

# Ex-JPMorgan Banker Makes Case For Damages As Trial Wraps

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By [Pete Brush](#)

Law360, New York (November 6, 2017, 6:40 PM EST) -- Former [JPMorgan Chase & Co.](#) private wealth manager Jennifer Sharkey told a Manhattan jury Monday that she is owed least \$660,000 for being fired after raising concerns about a rich client, but the \$350 billion megabank painted Sharkey as a liar in search of a payday.

The accusations and counter-accusations came during closing arguments before U.S. District Judge Denise L. Cote in a trial pitting Sharkey against the bank and three of its employees, co-defendants Leslie Lassiter, Adam Green and Joe Kenney, who oversaw her employment when she was fired in August 2009.

The jury of five women and three men got the case just after 3 p.m. and deliberated for under two hours Monday. They are set to resume deliberations Tuesday morning.

Sharkey claims in her 2010 lawsuit that she flagged an [unnamed wealthy bank client](#) for possible fraud and money laundering and was unlawfully fired in violation of anti-retaliation provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act for her trouble. JPMorgan countered that Sharkey was fired for dishonesty.

Sharkey's lead counsel, Douglas H. Wigdor, told the jury that the \$660,000 figure represents pay and bonuses she would have received between the time of her firing and early 2012, when she conceded that she stopped looking for other jobs in the financial services sector.

Citing Sharkey's [testimony that](#) the firing left her feeling humiliated and anxious, Wigdor also asked the jury to add on damages for emotional distress.

Sharkey, who had a 10-year career in finance under her belt, was a "star" at JPMorgan with \$400 million under management when she was fired, Wigdor said. She brought \$100 million of new client money into the bank, Wigdor told the jury. Sharkey joined JPMorgan's wealth management group in October 2006, according to her suit.

Lassiter, Sharkey's direct supervisor, was unwilling to have the bank exit its relationship with the wealthy client, Wigdor told the jury. Lassiter, whose pay was tied to the bank's earnings at the time, put greed ahead of "know-your-customer" concerns and the plaintiff's economic prospects in firing Sharkey, Wigdor said.

JPMorgan painted Sharkey as a liar and portrayed Lassiter, Green and Kenney as "thoughtful" and "hard-working" bankers who tried to manage Sharkey but in the end could not justify keeping her because of untruths she told related to another client.

The wealthy man that Sharkey flagged for possible money-laundering and fraud is a mere "pawn" in Sharkey's "quest for a payday," bank counsel Michael D. Schissel of [Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP](#) told the jury.

"This whole story that plaintiff has spun up ... is an unmitigated lie," Schissel said.

The jury's take on the trial may boil down to Lassiter's testimony against Sharkey's testimony. Lassiter was Sharkey's direct supervisor at the time of her firing, while Kenney and Green oversaw the bank's wealth management department.

Wigdor had told the jury that it was Lassiter who was spouting untruths.

“The only person who has been caught in repeated lies in this case is Ms. Lassiter,” he said, accusing Lassiter of inventing details to support her version of Sharkey's termination.

Sharkey and Lassiter both were called to the stand while Kenney and Green were lesser players at trial.

Sharkey is represented by Douglas H. Wigdor, Michael J. Willemin and Lawrence M. Pearson of [Wigdor LLP](#).

JPMorgan is represented by Michael D. Schissel and Kathleen A. Reilly of Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP.

The case is Sharkey v. JPMorgan Chase & Co. et al., case number [1:10-cv-03824](#), in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

--Editing by Dipti Coorg.