



Kristen J. Thorsness

Of Counsel

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Profile

Kristen concentrates on athletics regulation, specifically gender equity in athletics (Title IX). Kristen brings a unique perspective to her work. She is an Olympic Gold Medalist (1984) as part of the first U.S. women's rowing team ever to win Olympic Gold. Kristen is a former Division I collegiate rower, and she won three World Championship silver medals as a member of the U.S. national rowing team and multiple U.S. national championships.

In addition to her traditional legal work, Kristen is an arbitrator for the Court of Arbitration for Sport, an international body for sports-related disputes, and was a CAS arbitrator at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. She also serves as an arbitrator and on adjudicative panels for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee. Kristen's lifelong experience as an athlete at all levels of competition, her career as a litigator, and her experience working with national and international athletic bodies allows her to provide practical guidance to universities, colleges and school districts navigating Title IX's regulatory requirements for athletic programs.

Kristen also works as a litigator, primarily in employment and commercial disputes. Prior to joining Bond, Kristen was involved in litigation practice in Alaska, California and New York. She served as Assistant County Attorney for Ontario County. Kristen has practiced in both the private and public sectors, with successful litigation and alternative dispute resolution in state and federal courts and extensive experience before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, New York State Division of Human Rights and U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. She has substantive experience with discrimination, personnel, statutory and regulatory compliance, among other areas. She also has been a court referee for the New York State Supreme Court and practiced in products liability and general civil litigation matters.

Kristen has been a member of adjudicative panels for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, and serves as an arbitrator for the Court of Arbitration for Sport. She is highly regarded when it comes to international sports-related disputes, including commercial and contract issues, disciplinary matters and other sporting issues.

Honors & Accolades

- University of Wisconsin Athletics Hall of Fame Inductee, 2018
- Ontario County Service Excellence Award, 2011

Education

- Boston University School of Law (J.D. 1989)
- Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs (M.A. 2002)
- University of Wisconsin (B.A. 1985)

Bar/Court Admissions

- New York

Practices

- Collegiate Sports
- Higher Education
- Labor and Employment
- Litigation
- Title IX

- Co-Recipient of Ernestine Bayer Award – U.S. Rowing Association's "Woman of the Year," 2008
- Alaska Sports Hall of Fame Inductee, 2007
- Alameda County Counsel Association Award, 2001
- County Counsel's Association of California Litigation Award, 1998
- Olympic Gold Medalist and World Champion, U.S. National and Olympic Rowing Team, 1984
- World Championship Silver Medalist, 1982, 1983, 1987
- United State Rowing Hall of Fame Inductee, 1984
- U.S. National Rowing Championships National Champions: 1979, 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988; Masters National Champion, 2001 and 2005
- Big Ten Rower of the Decade, 1980s
- Big Ten Female Athlete of the Decade, Runner Up, 1980s

Representative Publications

- Quoted, "This Proposed Law Would Push Transgender Athletes Out of Women's Sports in One Fell Swoop," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 14, 2025
- Olympian Attorney Joins Rochester Law Office, *The Daily Record*, March 24, 2023

Representative Presentations

- Bond in Paris, Part Four, Legally Bond Podcast, August 19, 2024
- Bond in Paris, Part Three, Legally Bond Podcast, August 5, 2024
- Bond in Paris, Part Two, Legally Bond Podcast, July 29, 2024
- Bond in Paris, Part One, Legally Bond Podcast, July 22, 2024
- "The Court for Sport: Alternative Dispute Resolution Before the Court of Arbitration for Sport," Bar Association of Erie County's Alternative Dispute Resolution and Diversity & Inclusion Committee CLE, April 12, 2024
- "Navigating the Higher Education Regulatory Landscape," Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York Annual Meeting, March 11, 2024
- An Interview with Kris Thorsness, Title IX, Legally Bond Podcast, June 26, 2023
- "Title IX in Athletics 50 Years Later: Still a Ways to Go," Bond, Schoeneck & King CLE, June 2022
- "The International Court of Arbitration for Sport," Alaska Bar Association Mediation and Arbitration Section, May 2022
- "Second Opinion: Cardiac Comeback," PBS, 2017 and 2020
- Television and Print Media Appearances, University of Rochester Medicine and Thompson Health, 2013-2014, 2017
- "Lessons Learned on Perseverance," SUNY Geneseo Leadership Development Program, February 2015
- "Women's Cardiac Health," Ontario County Employee Wellness Committee, 2013
- Keynote Speaker, NCAA National Rowing Championships Banquet, 2004

- Keynote Speaker, Russell Sage College Athletics Department Banquet and Hall of Fame Induction, 2002
- Panelist, "Thirty Years of Title IX" Panel Discussion, William Smith College, 2002
- Keynote Speaker, University of Wisconsin Men's and Women's Rowing Teams' Awards Banquet, 1998

Other Activities

- Court of Arbitration for Sport, 2021-Present
 - CAS Ad Hoc Division, 2024 Paris Olympics
- U.S. Rowing Association, Board of Directors, 2015-2017; USRA Judge-Referee, 2004-Present