

Roberta F. Howell

Partner/Retired

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Madison



Roberta (Bobbi) Howell helps manufacturers achieve their business goals while minimizing legal risk within an ever-changing regulatory environment.

A partner and business lawyer with Foley & Lardner LLP, Bobbi's practice focuses on product distribution-related matters, including litigation and counseling in connection with dealership terminations; drafting dealer, distributor, franchise and agency agreements; drafting franchise disclosure documents and counseling clients on compliance with the regulatory requirements of franchising; compliance with state and federal dealer protection statutes; reseller policies; warranties; antitrust and pricing matters; trade secret misappropriation and noncompetition contracts; and automobile dealer/manufacturer relationships and licensing. She also assists manufacturers of electric vehicles (EVs) and nontraditional automotive products in setting up new distribution channels. She is former co-chair of the Distribution & Franchise Practice, as well as a member of the Antitrust & Competition and Trade Secret Noncompete Practices, and the Manufacturing and Automotive Industry Sectors.

Bobbi's experience also includes general business litigation, closely held corporation/limited liability company shareholder disputes, eminent domain actions, constitutional litigation, and class action defense.

For 15 years, Bobbi chaired the firm's annual Law of Product Distribution and Franchise Seminar, where she is a regular speaker, and she has co-presented the International Franchise Association's Judicial Update at its Annual Legal Symposium. Bobbi has published several articles on product distribution law.

Awards and Recognition

- State Bar of Wisconsin President's Award (2023, 2025)
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Franchise Law (2016-2024)
- Peer Review Rated as BV® Distinguished™, a mark of excellence in Martindale-Hubbell® Peer Review Ratings™ system

- *Wisconsin Law Journal's* Women in the Law (2013)

Affiliations

- Member, Dane County Bar Association
- Member, Western District of Wisconsin Bar Association
- Member, State Bar of Wisconsin
- Member, American Bar Association
- Fellow, American Bar Foundation
- Fellow, Wisconsin Bar Foundation

Community Involvement

- Past-president, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Western Wisconsin Chapter
- Member, board of directors, Fund for Campus Servant Leadership
- Member, board of directors, Levy Family Foundation
- Former commissioner, Kegonsa Sanitary District, Town of Dunn, Wis., serving as president and secretary of the commission (14 years)
- Former member, board of directors, Stoughton Youth Hockey Association
- Various capacities, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and the Student Center on the University of Wisconsin, Madison campus

Sectors

- [Automotive](#)
- [Fashion, Apparel & Beauty](#)
- [Manufacturing](#)
- [Supply Chain](#)

Practice Areas

- [Antitrust & Competition](#)
- [Distribution & Franchise](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Retail & Consumer Services](#)
- [Trade Secret Noncompete Litigation](#)

Education

- University of Wisconsin Law School (J.D., high honors)
 - Order of the Coif
 - Editorial board member and note and comment editor, *Wisconsin Law Review*
- University of Wisconsin, Madison (B.A., with honors)
 - Phi Beta Kappa

Admissions

- Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota
- First Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals
- 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals
- 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals
- 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals
- U.S. Supreme Court