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Daily Journal's Top 100 Lawyers



Peter K. Stris

Stris & Maher LLP

Los Angeles
Litigation

Peter K. Stris is the founding partner of Stris & Maher LLP, a 20-lawyer litigation boutique specializing in difficult, high-stakes business disputes. Based in Los Angeles, the firm has a nationwide practice, representing clients in trials and appeals before courts throughout America.

Stris' trial-court practice focuses on bet-the-company cases, generally involving damages of \$50 million or more. He also has a widely respected appellate practice, which includes having personally argued 10 cases before the United States Supreme Court.

"Unlike our trial-court practice where we represent plaintiffs and defendants in roughly equal parts, our Supreme Court practice is skewed heavily toward representing plaintiffs," Stris said in an interview. "Last year was unusual because our two most significant Supreme Court cases were on the defense side."

In one of those cases, Stris represented a generic drug manufacturer against a big pharma company in a high-stakes patent dispute over a leading drug treatment for multiple sclerosis. *Novartis Pharmaceuticals v. HEC Pharma*, No. 22A272 (U.S. 2023). Novartis was generating over \$3 million a day selling its branded version of that drug.

Stris' client persuaded the Federal Circuit to find Novartis' patent invalid. But at the Supreme Court, Novartis—represented by prominent teams from three AmLaw firms—obtained a temporary restraining order from Chief

Justice Roberts staying issuance of the Federal Circuit's mandate. That led HEC to hire Stris as its lead Supreme Court counsel. Stris' team submitted a brief in opposition, and Justice Roberts subsequently referred the case to the full court for decision.

In a victory for Stris' client, the court denied Novartis' stay petition and lifted the temporary restraining order, paving the way for HEC to become the first generic to enter the highly lucrative market for fingolimod. Stris later defeated Novartis' petition for certiorari.

"This was a well-deserved victory not only for our client but also for multiple sclerosis sufferers, who now have cheaper and readier access to this life-saving drug," said Stris.

In another closely watched case before the Supreme Court, Mr. Stris and his team preserved a landmark victory for the city of Seattle, overcoming a well-funded legal challenge to the city's guarantee of minimum compensation for low-income hospitality workers. *ERISA Industry Committee v. City of Seattle*, No. 21-1019 (U.S. 2022).

Asked when he decided to become an attorney, Stris replied: "In college, I was studying to compose music for movies. But during my junior year, I won the national debate championship and struggled to fill the seats at my concerts. That's when I realized law school would probably be a better fit for me than Hollywood."

—Douglas Saunders