

Wiley Rein Wins Closely Watched Legal Malpractice Trial for Client

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On July 13, in a case that drew widespread media attention, a Washington, DC jury found that high-profile family law attorney Rita Bank did not violate the standards of professional care in her handling of the divorce of Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize-winning professor of economics at Columbia University. Wiley Rein Litigation partner Richard A. Simpson represented Ms. Bank, leading a team that included partner Mary E. Borja and associate Kimberly A. Ashmore.

In 2005, Mr. Stiglitz sued Ms. Bank in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, accusing her of failing to file divorce papers in a timely manner, while exposing Mr. Stiglitz to larger claims in the settlement negotiation. After hearing eight days of evidence, it took the jury one day to rule in favor of Ms. Bank.

"It's the right result," Mr. Simpson told *The National Law Journal*. "It was a meritless suit. We put in the entire file because we were proud of the way it was handled." During the trial Mr. Simpson introduced evidence demonstrating Ms. Bank gave counsel that met, if not exceeded, her professional responsibilities.

Mr. Simpson has a national litigation and insurance coverage practice, with an emphasis on appellate litigation and claims against lawyers and other professionals, including accountants, architects, engineers, insurance agents and real estate brokers. Professionals and insurance carriers often retain Mr. Simpson to defend complex or high exposure malpractice claims and to provide legal ethics counseling. Ms. Borja litigates a wide range of trial and appellate matters in federal and state courts.

The trial has previously been covered by *The National Law Journal*, *Bloomberg*, *The ABA Journal* and *Washingtonian*.