THE HONORABLE AMY Berman Jackson sworn in as a US District Judge for the D.C.

The investiture of Amy Berman Jackson as a District Judge was held at the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on Thursday, June 2. With Chief Judge Royce C. Lamther presiding, the oath was administered by The Honorable Merrick B. Garland of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, and Deputy Attorney General James Cole presented the Commission. Robert Trout of Trout Cacheris, Roxane Marenberg of Cisco Systems, Inc., and William D. Dolan of Venable all provided remarks.

Prior to her investiture, Judge Jackson was a Member of Trout Cacheris, PLLC, in Washington, D.C., where she specialized in complex criminal and civil trials and appeals, and earlier, she was a partner at Venable, Baetjer, Howard, and Civiletti. From 1980 to 1986, Judge Jackson served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, where she received Department of Justice Special Achievement Awards for her work on high profile murder and sexual assault cases. She has been a regular teacher at the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and the Harvard Law School Trial Advocacy workshop. After graduating from law school, she served as a law clerk to the Honorable Harrison L. Winter of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Judge Jackson received her J.D. cum laude in 1979 from Harvard Law School and her A.B. cum laude in 1976 from Harvard College.

U.S. District Court for D.C.

DISQUALIFICATION OF COUNSEL
DECLARATORY JUDGMENT / TORTIOUS INTERFERENCE WITH CONTRACT / NO CAUSE OF ACTION FOR TORTIOUS INTERFERENCE WITH ATTORNEY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP / CIVIL CONSPIRACY MUST ALLEGE A TARGET TORT / RIPENESS / ABSTENTION

Précis: In order to sustain a case for tortious interference with a contract, the plaintiff must show that an actual breach occurred and that it was caused by the defendant. There is no cause of action in the District of Columbia for tortious interference with an attorney-client relationship. Civil conspiracy is not an independent tort in the absence of an underlying tortious target act. Where the counts in a proposed amended complaint do not set forth claims upon which relief can be granted, it would be futile to grant leave to amend. The principle of "ripeness" for adjudication is based upon both constitutional and prudential considerations, and is intended to prevent courts, through avoidance of premature adjudication, from engaging themselves in abstract disagreements. It requires the identification of a concrete and specific injury. It is ill-advised to grant a declaratory judgment in one case which would have complicating repercussions in cases before other courts involving the same parties. Rather, the issue of disqualification of lawyers from ongoing suits is governed by the respective rules of the jurisdictions where those cases are pending, each of which would have to make its own independent determination. The Declaratory Judgment Act empowers a District Court to abstain from hearing certain suits, even when they may otherwise satisfy subject matter jurisdiction and are ripe for adjudication.

Abstract: In a civil suit that turned into a question of professional responsibility and disqualification the U.S. District Court dismissed a request for declaratory judgment and abstained from ruling on ethical issues which were also pending before other District Courts. Facts: In 1964, two major U.S. oil interests began drilling in northeast Ecuador, based in a small lakeside town. Eventually, the interests were consolidated under a third well-known U.S. Oil Company which, over the next 20 years took 1.7 billion barrels of oil out of the area at a gross profit of $25 billion, most of which went to the Ecuadorian Government. The project, however, caused hundreds of square miles of environmental harm to that area of the Ecuadorian Amazon, produced massive amounts of carcinogenic hydrocarbons which were dumped into the area’s watershed for decades, and was further complicated.