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Related Services

Advanced Technologies

Business and Commercial

National Coordinating
Discovery

Insurance Litigation

Product Liability

Securities / Finance

Fact Investigations

Education

The Ohio State University
Moritz College of Law J.D.,
2012

Grand Valley State University
B.A., 2009

Court Admissions

United States District Court for
the Eastern District of Michigan

United States District Court for
the Western District of
Michigan

Michigan State Courts

William E. McDonald, III *Member*

William ("Bill") McDonald, III focuses his practice on commercial, financial, and product liability litigation. Bill achieved a total defense jury-verdict in a product liability trial as lead counsel for a major automotive manufacturer involving claimed damages over \$100M, and has second chaired an arbitration to a successful award of over \$3M.

Beyond the courtroom, Bill provides strategic counsel to clients navigating the regulatory landscape, including matters involving the Federal Trade Commission, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Department of Justice. With extensive experience in large-scale discovery in complex product liability and class action cases across the country and winning total dismissals for three product manufacturers in Michigan state and federal courts, Bill is a seasoned litigator with a proven track record.

Representative Matters

- As lead counsel obtained a full defense verdict in South Bend, Indiana on multiple automotive product liability claims including defective and unreasonably dangerous design, failure to warn, and failure to instruct and a punitive damage claim against a major automotive OEM.
- Secured a unanimous jury verdict in Kent County in a challenging construction contract dispute on behalf of a residential/commercial construction company.
- Secured complete dismissal without payment in automotive product liability suit against major automotive OEM involving three fatalities in Michigan State Court.
- Currently serving as lead national air bag coordinating counsel for a major OEM.
- Lead responsibility for coordination of discovery and depositions, including company witnesses, experts and 30(b)(6) depositions, in the Takata MDL for a major OEM.
- Prepared discovery and dispositive motions in the Takata MDL for a major OEM.
- Coordinated depositions of plaintiff's putative class representatives in the Takata MDL for a major OEM.
- Prepared and conducted dozens of 30(b)(6) depositions and expert depositions for major companies, including major OEM clients.
- Secured summary disposition for a bus manufacturer in a product liability action stemming from a bus accident.
- Secured summary judgment for a vehicle manufacturer in action in United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan in which Plaintiff alleged product defects caused a fire in the subject vehicle.
- Secured summary disposition for U-Haul Co. of Michigan in an asserting claims of owner's liability and vicarious liability stemming from a vehicular accident.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of an automotive manufacturer in complex product liability case involving building fire in federal court.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a bus manufacturer in complex product liability case.
- Secured summary judgment on behalf of property storage company in long-fought battle on bailment and conversion in state court.
- Secured international arbitration award exceeding \$3M on behalf of automotive company in breach of contract dispute.
- Managed and resolved multi-year, large-scale federal investigation response for Fortune 500 company involving cybersecurity practices.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of vehicle rental company in personal injury action.
- Obtained favorable settlement in high-exposure automotive negligence case involving claims of traumatic brain injury.

William E. McDonald, III *Member (cont.)*

- Secured favorable settlement for automotive manufacturer in catastrophic injury claim in product liability action in California.
- Secured favorable settlement for vehicle rental company in high-exposure personal injury claim.
- Managed and resolved a multi-year federal inquiry for client in an automotive product recall investigation.
- Achieved total dismissal without payment for medical device supplier in alleged medical malpractice action.
- Secured dismissal of a complex product liability lawsuit on behalf of a Fortune 500 circuit breaker manufacturer.

Professional Memberships & Activities

American Board of Trial Advocates, *National Trial College Fellow*

DRI, Young Lawyers, *Member*

Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association, *Member*

Oakland County Bar Association, *Young Lawyers, Member*

Law and Capital Markets @ Ohio State, *Program Associate*

Entrepreneurial Business Law Journal of the Moritz College of Law, *Staff Associate*

The Sedona Conference Working Group Series, *Member*

Honors & Awards

Inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*®: Product Liability Litigation - Defendants (2025)

Michigan Lawyers Weekly, *Go-To Lawyers for Negligence Law* (2024)

DBusiness Top Lawyers (2023-Present)

Michigan Lawyers Weekly, *Leaders in the Law* (2022)

Michigan Super Lawyers, *Rising Star* (2016 - Present)

Publications & Presentations

- "Whose Surrogate Is It Anyway?" Trial Network Top Gun Litigation: Courtroom Mavericks, *Moderator* (October 2024)
- "To Install or To Not Install Optional Equipment – Liability Defense Considerations" *DRI Strictly Automotive Manuscript* (August 2023)
- "Defending Optional Equipment Decisions in Heavy Duty Trucks" DRI Strictly Automotive Seminar, *Moderator* (August 2023)
- "Reflecting on 2+ Years of Remote Work" The Trial Network Corporate Litigation: Never Face the Music Alone Conference, *Moderator* (November 2022)
- "Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities for the Self Driving Car: Vehicle to Vehicle Interconnectivity and Associated Risks" presented to ACI Automotive Product Liability Litigation Conference (July 2018)
- "Securing Vehicles of the Future: Privacy, Cyber Security, and Product Liability" presented to IQPC Automotive Cyber Security Summit Detroit (March 2018)
- "Steering Clear of Cybersecurity Issues with Emerging Trends in Automotive Technology" presented to DRI Strictly Automotive Seminar (September 2017)
- "Investigative Techniques Using Advanced Technology and Social Media Law Update," presented to Kentucky Defense Counsel, Inc.'s 2017 Spring Seminar (March 2017)
- "Updates and Trends in Warnings and Failure to Warn Claims," presented to nationwide counsel for an OEM (January 2017)
- Attorney-Client Privilege, Investigative Techniques, & Michigan No-Fault, CLE presentation for in-house counsel and insurance adjusters (January 2017)

William E. McDonald, III *Member (cont.)*

- “Updates and Trends in Investigative Techniques...,” presented to nationwide counsel for an OEM (June 2016)
- “Michigan No Fault: Personal Injury Protection,” CLE presentation for in-house counsel and insurance adjusters (January 2016)
- “Investigative Techniques Using Advanced Technology” DRI For the Defense (December 2016)
- “Protecting the Corporation’s Interests,” DRI In-House Defense Quarterly (Winter 2016)
- “The Rise and Fall of the Reasonable Expectations Doctrine in Michigan,” The Journal of Insurance and Indemnity Law
- “Evidentiary Issues Facing Insurers Seeking Interpleader,” DRI For The Defense
- “Advanced Automotive Technologies,” presented to Defense Research Institute Strictly Automotive Seminar (November 2015)
- “Product Liability for Engineers,” presented for University of Michigan UMTRI Program December 2014 (2015)
- “Unusual Suspects: Criminalization of Corporate Conduct in Product Liability,” presented to the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms (2015 Annual Meeting)
- “Confidential Information Handling,” presented to nationwide counsel for an OEM
- “Recall Part II: The Evolving Landscape for Suppliers and Their In-House Counsel,” presented to OESA’s Legal Issues Council Meeting

Personal

Before law school, Bill officiated youth, high school and adult ice hockey as a USA Hockey Level 2 Official. While in law school, Bill was an active participant in the Moritz College of Law Moot Court and Lawyering Skills Program, competing in the Lawrence Negotiation Competition in 2010 and 2011 and the Colley Trial Practice Competition in 2012.

In addition, while studying law Bill worked as a general counsel legal intern for NiSource Inc., a Fortune 500 Company and as a law clerk for Brian G. Miller Co., L.P.A.