

MICHELLE M. BUFANO

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FOUNDER & CEO • AI RISK ADVISOR • LEGAL STRATEGIST • OUTSIDE GENERAL COUNSEL

Former AmLaw 200 Litigation Partner • Enterprise Resilience Architect • Entrepreneurship Thought Leader

Senior legal and risk executive with 25+ years guiding boards, executives, and entrepreneurs through high-stakes legal, regulatory, and operational decisions across pharmaceutical, life sciences, healthcare, medical device, consumer products, chemical, and automotive industries. Currently leads two separately operated practices: as Founder and CEO of Michelle Bufano Business Consulting LLC, providing non-legal strategic advisory on AI risk, operational decision-making, and enterprise resilience; and as Founder of the Law Offices of Michelle M. Bufano LLC, practicing law as outside General Counsel on corporate governance, contracts, compliance, and legal risk management.

Former AmLaw 200 litigation partner (Patterson Belknap; Gibbons P.C.) who has led teams of 20+ attorneys, advised boards and C-suites on bet-the-company matters, and delivered measurable risk reduction through strategic litigation, contract negotiation, and crisis management. Trusted advisor to investment funds on M&A diligence, EU companies operating in the U.S., and emerging-growth founders.

National thought leader on AI risk, products liability, and the evolving intersection of law and technology through podcasts, ABA leadership, conference keynotes, and 20+ published legal articles. Active mentor and advocate for women entrepreneurs and DEI in the legal and business communities.

EXECUTIVE STRENGTHS

AI Governance & Risk Frameworks • Enterprise Legal Strategy • Board & C-Suite Advisory
Contract Review, Negotiation & Lifecycle Management • Regulatory Compliance (FDA, HIPAA, Data Privacy)
Bet-the-Company & Complex Litigation • Mass Tort & Class Action Strategy • Crisis Management
M&A Litigation Diligence & Valuation Risk • Cybersecurity & Data Privacy • Public Policy Advocacy
High-Performance Team Leadership • Founder & Executive Mentoring • Thought Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MICHELLE BUFANO BUSINESS CONSULTING LLC, Greater NYC Metro

May 2023–Present

Founder and CEO • Strategic Business Advisory • Non-Legal Services

- **Built the firm from inception** into a strategic advisory practice for entrepreneurs, founders, and enterprise clients on operational decision-making, AI risk, and enterprise resilience.
- **Design AI governance and risk frameworks** that help organizations adopt AI thoughtfully, while addressing strategic, operational, and reputational dimensions of innovation across the enterprise.
- **Translate complex technical and policy developments** in AI and emerging technology into practical, board-ready guidance for executives, founders, and investors.
- **Advise on enterprise resilience** across cybersecurity posture, data privacy strategy, third-party risk, and crisis preparedness, embedding decision-making playbooks for leadership teams.
- **Mentor founders—particularly women entrepreneurs**—on building resilient, growth-focused companies.

LAW OFFICES OF MICHELLE M. BUFANO LLC, Greater NYC Metro

May 2023–Present

Founder • Outside General Counsel • Legal Practice

- **Practice law as outside General Counsel** to emerging-growth and mid-sized companies on corporate governance, regulatory compliance, contracts, and legal risk management—including the evolving legal landscape of AI use in business operations.
- **Drive contract efficiency and legal risk reduction** through end-to-end contract review, negotiation, and dispute avoidance: master services agreements, vendor and partnership contracts, NDAs, IP licenses, and AI-vendor terms.
- **Build legal operations infrastructure** in the form of templates, playbooks, escalation criteria, and reporting dashboards that scale with the client without requiring a full in-house team.
- **Counsel and educate women-owned businesses** on the legal foundations of resilient companies, including proper corporate form, governance structure, founding agreements, and core commercial contracts, so founders launch with a strong legal footing and reduced risk exposure.

ENTREPRENEUR MEDIA

March 2025–Present

Member (Part-Time)

- Member of Entrepreneur Media's national network of business and thought leaders, with the opportunity to contribute editorial perspectives on AI risk, legal strategy, and business resilience.

