



(She/Her)

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René E. Thorne is co-leader of the firm's ERISA Complex Litigation group, and is a principal in the New Orleans, Louisiana, office of Jackson Lewis P.C. René started the New Orleans office and was the managing principal for ten years.

Her national practice covers the full range of complex benefit litigation matters, including representation of employers, plans, plan fiduciaries, third party administrators, and trustees. In that regard, she has handled numerous ERISA class actions alleging breach of fiduciary duty; breach of the duty of loyalty; prohibited transactions; 401(k) plan asset performance, fees, and expense issues; defined benefit plan asset issues, accrual issues, and cut-back issues; cash balance plan issues; ESOP litigation; fiduciary misrepresentation claims; sophisticated preemption issues; executive compensation litigation, both pension and welfare claims; retiree rights litigation; severance plan claims; Section 510 cases; and complex benefit claim cases.

During the course of her national practice, she has been admitted *pro hac vice* in courts across the country, including Alabama, the District of Columbia, California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

René also has been retained in complex ERISA breach of fiduciary duty, prohibited transaction, and cash balance cases. René has been qualified and testified on ERISA matters in federal court.

René is active on the Employee Benefits Subcommittee of the Labor and Employment Section of the American Bar Association, and was a management co-chair of the Employee Benefits Subcommittee Newsletter. She is a past instructor for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, and a former barrister in the Thomas More Inn of Court.

While attending Loyola University School of Law, René was a member of the *Loyola Law Review* and Moot Court.

Honors and Recognitions

- *Thomson Reuters*, “Stand-Out Lawyer” (2024)
- *New Orleans Magazine*, “Top Lawyers: Employee Benefits Law” (2023–present)
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, “Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law”, “Employment Law - Management”, “Litigation - ERISA” and “Litigation - Labor and Employment” (2011–present)
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, “Lawyer of the Year: Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law” (2022)
- *Chambers USA*, “Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation” (2010–present) and “ERISA Litigation” (2024)

Practices

- Financial Services
- Healthcare
- Life Sciences
- Class Actions and Complex Litigation
- ERISA Complex Litigation
- Litigation
- Higher Education

Education

- Loyola University New Orleans School of Law, J.D. 1993
- Loyola University New Orleans, B.A. 1990

Admitted to Practice

- Louisiana 1994
- Louisiana - M.D. La. 1995
- Louisiana - E.D. La. 1995
- Louisiana - W.D. La. 1995
- 5th Circuit Court of Appeals 2000
- 7th Circuit Court of Appeals 2005
- 9th Circuit Court of Appeals 2011
- Illinois - N.D. Ill. 2013
- 1st Circuit Court of Appeals 2014
- Indiana - S.D. Ind. 2016
- Michigan - W.D. Mich. 2016
- U.S. Court of Appeals, DC Circuit 2017
- 8th Circuit Court of Appeals 2020
- 11th Circuit Court of Appeals 2022
- Michigan - E.D. Mich. 2021
- Nebraska - D. Neb. 2023
- Illinois - C.D. Ill. 2024

- *Lawdragon*, “500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers” (2020, 2021, 2025)
- *Legal 500 USA*, “Recommended Attorney” (2020–present)
- *Martindale-Hubbell®*, “AV Preeminent® – Peer Rated for Highest Level of Professional Excellence” (2005–present)
- *Louisiana Super Lawyers®*, “Super Lawyers” (2008–present) and “Top 25 Women Attorneys in Louisiana” (2023)

Pro Bono and Community Involvement

- New Orleans Pro Bono Project, Volunteer Attorney

Published Works

- “ERISA Litigation Issues In The Face Of Bankruptcy,” *The College of Labor & Employer Lawyers Newsletter* (Fall 2006)
- “Unforeseen Pitfalls in Settling Fiduciary Breach Claims with Individual Plaintiffs,” *Employee Benefits Committee Newsletter* (Spring 2006)
- “ERISA Mutual Fund Litigation: Another Front In The Post-Enron 401(K) Plan Wars,” *Professional Liability Underwriting Society Journal* (2004)
- “ERISA Preemption: To Infinity and Beyond and Back Again?” (A Historical Review of Supreme Court Jurisprudence), Vol. 58 *Louisiana Law Review* 997 (1998)
- “*When is Class Action Appropriate?*” in *ERISA Litigation* (BNA 2d, 3d, and 4th ed., and 2006–2012 supps.) [Chapter Author]
- *Employee Benefits Law* (2d ed. BNA 2000 and 3d ed. 2011) [Contributing Author]

Speeches

- “ERISA Class Actions – Up Close and Personal: An In-Depth Look at the Myriad of Complex and Ever-Evolving Issues,” BNA Audio-conference
- “401(k) Plan Litigation: Employer Stock Suits Continue but Has Hecker v. Deere Changed the Fee Case Landscape?,” ABA Joint Committee on Employee Benefits
- “The Mist – Navigating the Fog of ERISA,” LSU School of Law Labor and Employment Law Conference
- “The 401(k) & ESOP Employer Stock Cases: Cases and Issues,” Professional Liability Underwriting Society International Conference
- “ERISA Litigation as a Contact Sport,” Women’s Executive Legal Conference
- “Litigating the New Breed of ERISA Class Actions,” Glasser ERISA Litigation Conference
- “Recent Developments in Health Insurance Coverage of Contraceptives for Employees,” ABA Taxation Section Employee Benefits Committee Meeting
- “ERISA Remedies After Great West – Are There Any?”