

AUGUST WOMEN'S INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT:**Susan Oliver**

Susan Oliver is a Partner in Tyson & Mendes' San Diego offices, where she leads a multi-attorney team focused on catastrophic personal injury defense, employment practices litigation defense, the defense of entity defendants where sexual torts are alleged, including sexual assault and child sexual abuse, and medical malpractice defense. Susan is known for finding novel legal arguments and has been extremely successful in positioning cases for summary judgment, including two recent cases where summary judgment was granted and saved her clients over \$100 million collectively. A long-time friend of the firm's Founding Partners Robert Tyson and Patrick Mendes, Susan is also an avid traveler and big college football fan ("Go Hawkeyes!"). Read on for more.

Q&A

T&M: Where did you go to undergrad and law school?

SO: I attended the University of Iowa for both.

T&M: What did you like most about the city the two schools were located?

SO: I grew up wanting to go to a big university that had a lot going on and a strong football program. Both my parents went to University of Iowa as well. Iowa City is such a fun college town. Being part of the Big 10 - it was never just a "college football game," it was a college football weekend. The city is also a very cool cultural mecca, which I think a lot of people do not realize. The Iowa Writers' Workshop is there, the Joffrey Ballet performs a few times a year, and there are always amazing concerts.

T&M: What drew you to Tyson & Mendes?

SO: I have been friends with Bob Tyson and Pat Mendes for 25 years. We all started our careers together as attorneys at our first firm, Edwards, White & Sooy. Even after we all moved on, we remained good friends. When Bob and Pat started their own firm, we discussed me joining the firm for seven years before I actually did. Now, I wish I had done it much sooner!

T&M: What do you enjoy most about working at the firm?

SO: First, the people. Everyone is friendly and nice, and we have a great group of lawyers. I also enjoy the type of work we do. We work on a lot of big cases, often involving complex legal or factual issues. Our caseload is always interesting.

T&M: What benefits do you think a client has by working with a female attorney?

SO: I think in the work I do, being a woman is a lot less threatening to the children or teens from whom I often need to get depositions. I also think women tend to listen first and talk second, which can lead to a more thoughtful response, as opposed to an immediate, "this is what we need to do" reaction.

T&M: What has been the biggest challenge of your career thus far?

SO: Maintaining some semblance of work-life balance is hard for any attorney, so it is important for me to not let work overwhelm my entire life. This is especially difficult, because as any lawyer will tell you - the work is never done. There is always some deadline hanging over your head, or someone coming after you for something related to a particular case, so I had to learn how to manage and deal with that stress.

T&M: What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

SO: I was told once that lawyers need to take the attitude of Harry S. Truman and "the buck stops with you." It is your responsibility to get things done and make sure they are done correctly. There is no blaming someone else for an error or missed deadline. If something is your responsibility, own it, every step of the way.

T&M: What did you want to be when you grew up?

SO: In first grade, I wanted to be a flight attendant, then as I grew older I thought about becoming either a lawyer or a teacher. I guess we know how that turned out!

T&M: What is your most or least favorite lawyer joke?

SO: My favorite, even if it is a little mean: "What is the difference between a lawyer and a catfish?" "One is a scum-sucking bottom-dweller, and the other is a fish."

T&M: If you could be any TV lawyer for a day, who would it be and why?

SO: To be honest, I find them all completely unrealistic!

T&M: What would be your last meal?

SO: Some combination of tuna sushi and filet mignon.

T&M: When not at work or home, where are we most likely to find you?

SO: Hopefully traveling to some place cool! I would like to spend some time in Northern Europe, particularly Belgium, Iceland and/or the Netherlands. We also go to the beach a lot, so you may find me there!