



JOI L. MORRIS
Senior Counsel

310.255.6182
Joi.Morris@ffslaw.com

Office: Century City

PRACTICE AREAS

Litigation
Trust and Estate Litigation

EDUCATION

J.D., Vanderbilt University School of Law
B.S., University of Missouri – Columbia

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

California
Missouri (inactive)
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
U.S. District Courts for the Central District of California, the Eastern District of California, and the Southern District of California

Joi Morris is a member of the Trust and Estate Litigation department and a member of the Litigation department at Freeman Freeman and Smiley. Ms. Morris prosecutes and defends a wide-range of business and insurance litigation matters as well as probate and trust disputes, including both will and trust contests, claims against the estate or trust, claims against fiduciaries, capacity issues, and civil or other lawsuits filed against or brought on behalf of the decedent. She also represents nonprofits involved in medical research and negotiates and drafts research grant agreements. She advises nonprofit organizations on governance, grant making, tax, and other matters unique to the nonprofit sector. During her career she has represented businesses of all sizes, charitable organizations, individuals, and trusts in complex business, securities, and insurance litigation in both state and federal courts, including regarding coverage and claims handling disputes. Ms. Morris' career has been consistently marked by a commitment to pro bono work and service to nonprofit organizations. She previously served as Senior Vice President and General Counsel of HeritX, a nonprofit organization focused on research to prevent inherited cancer, which she co-founded in 2015. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Cancer Prevention Initiative. She is a frequent speaker on topics related to nonprofit governance, inherited cancers, and research advocacy.

Representative Clients and Matters

- » Successful plaintiff's verdict in a commercial lender liability and fraud trial.
- » Represented successor trustee in a dispute between trust and beneficiaries regarding beneficiaries' use of trust real property that was resolved through mediation.
- » Successful defense judgement in a complex commercial investment fraud trial involving the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 for a large brokerage firm.
- » Successful defense of a major insurance company regarding allegations of improper claims handling practices.
- » Successful defense of insurance company in coverage dispute relating to homeowners insurance policy.
- » Formation of HeritX, a 501(c)(3) public charity. Representative activities have included applications for state and federal tax exempt status, governance and organizational structure, domestic and international research grant contracts, protection of intellectual property, state fundraising registration and compliance, audit, preparation of annual IRS Form 990 and maintenance of tax exempt status, state corporate and tax filings and compliance, and employment contracts.
- » Successful consolidation of multiple investment fraud claims under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 in multiple jurisdictions into a single class action removed to federal district court.
- » Successful pro bono representation of low-income tenants in an action against a landlord for dangerous premises that included pursuing return of defendant's fraudulently conveyed assets through bankruptcy court to enforce and collect a multimillion-dollar judgement.

Professional & Community Involvement

- » Cancer Prevention Initiative | Board of Trustees
- » HeritX, Co-Founder | Board of Trustees, Corporate Secretary | 2015-present | Senior Vice President & General Counsel | 2015-2019
- » Susan G. Komen for the Cure | Advocate in Science | 2009-2019
- » Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute | PCORNet Data Privacy Task Force | 2014
- » Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered – FORCE | Board of Directors | Vice President and Corporate Secretary | 2012-2014
- » Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered – FORCE | Los Angeles Outreach Coordinator | 2007-2013
- » Leo Baeck Temple | Board of Trustees | 2000-2003, 2011-2013