



## Sanford E. Watson

### Partner

950 Main Avenue,  
Suite 1100,  
Cleveland, OH 44113

D 216.696.2385

F 216.592.5009

[sanford.watson@tuckerellis.com](mailto:sanford.watson@tuckerellis.com)

Sanford Watson is a trial lawyer and arbitrator practicing in the areas of business litigation, products liability litigation, and public law.

The value Sanford provides clients extends beyond the courtroom. A former Director of Public Safety for the City of Cleveland, he brings real-world experience that allows him to provide practical counsel to clients involved in government contracts disputes, administrative law issues, and real estate appropriations cases. Clients benefit from his experience administering government contracts, negotiating mutual aid agreements and consent decrees, developing law enforcement policy, and hearing collective bargaining unit grievances and disciplinary matters. The client gets an experienced trial lawyer who understands the need for the best ethical and practical business solution.

Sanford has tried to verdict cases involving business acquisitions, contract disputes, and eminent domain. His first trial experiences were as a prosecutor for the City of Cleveland. As first chair, Sanford tried more than a dozen jury trials to verdict and hundreds of bench trials. Later in his career, he returned to the City to serve as Chief Prosecutor, where he supervised and trained assistant prosecutors, reviewed internal affairs and use of deadly force investigations, and issued criminal charges where appropriate. Sanford also clerked for the Ohio Eighth District Court of Appeals.

He devotes a significant portion of his practice to defending distributors and sales representatives in products liability, pharmaceutical, and medical products cases. His experience with sales representatives includes preparing them for and defending them in depositions and at trial. He counsels and teaches witnesses to educate when testifying to bring out their best selves as witnesses.

Sanford is an arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association's National Panel of Commercial Arbitrators and National Panel of Consumer Arbitrators. He also served for seven years with the

Ohio Board of Professional Conduct where he heard disputes regarding legal ethics and attorney discipline.

In addition to his trial practice, Sanford devotes a significant portion of his time to shaping equity and inclusion policy at Tucker Ellis and throughout the Northeast Ohio community. He has served as chair of the firm's Equity & Inclusion Committee for eight years, and he led the Committee in shaping its mission and objectives for the promotion of diversity and inclusion. Under his leadership, Tucker Ellis has received awards and recognition for its diversity and inclusion best practices.

## Education

---

- Georgetown University Law Center (J.D., 1988); Order of the Barristers; Frederick Douglass Moot Court Team; Moot Court Barristers' Council
- Morehouse College (B.A., 1985); Phi Alpha Theta

## State Admissions

---

- Ohio, 1988

## Federal Admissions

---

- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit
- United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio
- United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio

## Service Areas

---

- Business Litigation
- Class Action Litigation
- Financial Services Litigation
- Labor & Employment
- Life Sciences Litigation
- Public Law
- White Collar Criminal Defense & Corporate Investigations
- Educational Institutions
- Health & Life Sciences

### **Industries Represented**

---

- Fabricated Metal Products
- Government
- Hospitals
- Manufacturing
- Medical Devices
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Pharmaceutical & Medicine

### **Experience**

---

- Represented transportation agency in government contracts case and successfully secured summary judgment on all claims
- Represented federal government contractors in bid protests at the agency level and in litigation
- Represented corporate and government clients in internal investigations involving employment issues, including employee misconduct and/or racial discrimination claims
- Represented and counseled government entities regarding public safety issues, law enforcement best practices, and public policy
- Represented medical device company in product liability MDL involving hip implant system; defended company sales leadership, distributors, and national sales force in discovery depositions in federal and state courts; and served on trial team in six-week jury trial resulting in defense verdict (jury trial)
- Represented pharmaceutical company in product liability MDL involving birth control products; defended company sales leadership and national sales force in discovery depositions in federal and state courts
- Represented municipality in tort liability claims and successfully secured summary judgment on the basis of governmental immunity
- Represented hospital in breach of contract action arising out of the sale of a medical practice (jury trial)
- Represented municipalities and property owners in multiple eminent domain cases and counseled public finance clients regarding appropriations issues
- Represented municipality and served as trial counsel in eminent domain case to determine just compensation (jury trial)
- Represented corporation in real estate case and obtained favorable declaratory judgment (bench trial)

