LAW360® Pulse

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Meet The Attys Facing Off In Lawyer's Bias Suit Against J&J

By **Jake Maher**

Law360 (July 18, 2025, 4:27 PM EDT) -- A discrimination suit in New Jersey federal court against the pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson, featuring charged allegations and a motion for sanctions, is pitting a trio of discrimination and plaintiff-side employment specialists against a Morgan Lewis & Bockius employment law team.

Former in-house data privacy attorney Ivelisse Clausell **alleged** in March that the pharmaceutical giant discriminated against her based on her Latina ethnicity in passing her over for a promotion to chief privacy officer, and fired her when she tried to report unethical behavior by the person who ultimately got the job.

Clausell's legal team consists of Marjorie Mesidor, founder of the discrimination and employment boutique Mesidor PLLC; Jamila Cambridge, an associate at the firm; and Crystal Pettiford, a solo practitioner and New Jersey local counsel for Mesidor PLLC.

J&J **hit back** against the discrimination suit with a motion to dismiss in late June, represented by a team led by Richard Rosenblatt, head of Morgan & Lewis' labor and employment practice in Princeton, New Jersey. The company argued Clausell's suit lacked facts to show that she was more qualified than the person who ultimately got the CPO role, and that Clausell knew all along there was nothing unethical about the behavior she tried to report.

J&J followed that with a motion for **sanctions** earlier this week claiming Clausell and her team knew they had no basis for their allegations, and that she had defamed both the company and its employees with her claims.

"As detailed in our filings, the company asked the court to dismiss plaintiff's claims that not only are devoid of legal merit and premised on factual falsehoods, but wrongly impugn and defame the company's employees," a spokesperson for J&J told Law360 Pulse at the time.

Mesidor stood by the suit in an interview with Law360 Pulse. She said her firm's philosophy is to aggressively represent clients all the way through their matter, including discovery, trial and appeal if needed, and Clausell's case is no different.

"There isn't a single case that I signed up for that I can't do the opening statement for at trial," Mesidor said.

She added that the sanctions motion is a "dilatory" litigation tactic, and that she and the rest of Clausell's legal team have documents to support her allegations.

With a deadline for the motion to dismiss set for July 21 and a deadline for the sanctions motion set for August 18, Law360 Pulse took a closer look at the legal teams squaring off in the high-profile discrimination case.

Representing Ivelisse Clausell



Marjorie Mesidor

Mesidor PLLC

Clausell's lead attorney is Marjorie Mesidor, a self-described "harassment slayer" and founding partner of discrimination and employment law boutique Mesidor PLLC.

Mesidor told Law360 Pulse in an interview that she launched the firm after nearly 20 years in anti-discrimination law in order to offer high-quality and focused legal services to a smaller number of clients.

"I was at a point in my career where I didn't want to be in the position of not feeling like my clients were getting the best representation just because there were so many clients," Mesidor said. "I also wanted to make sure that it wasn't just celebrities and high net worth individuals that got the best representation."

Mesidor founded her firm in 2024. Today, it numbers six attorneys with locations in New York City, Long Island and Washington, D.C.

Outside of Clausell's case, Mesidor is currently **representing** a former tax partner for BDO who is suing the accounting firm in New York federal court. Mesidor's client has claimed the firm discriminated against her and fired her for taking leave to care for her son, who had a brain hemorrhage, and is seeking $75 million in damages.

Mesidor is also representing an insurance and construction law attorney **suing** Fabiani Cohen & Hall LLP in New York federal court. The attorney, a Black woman, has alleged she was paid less than her white male colleagues and subjected to a racist harassment campaign lasting more than a decade. The firm has denied those allegations.



Jamila Cambridge

Mesidor PLLC

Jamila Cambridge is a Washington, D.C.-based senior associate at Mesidor PLLC.

She joined the firm in February after working as in-house litigation and regulatory counsel at Reddit and as an associate at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati in Palo Alto, California, handling internal and government investigations, enforcement proceedings and compliance reviews.

Her work there included representing the Danish drugmaker H. Lundbeck A/S in a **suit** against the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office seeking to extend the patent for a PTSD drug.



Crystal Pettiford

Crystal Pettiford Law LLC

Crystal Pettiford owns a personal injury and employment law firm based in Livingston, New Jersey, and serves as local counsel in New Jersey for Mesidor PLLC.

A New Jersey Supreme Court-certified civil trial attorney, Pettiford launched her firm in 2024 after working for the New York and New Jersey personal injury firm The Law Office of Rosemarie Arnold as an associate and as a staff counsel for AmTrust Financial Services.

Pettiford also has experience in the insurance industry, having worked as a trial attorney for Liberty Mutual Insurance, and as a prosecutor, having served as an assistant prosecutor for the Essex County Prosecutor's Office in New Jersey and as an assistant district attorney for the Kings County District Attorney's Office in New York.

Representing Johnson & Johnson



Richard Rosenblatt

Morgan Lewis

Richard Rosenblatt is a partner at Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP and leader of the Princeton office's labor and employment practice.

Rosenblatt handles wage and hour class and collective action matters, restrictive covenant and trade secrets litigation and employee benefits litigation, as well as discrimination and retaliation claims on behalf of employers.

Rosenblatt's experience includes representing Amazon in a long-running suit in which the company is accused of **misclassifying** drivers as independent contractors, as well as in a suit accusing the company of forcing workers to go through COVID-19 **screenings** without being paid for their time.

Rosenblatt also **represented** the ERISA Industry Committee, a national trade association of companies with over 10,000 employees, which sued New Jersey's labor commissioner in 2020 over changes to the state's version of the federal WARN Act. A New Jersey federal judge granted the commissioner's motion for **summary judgment** over the trade group in 2023.



Jason J. Ranjo

Morgan Lewis

Jason Ranjo is a Princeton-based associate advising on harassment, discrimination, retaliation, wage and hour disputes and contract breaches.

Ranjo is a former officer in the U.S. Army and the New Jersey Army National Guard and advises clients on issues related to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, according to Morgan Lewis.

Ranjo joined the firm in 2014 after working as an associate at Patton Boggs LLP and clerking for New Jersey Supreme Court Justice Barry Albin. He is a graduate of La Salle University and Rutgers Law School.



Jerome E. Shaen

Morgan Lewis

Shaen is an employment law associate in Morgan Lewis' Princeton office working on discrimination and retaliation cases.

In addition to the J&J case, Shaen was part of a team representing 3M in a discrimination suit from a Jehovah's Witness claiming that the company fired her out of religious bias for opposing its COVID-19 vaccine mandate. The case was dismissed with prejudice and the decision was **upheld** on appeal before the Third Circuit.

Shaen began his legal career as an associate at Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC after graduating from William & Mary and Villanova University's Charles Widger School of Law.

Counsel for Johnson & Johnson declined to comment for this article.

--Editing by Marygrace Anderson.

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