

JILLIAN L. DINEHART

SHAREHOLDER



AREAS OF PRACTICE

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation
Employment Law
Real Estate E&O Liability
Non-Profit D&O
Insurance Agents & Brokers Liability
Miscellaneous Professional Liability
Privacy & Data Security
Construction Injury Litigation
General Liability
Premises & Retail Liability
Product Liability

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ADMISSIONS

Ohio
2010

U.S. District Court Northern District
of Ohio
2014

U.S. Court of Appeals 6th Circuit
2015

EDUCATION

Case Western Reserve University
School of Law (J.D., 2010)

State University of New York at
Albany (B.A., magna cum laude,
2006)

HONORS & AWARDS

The Best Lawyers: Ones to
Watch®, Health Care Law
2023

The Best Lawyers: Ones to
Watch®, Personal Injury Litigation
- Defendants
2024

The Best Lawyers in America®,
Personal Injury Litigation -
Defendants
2026

OVERVIEW

Jillian is a member of the firm's Professional Liability Department where she focuses her practice across a broad spectrum of professional liability matters, including but not limited to, the defense of municipalities and their employees, non profit directors and officers, real estate professionals, insurance agents and brokers, and employers. She has practiced in both state and federal courts and has argued before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Jillian has been defending municipalities and their employees since 2013 and she has continued this practice with Marshall Dennehey, now leading the Cleveland office's professional liability practice.

Although varied, Jillian's public-sector liability practice focuses on police practices, sovereign immunity issues as well as labor and employment claims. Her employment practice extends to private employers, defending claims before the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, the EEOC, Ohio and federal courts regarding discrimination, harassment and retaliation, including claims brought pursuant to Title VII, the ADA, ADEA, the FMLA, trade secret litigation, whistleblower actions, housing discrimination and related tort claims.

In her real estate work, Jillian has a strong track record of obtaining favorable results for real estate agents, real estate brokers, title agents, and home inspectors in cases brought against them related to alleged negligence, misrepresentation, disclosure errors, and contract disputes. Jillian also concentrates her practice on D&O liability defending condominium and homeowners associations, as well as their directors, officers, and property managers, in matters involving alleged breaches of fiduciary duty, declaration disputes, real property document issues, and FHA, HUD and Fair Housing claims. Additionally, she routinely defends insurance agents and brokers and miscellaneous professionals in matters pertaining to negligence, errors and omissions. Jillian also has lived experience in non-profit D&O liability as a volunteer president of the board to a local community development corporation.

Further, Jillian's practice extends to privacy and data breach matters, where she helps clients manage cyber risk and navigate incident response, containment, and compliance obligations. She also has experience defending corporate and individual insureds in product liability, construction, premises liability, and personal injury claims.

A native of New York's Finger Lakes region, Jillian earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from SUNY Albany. She received her *juris doctor* from Case Western Reserve University School of Law, where she launched her litigation career as an award winning student in the Criminal Defense Clinic. Before joining the firm in 2017, she gained valuable public sector experience as a judicial staff attorney and assistant director of law—skills she continues to draw upon in her advocacy for political subdivision clients.

Outside the office, Jillian can often be found enjoying live music or exploring the Cleveland

ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

American Bar Association

Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association

YEAR JOINED

2017

MetroParks with her husband and their dogs.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Totality of the Circumstances: Tasing Okay in Immediate Passive Resistance

Cleveland
Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation
January 1, 2026

In a colorful opinion from the Sixth Circuit, the court found that it was not excessive force to tase the plaintiff when he refused to supply his hand for cuffing in the wake of more significant refusals to submit to the police o

Legal Updates for Real Estate E&O – CASE LAW UPDATE

Cleveland
Real Estate E&O Liability
November 1, 2025

Ohio Supreme Court Clarifies Sellers' Disclosure Obligations: No Duty to Disclose Publicly Recorded Easements *Ashmus v. Coughlin*, 2025-Ohio-2412

It Was Just a Mistake! Or Was It Negligence? Ohio Supreme Court Defines Mistake for Contract Principles

Cleveland
General Liability
October 1, 2025

In a certified conflict, the Ohio Supreme Court considered whether a negligent failure to exercise a lease renew option warranted equitable relief. The Court found it did not. Case Law Alerts, 4th Quarter, October 2025 is prepared by Marshall Dennehey to provide information on recent developments of interest to our readers.

98 Marshall Dennehey Attorneys Recognized in the 2026 Editions of The Best Lawyers in America® and the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America

August 20, 2025

Marshall Dennehey is proud to highlight the firm's 98 attorneys who have been recognized in the 2026 editions of The Best Lawyers in America® and the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America. Less than 6% of all practicing lawyers in the U.S.

