



Steven D. Lehner

Partner in Charge of Tampa Office

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Steven Lehner's tort litigation and mediation practice is national in scope. He devotes a substantial part of his practice to employee benefits litigation, both ERISA and non-ERISA. Steve has represented employee benefit plans and fiduciaries in court litigation and alternative dispute resolution, including dispositive motions and appeals. His employee benefits litigation experience includes defense of health, life, and disability claims, annuity, suitability, and related disputes, long-term care coverage disputes, provider disputes, and breach of fiduciary duty claims.

Steve also has a strong insurance practice, defending insurance companies and self-insured clients both regionally and nationally in the areas of premises liability, insurance coverage disputes, catastrophic litigation, wrongful death claims, dram shop/liquor liability, automobile negligence, and general liability litigation. In addition, Steve represents several insurers in first-party property work involving sinkhole claims, including breach of contract and extra-contractual damages claims. Steve's clients include national and regional insurers, hospitality and retail chains, restaurant chains, private commercial security companies, and trucking companies. He leads a team of attorneys within the firm that works closely with clients in the hospitality industry.

Steve joined Hinshaw's Tampa office in 1996. He serves on the firm's Executive Committee and is a former member of the Associate Hiring Committee. In addition to serving as the Partner in Charge of the Tampa office, Steve is the co-chair of Hinshaw's Business Litigation Practice Group.

Professional Affiliations

- Defense Research Institute (DRI)
- Hillsborough County Bar Association
 - Trial Lawyers Division
- Federal Bar Association
- American Bar Association, Former Member
- Exchange Club of Tampa, Former Member

Honors & Awards

- Holds the AV® Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest rating for ethics and legal ability

Practices

Employee Benefits

Life, Health, Disability & ERISA Litigation

Industries

Cannabis

Insurance & Reinsurance

Insurance Coverage

Education

J.D., University of Florida
School of Law, 1994

B.A., *with honors*, Southern
Methodist University, 1991,
Political Science

B.B.A., *with honors*, Southern
Methodist University, 1991

- Accounting; Dean's Scholar

Admissions

Florida

U.S. Court of Appeals for the
Eleventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the
Middle and Northern Districts
of Florida



- Selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Commercial Litigation, 2020 – 2024
- Recognized on the Super Lawyers list by *Florida Super Lawyers* magazine, 2024
- Named a "Legal Leader," by *Florida Trend's* Legal Elite, 2016, 2019
- *Tampa Bay Business Magazine* included Steve on their "Tampa Bay Top Lawyer" list, 2010

Representative Matters

A selection of Steve's representative cases includes:

- Defended hotel in premises liability claim. Plaintiff alleged defendant's dock was unsafe. Jury returned defense verdict after 4-day trial.
- Defended grocery chain in a slip-and-fall case. Obtained directed verdict for the defense.
- Represented large lawn care company in a breach of contract suit. Obtained verdict for the defense.

Presentations

Steve has delivered in-house presentations to his clients on topics including bad faith claim handling and issues of attorney-client and work product privilege. His other presentations include:

- "Current Trends in ERISA Attorneys' Fee Claims" Definitive Disability Conference 4, Boston, Massachusetts, October 2019
- "Effective ERISA Mediations," 11th Circuit ERISA Meeting, Tampa, Florida, January 2012
- "Deposing Expert Witnesses," Hillsborough County Public Defenders and State Attorneys Offices, Tampa, Florida, September 2009

Personal

Steve enjoys golf, snow skiing, and scuba diving.

Community/Civic Activities

- Royal Krewe of Privateers, Member