

Illinois

As the litigation epicenter of the Midwest, Chicago remains a highly competitive legal market with international firms stacked with premier talent battling high stakes antitrust, commercial, products liability and intellectual property cases on behalf of corporate giants. In a state traditionally prone to corruption scandals, Illinois is also home to many of the nation's preeminent white collar experts who sharpened their skills as state and federal prosecutors. Although still facing economic hurdles, as a key manufacturing, retail and banking region, Illinois law firms are handling a steady flow of toxic torts litigation, securities class actions and labor disputes while simultaneously advising on billion-dollar mergers and acquisitions in a range of consolidating industries.

Highly recommended firms

Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott

Founded in 1993 by former Kirkland & Ellis partners, the national litigation firm of Bartlit Beck has built an outstanding reputation as boutique trial firm. From its hiring practices to its client approach, the firm's business model is focused on providing expertly trained trial lawyers for bet-the-company cases across the country. Operating out of Chicago and Denver, the firm's name partners including **Phil Beck** and **Don Scott** are renowned nationally for their exemplary courtroom skills. As one global competitor states, "As good as we are, if we are up against Bartlit Beck, we know we are in for a huge battle. They are a fantastic trial firm and Phil Beck is as good as it gets."

Litigation partner **Chris Lind** has garnered national praise for his high-profile victory on behalf of client United Technologies in an alleged multi-billion patent infringement suit brought by Rolls-Royce. The claims involved UT's Pratt & Whitney division, which Rolls-Royce asserted infringed one of its engine blade patents in the Airbus 380. The battle between the two companies became international in scope with related claims and counterclaims in the UK and other jurisdictions in the US threatening to delay the launch of Boeing's 787 Dreamliner. Following the dismissal in Lind's case in Virginia, all subsequent patent claims have since been settled. As one peer states, "Chris Lind did a brilliant job in a case that could have cost the client billions."

Jenner & Block

Established in 1914, the national firm of Jenner & Block has 450 attorneys practicing across offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington DC. Although the firm suffered the loss of its legendary chairman emeritus Jerold Solovy this past year, current chairman **Anton Valukas** continues to uphold the firm's longstanding reputation as a national leader in practice areas including commercial litigation, securities, insurance, media, bankruptcy, corporate and government contracts. Valukas was appointed in 2010 as

examiner in the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy and received national praise for his extensive findings on the largest bankruptcy filed in the US to date. Jenner & Block also acted as lead outside counsel to the newly structured General Motors in its globally publicized IPO in late 2010. The \$23.1 billion total offering is considered one of the largest IPOs in history.

Other top litigation talent at the firm includes co-chair of the white-collar defense and investigations practice, **Charles Sklarsky**. An esteemed trial lawyer and former prosecutor for the state of Illinois, Sklarsky has significant experience handling high-stakes securities fraud, SEC enforcement, public corruption and criminal tax matters. **Jeffrey Colman** is an accomplished trial and appellate attorney with extensive experience handling professional liability and consumer class actions, with a focus on nationwide employment and food contamination cases. As a former Special Assistant Attorney General for Illinois, Colman also handles government investigations and criminal antitrust matters for major companies. In a recent high-profile intellectual property win, the firm won a motion for summary judgment of invalidity in client Viskase's action against World Pac International USA. Viskase, a global supplier of cellulose food casings for meat manufacturers and food processors, had been accused by competitor World Pac of infringing on a food casing patent. Partners Bradford Lyeria and Jeffrey Kopyy handled the case.

Kirkland & Ellis

Headquartered in Chicago, the global firm of Kirkland & Ellis has stacked itself with expert talent and prides itself on a business model that requires trial experience in all of its attorneys, from associates upward. As one multinational client states, "Kirkland & Ellis has a deep roster of superb litigation lawyers who have been developed through strong recruiting, internal training and hands-on litigation experience. K&E has a strong, aggressive culture that differentiates it from most firms."

Standout talent includes **Richard Godfrey**, who specializes in antitrust and products liability and is handling multibillion-dollar

litigation on behalf of BP in connection with the Gulf oil spill. In a recent victory for BP, Godfrey along with partner Martin Boles helped convince a New Orleans court to stay cross-claims against BP by partner Anadarko Petroleum, arguing that BP could enforce its arbitration clause with Anadarko, who could not prove grounds for a waiver. The same judge also dismissed multiple RICO claims alleging BP defrauded government regulators by misrepresenting drilling operations safety and spill response capabilities. **Michael Foradas** represents Dow Chemical, handling significant toxic tort, groundwater and insurance cases along with **Kevin Van Wart**, who handles high stakes toxic torts matters, and **Doug Kurtenbach**, who specializes in class actions. As the former Deputy Attorney General of the US, **Mark Filip**, who is part of BP's defense team, is sought after nationally by Fortune 500 companies involved in bet-the-company litigation and for officers facing multi-agency investigations.

Latham & Watkins

Established in 1934, the international firm of Latham & Watkins is one of the largest in the world, with 2000 attorneys throughout offices in 31 countries. In Chicago, the firm is involved in a broad range of business and litigation matters for companies with economic interests in the Midwest and across the country. The firm is known for its strategic litigation skills in high-stakes matters in the areas of white collar, intellectual property, products liability and insurance.

Latham's talent roster includes esteemed trial lawyer **Sean Berkowitz**, the global chair of Latham's litigation department who specializes in complex commercial cases and is recognized nationally for his securities fraud and white-collar defense work on behalf of corporate giants such as Oracle. Referred to by peers as an "exceptional litigator," Berkowitz is a former assistant US attorney for the DOJ who directed the task force investigating the Enron corporate scandal and was the lead prosecutor against its chief officers. Also on the team is **Zach Fardon**, a former federal prosecutor who co-chairs the firm's Chicago litigation group. Fardon specializes in white collar, securities and professional liability and is tapped for high-profile cases involving public institutions and officials in a range of industries. Partner **Mary Rose Alexander** is considered a go-to trial lawyer for high-stakes litigation involving environmental contamination and toxic tort cases. Alexander's clients include Ford Motor Company, Occidental Petroleum, Wells Dairy and The Southern Company.

Mayer Brown

Mayer Brown is a brand name in Chicago and is also one of the largest firms in Illinois. It is considered a go-to firm in the state for commercial for commercial litigation,