



John M. Challis

St. Louis
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Areas of Practice

- Fiduciary Litigation
- Probate, Trust & Estate Administration
- Guardianships & Conservatorships
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

Education

- Saint Louis University
School of Law
J.D., magna cum laude, 2004
Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honor Society
Order of the Woolsack
Managing Editor, Saint Louis University Public Law Review
Dean's List
Academic Excellence Award:
 - Constitutional Law
 - Legal Profession
 - Jurisprudence
- Truman State University
B.S., Biology, 2000

Bar Admissions

- Missouri
- Illinois

Experience

John Challis is the Managing Partner of Kembell Woods & Martinsen. John protects individual and business clients, diligently working toward the best possible outcome in all their contested matters. Focused in the area of trust and fiduciary litigation, John is a Fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, Litigation Counsel of America, and The American Bar Foundation. John is also the Chair of the Probate and Trust Division of The Missouri Bar and has been ranked as a "Band One" attorney for Private Wealth Disputes by *Chambers*. John has been named as the "Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers* for Trust and Estates Litigation, as well as a "Top 100 Lawyer" in Missouri and Kansas a "Top 50 Lawyer" in St. Louis by *SuperLawyers* on numerous occasions. John serves clients by providing counseling, advice, and litigation support on matters relating to fiduciary relationships, will and trust contests, and all other disputes arising from asset transfer. John has significant trial and appellate experience throughout the State of Missouri.

Although John is fully prepared to proceed through trial, he understands the value of alternative dispute resolution and is fully versed in utilizing mediation and arbitration to obtain favorable results for clients. John has completed the University of Missouri's Mediation Training and has met all requirements of Rule 17 to act as a mediator or arbitrator. John regularly acts as a mediator in trust and estate disputes.

Outside of the courtroom, John is a frequent author and speaker on issues relating to fiduciary relationships. John and his wife Bridget reside in St. Louis County.

Distinctions

- Fellow, American College of Trust and Estate Counsel ("ACTEC")
- Fellow, Litigation Counsel of America
- Fellow, American Bar Foundation
- Ranked in "Band One" for Private Wealth Disputes by *Chambers*, 2021-2024
- Awarded the "Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers* for Litigation - Trusts and Estates in St. Louis, 2018, 2020, 2024
- Named a Top 100 Attorney in *Missouri and Kansas* by *Super Lawyers*, 2020-2024
- Named a Top 50 Attorney in St. Louis by *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers*, 2019-2024
- Included on the "Under 40 Hot List" by *Benchmark Litigation* from 2016-2018

- Chosen as a "Future Star" by *Benchmark Litigation*, 2019-2024
- Recognized by *Best Lawyers* from 2012-2025 in the following fields:
 - Commercial Litigation
 - Litigation - Trusts and Estates
 - Trusts and Estates
- Selected for inclusion in Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers, 2013-2024
- Named "Rising Star" by Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers, 2011-2012

Affiliations

- The Missouri Bar
 - Chair, Probate & Trust Division
 - Past Chair, Fiduciary Litigation Committee
 - Member, Annual Meeting Planning Committee
 - Member, Government Relations Committee
- American College of Trust and Estate Counsel
 - Missouri Membership Coordinator
 - Vice Chair, Communications Committee
 - ACTEC/ALI CLE Coordinator
 - Member, Fiduciary Litigation Committee
 - Member, State Laws Committee
- Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis
- Estate Planning Council of St. Louis

Publications & Presentations

- "Litigating Claims for Breach of Trust Under the UTC" ACTEC/ALI Webinar, 2024
- "Litigating Claims for Breach of Trust" ACTEC, Heart of America Institute and Regional Meeting 2024
- "The Subtle Art of Setting Boundaries" The Missouri Bar, 2022 ETEL Institute
- "We've Only Just Begun: Starting off Estate Administration on the Right Foot" ACTEC, Summer 2022 Meeting
- "Who Owns the File?" The Missouri Bar 2022 Annual Meeting
- "Getting Paid the Right Way: Ethical Issues Related to Attorneys' Fees" The Missouri Bar, 2021 ETEL Institute
- "Getting Paid the Right Way: Ethical Issues Related to Attorneys' Fees" ACTEC, Heart of America Institute 2021
- "No-Contest Clauses: Traps for the Unwary" The Missouri Bar, 2020 ETEL Institute
- "Electronic Wills in Missouri: The Future is Now" Journal of The Missouri Bar, Vol. 75, No. 6 / November-December 2019.

"Estate Planning v. Elder Law: What's in Your Durable Power of Attorney?" The Missouri Bar, 2019 ETEL Institute

"Annual Law Update on Trusts and Estates" The Missouri Bar, 2019-2021 Annual Update

"Trusts on Trial: Tips and Traps in Fiduciary Litigation" ACTEC, 2018 Missouri-Kansas Meeting

"Strategic Point/Counterpoint on Trust Administration and Litigation" The Missouri Bar, 2018 Annual Meeting

"Issues Involved in Challenging and Defending the Estate Plan" St. Louis County Bar Association, 2016 Probate Law Conference

"The Lifecycle of Powers of Attorney for the Planner and the Litigator" The Missouri Bar, 2015 ETEL Institute

"Understanding Key Issues in Fiduciary Litigation" The Missouri Bar, 2014 Annual Meeting

"The Best and Worst Ways that Fiduciaries Can Handle Beneficiaries" Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, 2012 Fiduciary Litigation Conference

"Undoing the Written Word: Pitfalls in Will and Trust Contests" Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, 2011 Fiduciary Litigation Conference

"Damages in Fiduciary Litigation: How to Calculate and Efficiently Present" Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, 2010 Fiduciary Litigation Conference