coverage, and commercial disputes. His practice includes extensive experience handling high-stakes, multi-party Superfund litigation, cost recovery and contribution claims under CERCLA, environmental enforcement defense, and insurance recovery related to environmental liabilities.

Ron has served as lead counsel in some of the most complex Superfund matters in the country, including extensive litigation involving PCB contamination, multi-party cost allocation, contribution claims, and federal and state agency enforcement actions. He has negotiated consent decrees and administrative settlements with both the U.S. EPA and state environmental agencies, successfully defending clients against liability and securing favorable judgments and settlements.

In addition to his Superfund work, Ron has substantial experience litigating insurance coverage disputes arising from environmental contamination. He has secured tens of millions of dollars in insurance recoveries for clients whose carriers initially denied coverage. His experience includes litigation involving hazardous waste sites, landfill remediation, toxic torts, groundwater contamination, and natural resource damage claims.

Ron regularly handles large-scale, multi-jurisdictional litigation, working closely with corporate leadership, technical experts, and in-house legal teams to develop practical, cost-effective litigation strategies. His trial experience includes complex jury trials and appeals in both state and federal courts, where he has achieved favorable outcomes in cases involving hundreds of millions of dollars in potential exposure.

Representative experience includes:

- Lead counsel in high-profile Superfund litigation involving federal and state claims related to major river sediment contamination, resulting in complete dismissal of client liability and favorable cost recovery judgments.
- Negotiating consent decrees and cost allocation agreements at multi-party CERCLA sites involving dozens of responsible parties.
- Successfully resolving complex insurance coverage disputes to secure substantial recoveries for environmental remediation costs.
- Representing clients in environmental enforcement actions brought by the U.S. EPA, state agencies, and private parties, achieving favorable settlements and defense judgments.
- Litigating toxic tort and product liability claims involving allegations of environmental contamination and property damage.

Ron's deep understanding of environmental litigation's legal and technical aspects allows him to efficiently manage complex disputes while minimizing client risk and financial exposure.

Affiliations

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

Awards & Recognitions

- 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

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.)

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.

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 remediating 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

Service Area Subspecialties

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