[Read More](#)

Ohio Supreme Court Holds Seller Had No Duty to Disclose Recorded Sewer Easement in 'As-Is' Sale

Cleveland
Real Estate E&O Liability
July 14, 2025

The Ohio Supreme Court has reversed an appellate opinion and found that a seller does not have a duty to disclose a publicly-recorded sewer easement. In *Ashmus v.*

CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT

Ohio Personal Injury Litigation: Secrets Only the Top Attorneys Know, National Business Institute (NBI) Webinar, December 15, 2022

Political Subdivision Tort Liability, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, August 2015

PUBLISHED WORKS

"I Was Just Following Orders" - Ohio's Sixth Circuit Applies Fourth Amendment's Good-Faith Exception to First Amendment Retaliation Claims," *PLUS Blog*, January 28, 2025

"Understanding Municipalities' Rights and Liabilities in Weapons and Ordnance Legislation," *Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Journal* (page 18), December 2022

"Transferring a Plaintiff's Burden to the Court: In-Camera Inspections Are a Necessary Burden for Most Courts in Ohio," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 27, No. 5, December 2021

PRO BONO ACTIVITIES

Brief Advice Clinic with Legal Aid Society of Greater Cleveland, 2009

Immigration Clinic with Catholic Charities, 2009

AmeriCorps Service Member benefitting Legal Aid of Western New York, 2009

RESULTS

Successfully Defended a Suburban Mayor in a Defamation Case

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

January 16, 2025

We successfully defended an appeal of a trial court decision dismissing a defamation claim against a suburban mayor. The plaintiff, a former police officer, brought actions against a former city mayor and related defendants, asserting defamation, false light and related claims. The plaintiff alleged that statements made during a press conference disparaged him and violated a non-disparagement clause in his separation agreement. The court ruled the defamation and false light claims were correctly barred by the one-year statute of limitations under R.C.

Summary Judgment Won in Slip and Fall Case Involving a Large Supermarket Chain

Premises & Retail Liability

November 5, 2024

We won summary judgment in Franklin County, Ohio, for a large supermarket chain in a slip-and-fall case. The plaintiff alleged he slipped and fell in the parking lot on ice that remained more than two days after the most recent snow fall and after the lot had been plowed and salted by a co-defendant. The plaintiff's expert opined that no amount of remaining snow or ice is acceptable and that the standard of care according to the Ohio Building Code requires complete removal in order to maintain a "slip-resistant" surface.

Dismissal Affirmed on Appeal in Ohio Personal Injury Lawsuit

General Liability

Appellate Advocacy & Post-Trial Practice

June 5, 2024

Our motion to dismiss was affirmed on appeal after the Ninth District Court of Appeals found that the plaintiff had sued a non sui juris entity by suing a county department in a personal injury suit. The plaintiff initially filed suit against the department, which was later dismissed without prejudice to allow more time to develop the plaintiff's medical records. When he refiled his suit, he again named a county department as the defendant. We filed a motion to dismiss, arguing that a county department does not have the capacity to be sued.

Summary Judgment on Behalf of Former Mayor in Civil Rights Lawsuit

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

March 4, 2024

Jillian won summary judgment in favor of her client, a former suburban mayor, after seven years of protracted litigation, arising out of alleged defamation. In 2016, Jillian's client was arrested for domestic violence. Although the criminal case was ultimately dismissed, the charge significantly tarnished her personal life and career and she lost re-election. In 2017, the police chief and a lieutenant that led the investigation into the criminal charge left their positions, allegedly forced out by the mayor.

Summary Judgment Secured in Protracted Defamation Case

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

March 4, 2024

We won summary judgment for a former suburban mayor after seven years of litigation. As background, in 2016, our client was arrested for domestic violence, but the criminal case was ultimately dismissed for lack of evidence and sealed. In 2017, after the police chief and lieutenant left their positions, the City found documents regarding the sealed charges against the mayor in their offices. This spurred an internal investigation into the police investigation into the mayor, which found that there were significant deficiencies in the criminal investigation.

SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Jillian's Motion to Dismiss was affirmed on appeal after the Ninth District Court of Appeals found that Plaintiff had sued a non sui juris entity by suing a county department in a personal injury suit. The Plaintiff initially filed suit against the department, and later dismissed without prejudice to allow more time to develop Plaintiff's medical records. When he refiled his suit, he again named a county department as the defendant. Jillian filed a Motion to Dismiss arguing that a county department does not have the capacity to be sued. Plaintiff then filed a Motion to Amend the Complaint and named the county. Jillian then filed a Motion to Dismiss the Amended Complaint arguing that the plaintiff was outside of the statute of limitations and that the change in defendant could not relate back to the originally filed suit. Plaintiff's argument that naming the department was merely a misnomer and that the Amended Complaint should relate back to the original filing failed and the trial court dismissed the case. After oral argument, the appellate court affirmed the decision.

In 2023, Jillian went to trial in a motor-vehicle accident case in which she represented a driver that had died while the case was pending. There was also a large, financially successful, corporate co-defendant represented by other counsel. The plaintiff had sustained a broken arm in the accident that was surgically repaired. Jillian's client had admitted liability, so the case was solely to be heard on the value of the injury, and the liability of the corporate co-defendant. Likely counting on the deep pockets of the co-defendant, the Plaintiff's pre-suit demand was not rationally related to the injury or in the realm of similar verdicts in the region. During the first day of trial, Jillian formed a clear rapport with the jury panel, often engaging in friendly banter with the potential jurors about their own experiences in car accidents, injuries similar to the plaintiff's, and the social impact of surgical scars. This rapport was in direct contrast to a very dry voir dire by plaintiff's counsel and was bolstered by a similarly friendly voir dire by the co-defendant's counsel. The parties completed their opening statements and returned to court in the morning, at which time the plaintiff asked to engage in settlement discussions. As a result of Jillian's trial performance, the case settlement for \$1.5 Million less than the plaintiff's demand the day before trial.