## Publications & Events

---

### SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- “Exploring Legal Careers,” Norman S. Minor Bar Association 5th Annual Law Student Summit for Success (November 2020)
- Cleveland Internship Summit, Panelist, Greater Cleveland Partnership, Cleveland, Ohio (February 2020)
- “Prosecutorial Discretion,” When They See Us, Greater Cleveland Delta Foundation Life Development Center, Cleveland, Ohio (November 2019)
- “Confidentiality in Settlements Is Not Dead!”, 2018 In-House Counsel Summit, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (October 2018)
- “Mentors vs. Sponsors,” Norman S. Minor Bar Association Third Annual Law Student Summit, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (September 2018)
- “There Are No Secrets When ...,” 2017 Legal Update, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (September 2017)
- “Mentors vs. Sponsors,” Norman S. Minor Bar Association Second Annual Law Student Summit, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (September 2017)
- “Navigating the Muddy Waters of Law School,” Norman S. Minor Bar Association Law Student Summit, Tucker Ellis LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (September 2016)
- “On Being a Catalyst for Reform: A Conversation with the Monitor of the Cleveland Police Consent Decree,” Federal Bar Association 2016 Annual Meeting and Convention, Cleveland, Ohio (September 2016)
- “Creating and Sustaining Successful Pipeline Programs – Stepping Stones to a More Diverse & Inclusive Profession,” Webinar, Federal Bar Association (July 2016)
- “Diversity and Inclusiveness,” Ernst & Young LLP, Cleveland, Ohio (November 2015)
- Tucker Ellis Ethics, Professionalism & Substance Abuse Seminar (December 2013)
- Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Career Fair, Panelist (November 2013)
- “Starting a Diversity Pipeline Program,” Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, 5th Annual Diversity & Inclusion Conference (March 2012)
- “Is the Business Case for Diversity Dead?,” Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, 4th Annual Diversity Networking Conference, Conference Co-Chair and Panel Moderator (March 2011)
- “Ethical Issues to Beware Of,” Institute for Paralegal Education (June 2009)
- “Municipal Law Update,” Cuyahoga County Bar Association (September 2003)
- “The Record,” Ohio Eighth District Court of Appeals, Appellate Walk-thru Seminar (1995, 1998)

### PUBLICATIONS

- [“Don’t Be a Target for Lawsuits,”](#) *Wholesale & Distribution International* (April 2017)
- [“‘Call’ing All Pharmaceutical Manufacturers: An Update on the Legal Implications of Sales Representative Call Notes,”](#) *Bloomberg Law Pharmaceutical Law & Industry Report* (March 2017)
- [“Stone Soup: A Recipe for Implementing a Diversity and Inclusion Program in Any Law Office,”](#) *Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Journal* (February 2015)
-

“Death of a Sales Rep: Bringing the Rep to the Table for Witness Preparation in a Products Liability Case,” DRI’s *RX for the Defense* (October 2014)

## Honors

---

- Ramey Award for Distinguished Community Service, Ohio State Bar Foundation (2021)
- Trailblazer Award, Norman S. Minor Bar Association (2019)
- “Leading By Example” Award, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Chapter of the Black Law Students Association (2018)
- Most Influential Black Lawyers, *Savoy Magazine* (Spring 2015)
- Inclusion Innovation Award, Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (2014)
- Antioch Baptist Church “Man of the Year Award” (2009)

## In the Community

---

### PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- American Arbitration Association
  - » Commercial and Consumer Arbitration Panels
- Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association
- Judicial Conference of the Ohio Eighth District, Life Member
- National Bar Association (NBA), Partners in Majority Firms Committee
- Norman S. Minor Bar Association
  - » Past President (NBA Cleveland Chapter)
  - » 6th Annual Law Student Summit for Success, Co-Chair (2021)
- Ohio Board of Professional Conduct (2011-2018)
  - » Vice Chair of the Board (2017-2018)
  - » Advisory Opinion Committee Chair (2015-2016)
- Ohio State Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association, Northern District of Ohio Chapter, Board of Directors (2013-2017)
- William K. Thomas Inn, American Inns of Court (1991-2004)
- Case Western Reserve University School of Law, Assistant Adjunct Professor (2001, 2003)

### PUBLIC SERVICE

- Cleveland Institute of Music, Trustee
- Greater Cleveland Partnership Equity & Inclusion Advisory Board
- Greater Cleveland Urban Film Foundation, Board of Directors
- Karamu House, Board of Directors
- Domestic Violence and Child Advocacy Center, Board of Directors (2006-2015)
- Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, Board of Directors (2007-2008)