PATTERSON BELKNAP WEBB & TYLER LLP, New York, NY

August 2016–April 2023

Partner • Complex Litigation & Risk Advisory

Enterprise Legal & Risk Leadership

- **Led inclusive, high-performance teams of up to 20+ attorneys** across multi-jurisdictional matters; hired, managed, and maintained an extensive multi-state network of outside counsel.
- **Owned KPIs around litigation reserves, budgets, and total cost of resolution.** Drafted audit letters for boards and built finance-team budgets, including projected appeal costs and insurance-rate impact.
- **Served on firm leadership committees:** Hiring, Associate Review, Diversity (DEI) Initiative, and Women Lawyers at Patterson (WLAP). Active in shaping talent strategy and inclusive culture.
- **Launched and hosted Notorious: The Legal Legacy of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg** podcast (multiple seasons), elevating firm thought leadership on Constitutional interpretation, the Supreme Court, and law and public policy.

Litigation Strategy & Board-Level Advisory

- **Led bet-the-company litigation** from risk analysis (including whether to litigate) through pre-trial, trial, and settlement, including highly nuanced and protracted mass tort claims and class actions.
- **Aligned legal strategy with business goals** using a calibrated approach to the risk tolerance of boards, senior leaders, and key stakeholders; advised on go/no-go decisions and exit strategies.
- **Litigated and counseled on** corporate branding, sustainability, non-competition and breach of contract, cybersecurity, and corporate governance matters.

Client Counseling, M&A Diligence & Compliance

- **Advised investment funds on M&A diligence**—pharmaceutical, consumer products, chemical, and medical device targets—quantifying litigation risk and its effect on valuation and deal structure.
- **Reviewed and de-risked complex contracting arrangements** across regulated industries; drafted cease-and-desist letters and managed trademark infringement matters.
- **Guided clients on regulatory compliance** (HIPAA, FDA reporting obligations) and document retention; partnered with in-house teams and corporate communications on crisis management.
- **Counseled non-profit clients** on COVID-19 undertakings under the PREP Act.

GIBBONS P.C., New York, NY**September 2003–July 2016***Partner (2009–2016) • Associate (2003–2008) • Mass Tort & Products Liability*

- **Represented pharmaceutical and other clients** in mass tort and complex litigation, including pre-trial proceedings, motion practice, and trial in state and federal court.
- **Supervised teams of up to 12** attorneys and paralegals as Partner; served as on-going trusted advisor to long-term clients.
- **Promoted from Associate to Partner** on the strength of trial work, client relationships, and complex litigation results.

Earlier Legal Roles

- Associate, Cole, Schotz, Meisel, Forman & Leonard, P.A. (December 2002–August 2003)
- Associate, Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP (1998–2002)
- Law Clerk to The Honorable Martin L. Greenberg, P.J.Ch., Superior Court of New Jersey (September 1997–August 1998)

EDUCATION, CERTIFICATIONS & BAR ADMISSIONS

J.D., Seton Hall University School of Law, Newark, NJ **1997**

Seton Hall Law Review • National Interscholastic Constitutional Law Moot Court Team

B.A., cum laude, English and Political Science, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA **1993****Executive Certifications**

- Corporate Governance: Maximize Your Effectiveness in the Boardroom — The Wharton School
- Business Essentials Accelerator — Morning Brew
- Women's Entrepreneurship — Bank of America Institute at Cornell
- Data Privacy & Security Compliance — Seton Hall University School of Law (2021)

Bar Admissions

States of New York and New Jersey; U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York and the District of New Jersey.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & RECOGNITION

Honors

- Recognized in New Jersey and New York Super Lawyers — Class Action / Mass Torts
- New Jersey Law Journal "40 Under 40"
- Project for Attorney Retention, Work-Life Balance Award (2009)

