

# Melany Kotlarek Fontanazza



**of counsel  
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**Legal Assistant**

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**education**

University of Akron School of Law (J.D., 2005)

- *Law Review*

Marietta College (B.A., 2002, *cum laude*)

- *Minor: Business Certificate: Leadership*

**admissions**

Ohio

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

**industries**

Financial Services

**services**

Appellate

Commercial Litigation

**My clients tell me that I'm a reliable, meticulous, and diligent attorney who always takes the time to communicate clearly with them. They say they appreciate the care I put into conveying essential information; for example, I draft emails to concisely set forth all options in an effective and easy-to-read style. Because I enjoy writing and researching, appellate work is a great fit for me. Whether I'm crafting briefs, drafting summary judgment motions, or preparing a case for trial, I always give it my all. When all of the hard work pays off in positive resolutions for my clients, it makes it worthwhile.**

Melany Kotlarek Fontanazza represents a national client base of banks, lenders, and other financial institutions in consumer financial services litigation. Melany counsels companies and institutions at the trial court and appellate levels as well as pre-suit and during the mediation process. With almost 15 years of trial attorney experience, which includes successful jury trials, bench trials, and arbitrations, she brings to her practice a deep and broad knowledge base of the litigation process and the Ohio court system.

## Consumer Financial Services Litigation

### honors

- *Ohio Super Lawyers* "Rising Star" (Business Litigation), 2019–2020
- CALI Awards: Legal Writing & Research and Legal Drafting, University of Akron School of Law, 2005, 2006
- Ernest Karam Award for Academic Excellence, University of Akron School of Law, 2005
- Akron Law Review, Assistant Editor 2004–2005

### affiliations

#### Professional

- Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association

Always focused on getting clients optimal results, Melany recognizes that often this means settling a case. Consequently, she looks for ways to craft early and advantageous settlements to minimize client costs. Her deep familiarity with the consumer finance industry means she doesn't need to reinvent the wheel for each matter. In complex cases that don't conform to cookie-cutter solutions, Melany and her team rely on their collective ingenuity to structure settlements creatively and effectively.

State and federal financial services regulations are ever-evolving, and Melany closely monitors and analyzes the relevant banking statutes on which clients see counterclaims and affirmative lawsuits filed. Because she believes that it's more advantageous to present a pleasant and professional demeanor rather than one that is confrontational or argumentative, Melany places a premium on being collegial, personable, and easy to work with, whether she's interacting with opposing counsel, judges, clients, or colleagues. When the situation warrants, however, she does demonstrate her assertive side in advocating for her clients.

Melany enjoys researching the issues that arise and converge during litigation. She views each case within the full picture of the legal landscape while also zeroing in on the small but important details and then drafts salient motions and briefs. She previously served as an adjunct professor at the University of Akron School of Law, where she taught Legal Writing & Research. With a degree in accounting, Melany credits this educational background as a foundation for the detailed-oriented and business-focused approach she takes in counseling clients.