



John M. Hessel

Member

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John Hessel advises businesses, municipalities, and media organizations nationwide on complex legal matters ranging from commercial litigation and municipal law to First Amendment and intellectual property issues.

John represents business clients in commercial transactions and commercial litigation. His diverse client base spans a variety of industries, including service institutions, manufacturers, municipal corporations, financial institutions, publishing companies and local and national media entities. John's representations stretch from California to New York, where he handles negotiations, arbitrations, and mediations involving contractual issues, intellectual property, complex litigation matters, and class actions.

A particular focus of John's practice is Municipal Law. John is the long-standing city attorney for Kirkwood and Florissant, Missouri. He advises these cities and other municipalities, fire districts, state and local bonding authorities, and other governmental bodies in a number of complex matters including labor law, Sunshine Law, contractual issues, environmental issues, pension issues, zoning, and traditional litigation cases.

John also has deep experience addressing the unique needs of traditional media and new technologies, through all modes of content delivery. He represents clients in litigation involving defamation and privacy, newsgathering, and access; copyright and trademark registration and litigation; First Amendment issues, and much more.

A member of the Missouri and Illinois Bars, John practices before the U.S. District Courts in the Eastern District of Missouri and the Southern District of Illinois. He regularly appears in the Missouri Appellate Courts and has appeared in the Supreme Court of Missouri and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second, Seventh, and Eighth Circuits. He is a frequent speaker on municipal and media law issues.

John is a former member of the Firm's Management Committee.

Education

- Saint Louis University School of Law (J.D., 1977)
 - Top 10% of class

Services

- Municipal Law, Zoning & Finance
- Intellectual Property
- Media & Communications
- Securities Litigation
- Information Technology
- Complex Litigation
- Products Liability
- Opportunity Zones

- Southeast Missouri State University (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 1974)
 - Political Science and History
 - Included in Who's Who in American Colleges & Universities
 - Cardinal Key (Honorary Achievement Society)
 - Awarded academic and athletic scholarship (1970-1974)

Legal Background

- City attorney, City of Kirkwood, MO
- City attorney, City of Florissant, MO
- Evans, Hoemeke & Casey (merged with Lewis Rice) (1977-1982)
- Advisory group, Civil Justice Reform Act, Eastern District of Missouri (1980-1995)
- Adjunct professor of media law, Washington University in St. Louis (1981-1985)
- Adjunct professor of media law, Webster University (1979-1981)

Professional Affiliations

- International Municipal Lawyers Association
- American Bar Association
- American Association for Justice
- Missouri Municipal Attorneys Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, Municipal Law Section (Chairperson, 1988-1989)

Admissions

- Second Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals
- Seventh Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals
- Eighth Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals
- Eastern District of Missouri, U.S. District Court
- Southern District of Illinois, U.S. District Court
- Missouri Bar
- Illinois Bar

Charitable & Civic Involvement

- Board of Directors, Old Newsboys
- Board of Directors, Crusade Against Crime
- Member/Treasurer, 1-2-3 Club
- Member, Greenbriar Hills Country Club

Special Honors

- Public Service Leadership Award, North County Incorporated (2024)

- *Best Lawyers®*
 - St. Louis Municipal Lawyer of the Year 2011, 2013, 2016, 2022, 2024
 - St. Louis Litigation-First Amendment Lawyer of the Year 2014, 2018, 2020, 2025
 - St. Louis Litigation-Municipal Lawyer of the Year 2015, 2021, 2024
- *Best Lawyers®* 2009-2026
- ICON Award, Missouri Lawyers Media (2022)
- Keynote speaker, Medal of Valor Award (2014)
- *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers®* 2009-2016, 2025
- *Top Lawyers in St. Louis* in commercial law and municipal law
- *Presidential Who's Who*
- *Madison Who's Who*
- Recipient, SEMO Distinguished Alumni Merit Award (2009)
- Proclamation for civic duty, Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (April 2008)
- Citizen of the Year, City of Kirkwood and City of Des Peres (2008)
- Medal of Valor Award, Crusade Against Crime
- Recipient, SEMO Salutes Award (2003)