Selected Speaking Engagements

- Presenter, "Updates in Products Liability Law," NJCJI Fall Legal Forum (October 12, 2021)
- Presenter, "State of the Union on Preemption," American Conference Institute's 25th Annual Drug & Medical Device Litigation Conference (December 8, 2020)
- Presenter, "In the Aftermath of Albrecht: Implications of the Supreme Court's Ruling on Preemption," American Conference Institute's 24th Annual Drug & Medical Device Litigation Conference (December 10, 2019)
- Co-Presenter, "Predicting Risk and Examining the Intersection of Traditional Principles of Product Liability Laws with Digital Health and 3D Printing," American Conference Institute (November 29, 2018)
- Co-Presenter, "Products Liability and the Internet of Things," Bloomberg Webinar (September 13, 2018)
- Co-Presenter, "NJ Supreme Court: Landmark Decision on Standards for Expert Testimony," NJ Civil Justice Institute Policy Teleforum (August 1, 2018)

- Co-Presenter, “Deposition Toolkit,” ABA Joint CLE Seminar (January 11, 2019)
- Presenter, “Revisiting the Role of the Learned Intermediary Doctrine,” NJ Defense Association & ACC-NJ Products Liability Seminar (September 23, 2016)

Selected Media Mentions

- Quoted in “What Zohran Mamdani’s big win means for Main Street small business owners,” CNBC (November 5, 2025) — commentary on small business impact, progressive capitalism, and minimum wage policy.

Featured in Published Books

- Unseen Leadership, by Amy Clark (2026) — quoted in the book and featured on the back cover endorsement.
- UNLIMITED: The Seventeen Proven Laws for Success in a Workplace Not Designed for You, by Eugina Jordan (2023) — quoted/featured.
- Something Major: The New Playbook for Women at Work, by Randi Braun (2023) — quoted/featured.

Selected Publications (20+ articles; full list available on request)

- Chapter author, “What I Was Made for,” in Own Your Story: Empower. Connect. Create Change, anthology edited by Susan Claudia Freeman, Lesley Marlin, and Jennifer Thibodaux (May 2024).
- “Expert Witness Testimony Rule Changes Would Serve Justice,” Bloomberg Law (January 5, 2022)
- “Adapting to Remote Proceedings in the Post-Pandemic Era,” Three-Part Series, The National Law Journal (July 14–16, 2021)
- “Assessing Potential Risk: Due Diligence for Acquisition of Product Manufacturers,” New Jersey Law Journal (December 11, 2019)
- “What New Calif. Law Means For Connected Medical Devices,” Law360 (October 5, 2018)
- “‘Accutane’ Appeal Presents Opportunity for NJ to Adopt ‘Daubert,’” New Jersey Law Journal (December 11, 2017)
- Earlier publications in New Jersey Law Journal, Law360, Bloomberg BNA, LJN’s Product Liability Law & Strategy, and New Jersey Lawyer (2007–2016)

Board Service

- Board of Directors, Nerdy Girl Success, Inc. — 501(c)(3) supporting young women in leadership (2022–2024)

Professional Memberships & Affiliations

- New Jersey State Bar Association (2003–Present)
- New York City Bar Association (2016–Present)
- American Bar Association — former Vice-Chair, Section of Science & Technology Law Committee, and Member, Biotechnology, Healthcare Technology, and Medical Devices (BHTMD) Committee (2019–2020)
- Chief (2021–Present) — network of women in executive leadership
- Entreprenista (2022–Present) — community of women entrepreneurs
- The Bold Leaders Collective — Founding Member (2023–2025)
- The Outlier Project (2024–2025)
- Defense Research Institute, Drug and Medical Device Committee (1998–2023)
- New Jersey Civil Justice Institute, Legal Advisory Board (2005–2025)
- The Foundation of the International Association of Defense Counsel (2017–2023)
- Law Journal News Product Liability Law & Strategy Newsletter (Board of Editors, 2008–2017)
- National Trial Advocacy College, University of Virginia School of Law (Graduate, 2001)
- William J. Brennan, Jr. Inn of Court (Graduate, 1999–2001)