

Product Liability Group Of The Year: Kline & Specter

By Jake Maher

Law360 (February 9, 2026, 4:03 PM EST) -- Kline & Specter PC won multiple major verdicts against Bayer unit Monsanto over the company's Roundup weedkiller product over the last year, including a \$78 million award in Philadelphia and a \$2.1 billion verdict in Georgia, earning it a spot among the **2025 Law360 Product Liability Groups of the Year**.



Led by name partners Tom Kline and Shanin Specter and mass tort chair Tobi Millrood, the firm also landed an undisclosed settlement with Monsanto just before closing arguments were set to begin in a trial in St. Louis County, Missouri, and was appointed liaison counsel in a hair relaxer mass tort case in Philadelphia last year.

Millrood told Law360 that one key to the firm's success last year — and every year — is focusing on clients as individual people. The firm pursues damages over product liability claims through jury trials, rather than massive multidistrict litigations, putting its clients' stories at the center of its work, according to Millrood.

"Our approach at Kline & Specter to mass torts is ironically to remove the mass from mass torts," he said.

Specter similarly emphasized that spirit of trial-readiness, saying the firm will never turn down a proposed trial date, even if it has to rearrange attorneys' schedules to make it work. Kline & Specter is based in Philadelphia, with additional locations in New Jersey, Delaware and New York City, and has about 60 attorneys. Nine are in the product liability group.

"Our success starts and ends with the fact that we are a trial firm," Specter said.

In the **\$78 million trial** win in Philadelphia, for example, Millrood said the firm found success by centering the story of plaintiff William Melissen, who claimed he developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma from using Roundup. Millrood served as trial lead counsel along with Kline and Jason Itkin of Arnold & Itkin LLP.

"Trials are in many respects about storytelling. After all, there's a real life that was impacted," Millrood said. "The story of Billy Melissen against the backdrop of Monsanto and the story that's been told in these Roundup trials had a significant effect on the jury."

The jury awarded Melissen \$3 million in compensatory damages and \$75 million in punitive damages in a verdict that reversed a nationwide trend at the time of Monsanto winning at trial, according to Kline & Specter.

In the **St. Louis County case**, where Millrood was also lead counsel, he said the firm was able to present a compelling story in the face of strong work by defense counsel and in a venue that he described as Monsanto's "backyard." The company is based in St. Louis County.

"When we had the opportunity to challenge the science in the case, and challenge the experts on the medicine and the science, I think we were able to present a very different view for the jury to consider," Millrood said.

Kline represented the plaintiff in the Georgia trial that resulted in a **\$2.1 billion verdict** in March 2025. That was the largest single-plaintiff injury verdict in the state's history, Kline & Specter has said, and one of the largest in all Roundup litigation after a \$2.25 billion judgment was ruled unconstitutionally excessive and trimmed down to \$404 million in 2024.

Monsanto has said it will appeal the verdict, but Kline told Law360 his firm has a record of doing strong work on appeal, which was another factor in its success over the last year.

"If ever there were a year that we were able to coalesce the appellate victories with continued success in the trial court, 2025 was that year for our firm," Kline said.

Looking to the future, Kline & Specter joined litigation being handled in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas' mass tort program tied to hair relaxer products that allegedly caused gynecological cancers. The litigation is related to a major multidistrict litigation in the Northern District of Illinois.

The defendant companies "buried their head in the sand" about the products, Specter said, adding that he looks forward to trial dates being set soon.

"We feel it's very important litigation for the country," Specter said.

Millrood added that the litigation "gives these women an opportunity to have their day in court, to have a jury trial amongst the jury of their peers, and that kind of critical thinking and strategy that we do is somewhat unique."

Overall, Millrood said, Kline & Specter's success in 2025 was a vindication of its vision for handling mass tort cases by putting them to the test before a jury.

"This last year was very gratifying, to see that vision come to fruition," Millrood said.

--Additional reporting by P.J. D'Annunzio, Elliot Weld and Cara Salvatore. Editing by Linda Voorhis.